

## Decision Digest

Edition 115

**Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 28<sup>th</sup> May to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011.**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF ONE LEISURE, ST IVES**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels for (Economic Well-Being) and (Social Well-Being) have received details of four potential options to re-model St Ives Leisure Centre, together with their financial implications, prior to their consideration by the Cabinet. The proposals have been designed to reduce One Leisure's net operating costs and to increase admissions and participation levels to meet both Government and Council health agenda targets. Prior to their deliberations on the subject, the Panels were addressed by a representative of St Ives District Rifle and Pistol Club who had received notification that a potential alternative use had been identified for the range area at the St Ives Leisure Centre.

In considering the contents of the report, the Panel for Economic Well-Being has discussed a number of issues including the timing of the proposals given the current economic climate and the need for the District Council to achieve significant financial savings in future years. Members have been informed that the proposals are expected significantly to improve the Centre's financial performance and contribute to the Council's overall budget reduction plan. As part of their deliberations, the Panel has discussed in detail the proposals for the facility, the success of the re-development at the St Neots centre and the appropriateness of investment if it is intended to pursue trust status at a later

date. Panel Members have also made a number of suggestions with regard to the inclusion of additional information within the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.

With regard to the presentation by the representative of the Rifle and Pistol Club, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) have been informed of the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) who have suggested that the possibility of providing a smaller facility for the rifle club should be investigated. The Economic Well-Being Panel is of the opinion that the opportunities to establish a new range in conjunction with the Rifle Club should be explored. With this in mind and subject to the inclusion of additional information within the report to the Cabinet, both Panels have invited the Cabinet to proceed with Option B for the development of the St Ivo Leisure Centre. However, the Economic Well-Being Panel has also suggested that separate plans should be drafted incorporating shooting facilities, which might be pursued if the Rifle and Pistol Club make a significant contribution to the capital costs for its construction. The Panel has also further suggested that following receipt of the tenders for the re-development, a review should be undertaken of the building costs and the economic climate at the time.

### **USE OF CONSULTANTS**

The Panel has received the final report of its Working Group which had been

established to review and make recommendations on the Council's use of consultants. The study emanated from a previous Panel recommendation to the Cabinet that the Council should reduce the amount it spends on employing external consultants in the current financial year.

Having been acquainted with details of the investigations into the use of non-permanent human resources and other related manpower issues, the Panel have made a number of recommendations for submission to the Cabinet and the Corporate Governance Panel.

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet has recognised that in some service areas the use of consultants is a necessity i.e. planning decision appeals and that a consultant brings expertise into the organisation where it is lacking. In reviewing the recommendations put forward, the Cabinet has requested the Managing Director (Resources), after consultation with the Executive Leader, Executive Deputy Leader and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) to oversee their implementation and to report back to a future meeting.

### ONE LEISURE FINANCE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Economic Well-Being and Social Well-Being) have received an update on the progress of a joint Working Group which has been established to review the financial performance of One Leisure and make recommendations on the services' future strategic direction. Members have been acquainted with the Group's discussions on the following overheads and recharges -

- Leisure Service Management
- Information Technology Network
- Accountancy

- Information Technology Helpdesk
- Payroll
- Human Resources

In considering the content of the report, the Economic Well-Being Panel has noted a number of emerging issues, which will be examined in further detail as part of the review. In the interim period and having regard to the cost of IT Network and Helpdesk Services, the Panel has asked the Cabinet to arrange for a separate review to be undertaken of the Council's IT costs. This is to include the basis upon which the IT Network Service is recharged to users. Members of the Social Well-Being Panel have commented on the benefits of looking at both the social and economic aspects of the service and have also endorsed the Working Group's recommendation for a separate review of the Council's IT costs.

The Economic Well-Being Panel has also asked the Head of Financial Services to provide further information on central recharges within the District Council with a view to ascertaining whether there is any scope for a study on this subject.

