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## **Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)**

**Report of the meetings held on 6th July and  
7th September 2010**

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### **Matters for Information**

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#### **10. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)**

The Panel has been updated on the receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements. Additional information, which was previously requested by Members, has now been included within the report. However, Councillor P G Mitchell has suggested that further information is still required and he has met with the Chairman of the Section 106 Advisory Group to discuss the monitoring process. They have suggested that a project plan should be developed for each scheme to include the scheme's objectives, total cost, developer contributor(s), other funding sources and its trigger points. This proposal has been endorsed by the Panel and will be submitted to the next meeting of the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group for consideration.

#### **11. STRATEGIC/PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY**

##### **(a) Scrutiny of Partnerships**

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Environmental Well-Being and for Economic Well-Being, the Panel for Social Well-Being has considered its future role in scrutinising the partnerships in which the Council is involved. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on the Council to scrutinise the Local Strategic Partnership. The Panel will, therefore, focus in this area and, to assist them in this, Members have requested information on the thematic groups that are involved in areas of work that are within their remit. This information has been circulated to Panel Members.

##### **(b) Joint Scrutiny**

Recent developments relating to joint scrutiny between the Cambridgeshire Councils has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Whilst the Social Well-Being Panel has endorsed the principle of introducing joint scrutiny arrangements across the County, Members are mindful that

such a move could have cost implications for the District Council. They also are of the view that this approach will work best if it is conducted through issue based task and finish groups and does not result in new organisational structures being created.

In view of the complexity of the framework in which they operate, Members have asked for background information on the Cambridgeshire Joint Accountability Committee (JAC) and the Cambridgeshire Together Board. The Panel has discussed the future role of the JAC should joint scrutiny be adopted by all Cambridgeshire authorities.

**12. UPDATE REPORT WITH REGARD TO ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO HILL RISE PARK, ST IVES**

Pursuant to Item No. 45 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 18th February 2010, the Panel has received a report on the action taken to address nuisance caused by anti-social drivers late at night in Hill Rise Park, St Ives. This matter was originally raised through a petition signed by local residents, which was presented to the Panel at its meeting in February 2010. Members have been encouraged to learn that a series of actions have resulted in a very low number of instances of nuisance occurring in the intervening period. The Panel has requested Officers to report on the actions taken and the outcome to the next St Ives Neighbourhood Forum meeting and to continue to monitor the situation over the next six months.

**13. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES – PROPOSALS FOR MARKET TOWNS**

The Panel has been updated on the latest position with regard to proposals for enhanced Sunday cleansing services in St Ives, Huntingdon, St Neots, Ramsey and Godmanchester. A cleansing service is now provided on Sundays in the four market towns covering the main shopping areas. As very few complaints have been received about the cleanliness of the towns, the Panel has concluded that there is no need to expand the current Sunday cleansing regime.

The Council will in the future consider this subject in the context of the whole cleansing service taking into account the current financial position of the authority and anticipated budget announcements. Members have commented that they would not wish to see service reductions in the future as this would be detrimental to the vibrancy of the town centres. The Panel has received assurances that should a review of the cleansing service be undertaken, then appropriate discussions will be held with the Towns Councils.

**14. PROVISION OF PLAY FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

Pursuant to Item No 3 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 23rd June 2010, the Panel has considered a report on

recommendations, which were endorsed by the Cabinet, that the Council should investigate the feasibility of co-ordinating on behalf of parish councils a group insurance scheme and combined safety inspections. Advice has been received that for legal reasons it is not possible for the District Council to organise group insurance for third tier authorities. In addition, an analysis of the costs involved and potential savings that might be achieved indicate that it would not be possible to make any significant reductions in cost to town or parish councils for safety inspections.

The Panel has discussed whether to revisit its previous recommendations regarding the maintenance of outdoor youth facilities. Before proceeding further, Members have requested details of what the Council spends on such facilities, together with details of where the funds have been allocated.

