

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in the Civic Suite 0.1a, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 6 July 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.
Councillors S Cawley, Mrs K E Cooper, J J Dutton, P G Mitchell and R J West.
Mrs M Nicholas.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P L E Bucknell, Mrs P A Jordan and A Monk and Mr R Coxhead.

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 1st June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

19. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 1st July to 31st October 2010. In noting the addition of an item entitled Open Space Strategy, the Panel requested sight of the report prior to its consideration by the Cabinet. Additionally, it was reported that the item entitled Single Equality Scheme would be submitted to the Panel's meeting in September 2010.

With regard to an item entitled Public Conveniences, the Panel suggested that it might be useful for the public to be made aware of alternative facilities available in each of the District's towns. It was agreed to forward to this comment to the Cabinet for consideration during their deliberations on this item. Having been reminded that the Varrier Jones Trust had not responded to a suggestion that its high dependency toilet facility at the Saxongate Community Learning Centre might be made available for public use, Councillor R J West undertook to pursue this matter further with the Trust.

20. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

Pursuant to Minute No. 10/10, the Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy

of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an update on the receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements. Members' attention was drawn to the inclusion of reference to the development site for each of the schemes listed in Tables 1 and 2 of the report, which had been requested by the Panel at its previous meeting. It was also explained that some schemes did not have expiry dates specified within their agreements.

Having acquainted the Panel with problems associated with parking, which had resulted from one of the schemes in his Ward, Councillor J J Dutton undertook to raise this matter with the relevant Executive Councillor and the Council's Estates Manager.

In discussing a number of schemes relating to contributions for skateboard ramps/parks in various locations across the District, concern was expressed that the level of funding received would not be sufficient to cover the full cost of these facilities. In response, it was reported that this funding represented only a partial contribution to the total cost of the schemes and that these details would be included within project plans.

Members were reminded that their role was to scrutinise the progress of allocated schemes and existing maintenance agreements. Having discussed the additional information that would be required for this purpose, Councillor P G Mitchell undertook to discuss this matter with the Scrutiny and Review Manager.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

21. STRATEGIC / PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY

(a) Scrutiny of Partnerships

With the aid of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel considered their approach to scrutinising the partnerships in which the Council was involved. Members were reminded of that the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed a duty on the Council to scrutinise the Local Strategic Partnership and of the role that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) had in this work. It was agreed that a briefing note should be circulated to Panel Members in advance of their next meeting to enable them to determine how to undertake this work. The briefing note would include the terms of reference for each thematic group, current issues being considered and the respective Chairmen's details.

Having been reminded that training on the Scrutiny of Partnerships and on an Introduction to Local Strategic Partnerships had been undertaken on 3rd June and 1st July 2010 respectively, the Panel were informed that a further session would be arranged for Overview and Scrutiny Members to meet with representatives from the

Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. The purpose of this session would be to enable both parties to establish ways of working together.

(b) Joint Scrutiny

By means of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel were acquainted with recent developments relating to joint scrutiny by the Cambridgeshire Councils. Members were advised that the Cambridgeshire Scrutiny Officer Network were due to discuss this matter at their next scheduled meeting and the Scrutiny and Review Manager invited comments from Members on proposals for greater joint working.

In acknowledging the complexity of the framework in which the Cambridgeshire Joint Accountability Committee (JAC) and the Cambridgeshire Together Board operated, a request was made that background information on the two bodies was circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

While they endorsed the principle of introducing joint scrutiny across the County, Members were mindful that such a move could have cost implications for the District Council. They also commented that this approach would work best if it was undertaken through issue based task and finish groups and did not result in new organisational structures being created. In that context, the Panel questioned whether joint scrutiny would mean that the JAC would no longer be required. The Scrutiny and Review Manager undertook to report Members' comments at the Scrutiny Officer Network meeting.

22. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor R J West reported that the next meeting of the Cambridgeshire Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held the following week. In addition, it was reported that the Committee had changed its name to the Adults Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Committee.

23. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing their programme of studies and informing Members of the studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Members discussed a suggestion that their Agenda should in future include an item on potential studies. Having been reminded that they already had an opportunity to raise items for future study/investigation at this point during the meeting, it was decided not to change the current arrangements for managing the Panel's programme of studies.

The Chairman suggested that, in light of the current consultation on potential locations for gypsies and travellers sites, a review should be undertaken of the Council's current consultation processes, to determine whether the Council's approach to consultation was consistent across the authority. Having discussed the proposal, the Panel requested that a scoping report was submitted to a future meeting, which indicated what the current process was, the methods that were used and how materials were prepared for this purpose. In addition, Members discussed gypsy and traveller welfare. It was suggested that the Panel might look at the gypsy and traveller sites already established within the District.

The Chairman drew attention to two possible studies which could be referred to the Panel for further investigation by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), namely waste collection round scheduling and promotion of the use of re-usable nappies. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that a scoping report on the Council's consultation process be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel; and
- (b) that gypsy and traveller welfare be included within the Panel's work programme.

24. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions. The Chairman reported that the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Stakeholder Panel Sub-Group was currently undertaking site visits to facilities managed by the three bidders who wished to take on the Hospital's management contract. The next stage would be to interview the bidders on 8th September 2010.

Councillor R J West commented that the Panel might wish to revisit the Provision of Play Facilities study at a later date, in light of possible changes at a countywide level. Members also reiterated their interest in receiving an update on town centre cleaning at its meeting in September 2010.

With the aid of a report tabled at the meeting (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Chairman reported on the outcome of his discussions with Hinchingsbrooke Hospital's Head of Facilities and Facilities Business Manager on car parking at the Hospital. Members noted that the meeting had been constructive and that the revised pricing structure and car park concessions had been introduced with effect from 1st July 2010. The new arrangements would be reviewed by the Hospital after six months and the Panel would be invited to participate in the review.

25. SCRUTINY

The 105th Edition of the Digest of Decisions was received and noted.

Chairman