At a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet, Executive Councillors referred to the various elements of the service provided by the IT Division and acknowledged its use in the day to day running of the leisure centres. However, it was felt that a review of the Council's IT costs could be undertaken and the Executive Councillor for Organisational Development has agreed to oversee this.

### DRAFT PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT – PLANNING FOR TRAVELLER SITES

The Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) have endorsed the content of a

response to the Government's formal consultation on the draft Planning Policy Statement "Planning for Traveller Sites".

Their attention was drawn to a number of matters including the means by which the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment will be undertaken, recent decisions by the Planning Inspectorate in respect of applications for traveller sites within the District, the future provision requirements and whether the same tests of sustainability should be applied to traveller sites and other housing sites. Other matters discussed include the need for travellers to have access to the necessary infrastructure and the issue of separation between the traveller and the local community.

### **PRELIMINARY DRAFT COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) CHARGING SCHEDULE**

Consideration has been given by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) to the Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule.

The scheme requires the Council to be responsible for collecting contributions from developers and enables the Council greater powers to influence how the levy is spent. The Panel has discussed the terms of the proposed policy and made comment upon the level of resources required to administer the scheme.

A number of matters have been discussed including the need to establish service level agreements with the beneficiaries of levy funds, the requirement to produce an annual report on the CIL for submission to the Government, administrative costs associated with the scheme, the involvement of other public sector

bodies in negotiating CIL funds and the need to ensure that a "plain English" version of the document is available on the website. It was noted that Member involvement will be a key factor in determining the funding of local infrastructure projects.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved the document for consultation. In discussing the level of charges proposed, Executive Councillors have raised concerns over not charging for general industrial, storage and distribution. Members were reassured that the rates had been set after taking into account the viability of the business to pay the charge.

Executive Councillors have requested that the comments received as part of the consultation exercise be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel prior to their final approval by the Cabinet.

### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Panels have reviewed the Council's performance against its priority objectives for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The Panels have received answers to a number of questions by the Corporate Plan Working Group on the data presented.

Having noted that consideration is currently being given to the performance management arrangements for the new Council Plan, the Panels have endorsed a suggestion by the Corporate Plan Working Group that Overview and Scrutiny should continue to monitor the Council's performance.

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS – SCHEME OF CO-OPTION**

Following a recent review of the Scheme of Co-option, the Overview

and Scrutiny Panels have endorsed a number of suggested changes to the scheme acknowledged the valuable contribution made by the Co-opted Members to their discussions.

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) – REMIT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) have identified waste collection and recycling policies and the Council's water courses as potential areas for investigation. Additionally, the Panel has tasked the Tree Strategy Working Group to investigate the reciprocal impact of tree roots and public footpaths upon each other. Items that have been transferred across from the Social Well-Being Panel, in light of changes made to the Panel's remit and the establishment of new Cabinet Portfolios, have been noted by the Panel.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has requested sight of items entitled Great Fen Supplementary Planning Document, Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, Residential Travel Plan and St Ives West Urban Design Framework for submission at a future meeting. The Social Well-Being Panel will give consideration to reports on the Home Improvement Agency Review – Future Delivery Model Consultation and the Homelessness Strategy prior to their consideration by Cabinet.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

As part of its programme of review of the Council's current human resources policies and subject to the incorporation of a number of comments by Members

and Employee Side representatives, the Employment Panel has endorsed the contents of a new safeguarding policy for the District Council.

The policy which applies to all District Council employees, volunteers and Councillors promotes the safety of those using the Council services and sets out clear procedures for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It has been drafted to take into account best practice and any legislative change which has emerged since the procedure was last reviewed.

A copy of the policy is available from Democratic Services on request and will be published on the District Council website in due course.

### **REQUESTS TO FILL VACANT POSTS**

Having been satisfied that it was essential to recruit to the vacant post of Database Administrator (CT180) in the Information Management Division, the Employment Panel has authorised the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships to commence recruitment to the post.

