
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 8th December 2009
and 12th January 2010**

Matters for Information

33. GREEN HOUSE PROJECT

The Panel has welcomed a progress update on the District Council led retrofitting demonstration project for private housing in the District. In so doing, Members have suggested that the financial savings that can be achieved by householders should be published alongside the associated carbon savings, as this is likely to carry weight in residents' decisions on energy conservation. The Panel is of the opinion that a cost benefit analysis should be included in future promotional material, in particular details of projected pay back periods.

The Panel has been advised that the property in St. Ives will be the main exemplar, showcasing how emissions can be reduced through various affordable measures. This property will be open for individuals and organisations to view, with the property in St. Neots likely to be let to tenants.

The Panel has asked to visit the retrofitted properties prior to the formal launch in June 2010.

34. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF OLD FIRE STATION, ST. NEOTS

The Panel has welcomed and supported a report on the redevelopment opportunities of land in and around the Old Fire Station and Depot, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots, a redundant site that requires design guidance to aid with its marketing. The Panel has acknowledged the interest locally in improving the leisure infrastructure within St. Neots and agreed that this could be a potential site for leisure development. Members have been assured that any development at this site will be appropriate to its town centre location.

35. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF CHEQUERS COURT, HUNTINGDON

The Panel has considered a report on the redevelopment opportunities in and around Chequers Court shopping area, in the centre of Huntingdon. Members have acknowledged that redevelopment of Chequers Court will be necessary for the town

centre to be re-invigorated. The Panel has been acquainted with two potential scenarios for the site, but noted that much will depend on land availability with a number of private owners involved.

The Panel has expressed its support for the development brief but has raised concerns over the possible loss of the petrol filling station currently operated by Sainsbury's which it was considered will lead to a lack of competition in the town.

36. ST. NEOTS HEALTH CHECK

The Panel has expressed its support for the purpose and process of the St. Neots Health Check. Members have commended the work that has been undertaken to date which has identified what can be done to improve St. Neots in line with its predicted growth. The consultation process undertaken will result in a master plan and will provide the evidence for future funding bids.

37. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Council's performance against the environmental well-being targets within the corporate plan 'Growing Success' has been reviewed by the Panel. The Panel was pleased to note that all but one of the indicators where statistics are available are positive.

38. STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA)

The Panel has received a presentation on the strategic housing land availability assessment which has identified and assessed potentially suitable sites for housing development as part of the Local Development Framework. The Panel has noted that the process has shown that Huntingdonshire has sufficient land supply for fifteen years and can demonstrate the achievement of sustainable strategy for growth.

In light of the ongoing flooding problems encountered in parts of St. Ives, the Panel has been assured that Anglian Water will be consulted prior to the allocation of sites in that area.

39. OVERVIEW OF NEW WEBSITE - FEATURES AND BENEFITS

The Panel has received a presentation on the Council's new website which was developed due to the need to upgrade the existing web infrastructure. In so doing the opportunity has been taken to improve the functionality and appearance of the website. The Panel has been informed that the website represents the cheapest form of service delivery and that the Council aim to persuade all residents who have the capacity to do so, to use the website in view of the savings that can be generated. Members have questioned the cost of maintaining the Council's website and this information will be circulated to Panel Members in due course.

40. CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCTION

Following the discussion at the headline debate at the Council meeting in December, the Panel has considered actions that have been taken by other local authorities in an effort to encourage residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint.

In that respect, the Panel has invited the Executive Councillor for Environment and Information Technology and the Head of Environmental Management to attend the next meeting of the Panel to discuss potential actions that the Council and other authorities might take to challenge, encourage and enable residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint.

41. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has been advised of progress made to date on its programme of studies.

42. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000, FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the forward plan of forthcoming decisions prepared by the Leader of the Council.

43. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) PROGRESS

The Panel has been advised of progress on issues that had been previously discussed. Following the receipt of a response from Anglian Water's Collection Manager to a list of pre-prepared questions regarding flooding in the area of St Audrey's Lane, St Ives, Members have acknowledged that there is little further that can be pursued at the moment but have asked that the situation continue to be monitored by officers.

The Transportation Team Leader has updated Members on progress towards the provision of cycling routes in Huntingdonshire. The Panel has been informed that the first stage of the Yaxley to Farcet Route has now been completed and design options are being considered for the next stage, although development will be dependant on sufficient funding becoming available. Members have been advised that a meeting has been arranged to discuss options for the Perry village cycle route with the private landowners affected, following which consultation will be undertaken with residents and the parish council in order to inform the Area Joint Committee of villagers' views on a preferred course of action. The scheme will depend on the budget available and the programming of work within the wider network programme. The Panel has been advised that progress is also constrained by a requirement to use contractors approved by the County Council and Members will be questioning the Head of Environmental Management on the possibility of the District Council engaging contractors directly.

44. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest edition of the Decision Digest and discussed the matters contained therein.

P M D Godfrey
Chairman