

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 2nd November 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a joint report by the Heads of Housing and Planning Services on the content of the draft Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan (CLIP), which is currently subject to consultation. This report sets out the Panel's discussions.

2. COMMENTS

- 2.1 The CLIP has been prepared by Cambridgeshire Horizons in conjunction with Cambridgeshire local authorities for submission to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). It aims to facilitate the delivery of investment in a range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community activities taking into account locally determined priorities and a number of existing Countywide strategies and plans. The document identifies investment needs and will primarily be used as evidence to support bids to draw in external funding to the local area.
- 2.2 In discussing the complex structure of partnerships that exists across the County, the Panel has been informed that the establishment of a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will assist in streamlining the current framework and will promote the adoption of cross boundary working practices. Members of the Panel have, however, expressed differing views on the extent to which the Council should engage in collaboration with other authorities and on the benefits it brings. While some Members are of the view that the funds that are being allocated by the HCA should be devolved to local authorities as they are best placed to use them to meet local needs, others argue that there are advantages in undertaking co-ordinated working on a geographical basis greater than that covered by individual local authorities. The latter gives the Council greater influence regarding the plans of other local authorities as, as present, the Council often is only consulted on them. As the HCA will receive 50% less funding as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review, it is ever more important that the CLIP effectively competes for these resources. In addition, the Panel has drawn attention to potential problems associated with variations in boundaries according to the context and level of activity.
- 2.3 A particular manifestation of this debate surrounds the local road network infrastructure. Members are concerned at the way upgrades or improvements to the A14, A428 and A1 are being prioritised. This has implications for housing growth and economic development. The failure to view the road network infrastructure in the national context is of greatest concern. Having regard to the A428, the Panel has been advised that work to compile a master plan for the St Neots area will be undertaken in conjunction with the Highways Agency and East Coast Mainline Rail Service in the future. The Panel also has highlighted the importance of upgrading the A14 as it plays a significant part in the road network infrastructure on local, national and European levels.

- 2.4 The Panel has questioned whether realistic targets have been set for Huntingdonshire in respect of the completion of housing schemes scheduled for 2010/11 to 2013/14. The main purpose of the HCA and, therefore, of the CLIP, is to deliver affordable housing. The Panel suggest that a more realistic approach should be adopted as they are considered to be too low. Arising from this, the Panel has questioned the reliability of the data generally presented by the County Council in the CLIP on population projections for the District. It is recommended that the data employed should be updated.
- 2.5 Finally, the Panel has requested a further report at a future meeting on the implications of the CLIP for local housing. While all the housing schemes referred to in the Plan will proceed, the nature of the affordable housing may vary. The report will, therefore, include an assessment of potential shortfalls in the delivery of affordable housing within the District.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Heads of Housing and Planning Services.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes and Reports of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd November 2010.

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