The Panel has also considered the procedure and process which had previously been adopted for the filling of vacant posts and having noted that the current policy had proved to be inflexible and led to delays in recruitment, the Panel has authorised the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships to vary the recruitment process such that :-

- the relevant Head of Service (or their nominee) be authorised to approve recruitment to fill vacancies graded 10 -15 for contracts of 6 months or less, including variable hours staff;

- the relevant Head of Service (or a Managing Director in their absence) be authorised to approve recruitment to fill vacancies graded 10-15 for contracts of more than 6 months;

the Chief Officers Management Team be authorised to approve recruitment to fill vacancies graded 9-5;

- vacancies in grades 5 to 1 continue to be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The Panel has also requested that periodic reports should be submitted to future meetings on changes to the establishment and staffing costs during the previous quarter.

### **RETIREMENT OF EMPLOYEES – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Employment Panel has placed on record its recognition of, and gratitude for, the excellent contributions made by 44 employees during their employment in the local government service and conveyed its best wishes to them for a long and happy retirement.

The majority of these employees had retired under the Voluntary Release Scheme.

### **ANNUAL PAY AWARD 2011/12 & PAY STRUCTURE CONSULTATION**

At the request of Employees' Side representatives, the Employment Panel has agreed to defer negotiations on the 2011/12 pay award. Negotiations for the current year will comprise:-

- the 'inflation' rise;
- amendments to various allowances;

- amendments to the Pay System and Performance related pay.

The Panel has also given preliminary consideration to the issues which should be discussed as part of a review of the pay system. These will include performance related pay and changes to employee allowances. The Panel also has commented on a number of matters and made several suggestions as to areas which need further consideration. The Panel has agreed to canvass the views of Employees' Side representatives on these ideas prior to more detailed proposals being formulated. The Panel was also of the opinion that employees should be made aware that changes may be made to the pay and grading structure and to the performance related pay scheme for the current year.

The Panel have outlined their desire to consider more detailed proposals at a future meeting.

### **FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2011/12**

The Licensing and Protection Panel has endorsed the content of the Service Plan for Food Safety 2011/12 for submission to the Council. The Plan has been developed to comply with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency.

### **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE ENFORCEMENT – PENALTY POINTS SYSTEM**

The content of a Penalty Points System for private hire operators, proprietors and drivers within the District has been approved by the Licensing and Protection Panel. The Licensing Manager has been authorised to amend, as appropriate, the existing list of offences in light of any future legislative change.



**ADVERTISING BY WAY OF DIGITAL DISPLAY SCREENS**

The Licensing and Protection Panel has approved a request for the installation of digital display screens, of no greater than seven inches, on the rear of the front headrests of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. The Panel has asked that permission be sought from the Council on the advertising material to be displayed. The Licensing Manager has been authorised to determine the scale of fees for advertising after consultation with the Chairman of the Panel. The necessary amendments to the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and drivers schedule of conditions of licence will be made to take into account these changes.

**GUIDELINES RELATING TO THE RELEVANCE AND TREATMENT OF CONVICTIONS – HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS**

Guidelines relating to the relevance and treatment of convictions for applications for hackney carriage and private hire drivers licences and existing licence holders have been considered by the Licensing and Protection Panel. These are intended to ensure consistency in future decision making in relation to the consideration of convictions, cautions, offences and information supplied by the Criminal Records Bureau, Police and other agencies.

**LICENSING OF STRETCH LIMOUSINES**

Following guidance issued by the Department of Transport, special conditions for the licensing of stretched limousines have been approved by the Licensing and Protection Panel.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2011/12**

The Licensing and Protection Panel has endorsed the content of the Service Plan for Health and Safety Enforcement for 2011/12. The Plan has been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive and covers the aims and objectives of the service, the resources available and the work undertaken in the previous year.

Members have expressed their concern over the lack of resources available to undertake inspections in the forthcoming year and have requested the Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities to investigate the matter and report back to a future meeting.