#### **15. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME**

The Panel has been acquainted with progress towards the achievement of the Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan. Of the 18 actions contained in the Plan, 12 have been completed and six are ongoing. The Policy identifies two outcomes and associated measures relating to the diverse needs of local people, the way the Council's services meet those needs and whether they are provided in a fair and accessible way. Members have noted trends in residents' perceptions in these respects, though they are mindful that the data captured reflect individuals' perceptions of all local public services and not just those provided by the District Council. Members have discussed how this information will be collected following the decision not to continue with the Place Survey.

The Panel has been acquainted with the legislative background to the decision to introduce a Single Equality Scheme, which now brings together all equalities matters into a single framework. Following external assessment the Council has attained Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

Members have been advised that all Equality Impact Assessments should be completed in the course of the current year. The Panel has questioned what impact potential service reductions will have on the monitoring of equalities issues and in response, has been reminded of the statutory duty to comply with legislation in this area. Following a question on employees' attitudes towards equalities matters, comment has been made on the need to embed equalities across the Council and that individuals are responsible for ensuring that they comply with their equalities responsibilities. The Action Plan appended to the Policy will assist with achieving this requirement.

#### **16. STUDY: CONSULTATION PROCESSES**

The Panel has identified the Council's consultation processes as an area for investigation, with a view to determining whether the approach taken to consultation is consistent across the authority. The Panel has been acquainted with the role of the Policy and

Research Team in offering advice and guidance to internal service departments on consultation and research methodologies. Members have been informed of the terms of the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and received details of the consultation calendar and database, which is located on the Council's intranet. Officers are encouraged to use these resources during any consultations they undertake.

Members have discussed a number of matters, including the cost and role of Market Research UK in assisting the Council with its various consultations, the level of responses to postal surveys together with the cost of different survey methods and how the results are interpreted, the value of undertaking consultation exercises and public perceptions of the consultation process. At the conclusion of discussions, Members have expressed a wish to pursue this study as a full Panel investigation and they have requested that further information is made available at a future meeting.

#### **17. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Environmental Well-Being and for Economic Well-Being, the Panel for Social Well-Being has reviewed the Council's performance against its priority objectives, which are contained in "Growing Success" - the Corporate Plan. The Panel has endorsed the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group, particularly with regard to the objectives where targets have not been achieved.

The Panel has noted the responses to a number of questions raised by the Corporate Plan Working Group on the number of users visiting leisure centres, exercise classes for older people and alternative types of affordable housing. Members also have endorsed suggestions by the Corporate Plan Working Group designed to enhance the Council's approach to its strategic budget planning and performance management.

#### **18. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELL-BEING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Panel has received updates on matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Adults Well-Being and Health Scrutiny Committee, including Addenbrooke's Hospital nursing staff, the future closure of day services for older people, proposed changes to dermatology services and the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2009/10.

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#### **Other Matters of Interest**

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#### **19. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS**

The Panel has reviewed its work programme at each of its meetings. During this work, Members have been informed that the

Hinchingbrooke Hospital Stakeholder Panel Sub-Group has undertaken site visits to facilities managed by three bidders for the contract to manage the Hospital. Interviews have also been held by the Sub-Group after which the final two bidders were assessed against pre-determined criteria. The Strategic Health Authority will use the results as part of their deliberations on which organisation will be awarded the contract.

The outcome of a meeting held between the Chairman and the Head of Facilities at Hinchingbrooke Hospital on car parking at the Hospital has been reported to the Panel. Members have noted that a new pricing structure together with car parking concessions was introduced on 1st July 2010. A review of the new arrangements will be conducted by the Hospital in six months time and the Panel will be involved in this process.

**20. WORK PLAN STUDIES**

The Panel has reviewed its work plan and received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Councillor R J West is now a co-opted Member on the Environmental Well-Being's study on Planning Conservation.

The Panel has requested a scoping report on Gypsy and Traveller Welfare. Background work is currently being undertaken on this subject.

**21. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN**

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Members have requested sight of the Open Space Strategy prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

**22. SCRUTINY**

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

S J Criswell  
Chairman