**THE SUNBED (REGULATION) ACT 2010**

The Managing Director for Communities, Partnerships and Projects and the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services have been authorised by the Licensing and Protection Panel to appoint Officers to enforce the Regulations associated with The Sunbeds Act 2010 and initiate prosecutions under the Act. The Regulations prohibit businesses from offering or allowing persons aged under 18 to use or have access to sunbed facilities.

**REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS**

The Cabinet and Licensing and Protection Panel have appointed representatives to serve on a variety of organisations for the ensuing Municipal Year. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, after consultation with the Deputy Executive Leader, has been authorised to make any changes

to the schedule that may arise throughout the year.

### CONSULTATION PROCESSES

The Overview and Scrutiny (Social Well being) Panel has endorsed recommendations made by its Working Group which are intended to improve both the Council's consultation processes and the public's perception of them. In considering the Working Group's findings, the Panel's attention has been drawn to examples of consultations previously undertaken by the Council and to the validity of the methods employed to undertake the 2010 budget consultation. Amongst the recommendations that have been put forward, the Panel has advocated prior involvement of Heads of Service, Ward Members and the Overview and Scrutiny Panels in consultations, the establishment of a consultation plan and improved use of the Consultation Calendar and Database.

Details of the Working Group's findings have been considered by the Cabinet. Executive Councillors were conscious that the study emerged as a result of concerns raised by members of the public over the perceived weaknesses in the procedures employed by the Council during recent consultations. In considering the Group's recommendations, the Cabinet has emphasised the need to consider them carefully given their potential to impact on staff time and resources. Having referred to the benefits of working with neighbouring authorities to build up a consultant database of information, the Cabinet has requested the Managing Director (Resources) to undertake investigations as to how the current process can be improved. His findings will be reported to the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being).

### CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Panel has received an update on matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

### DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS

Of the applications considered by the Development Management Panel in June was a proposal for the erection of four, three bladed wind turbines and associated operations on land, east of Whitleather Lodge, Woolley Hill, north of the village of Ellington. The Panel agreed to refuse the application because, in their view, the development had a detrimental impact on the setting and surroundings of the Grade I listed Ellington Church. The Panel also was of the opinion that the proposal was contrary to the Huntingdonshire Supplementary Planning Document on Wind Power published in 2006. Nine other minor applications were considered by the Panel at the same meeting, eight of which were approved and one refused.

### SENIOR OFFICERS' PANEL – SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

In accordance with paragraph 4(e) of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Cabinet has confirmed that there is no material or well founded objection to the Senior Officers' Panel's proposal to establish and appoint to two new posts of Managing Director (Resources) and Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) for a fixed period to March 2012, subject to a review of the progress of the new arrangements by the Executive Leader in October 2011.

### HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The draft Homelessness Strategy has been approved by the Cabinet. The Strategy is a statutory requirement under the Homelessness Act, 2002. Its format this year has been updated to include a summary of the financial resources required to meet the actions identified.

### LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP – PROPOSED ENTERPRISE ZONE

The selection of the Alconbury Airfield site by the Greater Cambridge – Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as their preferred option for an enterprise zone has been supported by the Cabinet.

The site was chosen from five areas and will now be submitted to compete against the bids of the other 32 national LEPs, all hoping to be awarded one of the ten zones being established by the Government.

In anticipation of the bids success and in order to aid the delivery and give some flexibility to the proposals, the Cabinet has supported the preparation of a Local Development Order for the site and has requested the Head of Planning Services to report back on the Order's content.

### SHARED HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES

Approval has been given by the Cabinet to the principle of establishing a shared Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.

The HIA will oversee the provision of aids and adaptations to the homes of those with disabilities. The current in-house service was reviewed in 2008 by the Cambridgeshire Supporting People Commissioning Body. It recommended

that a joint commission be considered to ensure future funding certainty, better value for money and consistency in service delivery.

The Cabinet has authorised the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects), after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources & Customer Services to approve the establishment of the service.