
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 12th July and
13th September 2011**

Matters for Information

8. CAMBRIDGESHIRE FUTURE TRANSPORT INITIATIVE

The Panel has reviewed proposals for alternative ways of meeting county-wide transport needs following an announcement by the County Council that all public transport subsidies across Cambridgeshire would end by 2015. Members have been informed that broad agreement has been reached amongst those partners involved in the delivery of passenger transport to work collaboratively in order to investigate the wider community benefits that might be achieved through a more efficient, effective and co-ordinated approach by working across organisational boundaries, joining up resources, priorities, people and journeys, together with transport operators. This work is being overseen by a cross-authority member led Governance Group, comprising the County Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Acre, together with representation from Huntingdonshire District Council and support from consultants.

The Panel has discussed the implications of the Initiative for the Council, which currently supports community based transport services across the District with a budget of £83.5k per annum. Under the new arrangements, from 2012/13, this budget will be aligned with that of the other partners as part of the wider scheme. Whilst Members have expressed their support for moves to create a more efficient service they are keen that the Council's engagement and the eventual outcomes should align with the community objectives contained within the Huntingdonshire Council Plan. The Panel has stressed the importance of safeguarding the Council's interests in community transport which often provide a lifeline to rural communities. Members have sought a guarantee that the Initiative will add value and robustness to the service before Council funds are committed. The Panel has requested the Cabinet to take these views into consideration.

9. CCTV

Members have previously requested information on possible ways to avoid mothballing the Council's CCTV service, as intended in the Council's current Financial Strategy. At the meeting in July, the Panel

was updated on the progress that had been made in seeking funding from partner organisations.

The Panel has been advised that savings of £129k have already been achieved and other possible options are being explored, which include approaching the Police and town and parish councils in an attempt to secure financial contributions toward the running costs of CCTV, and the possibility of running a joint service with a neighbouring authority.

During discussions on the available options Members have highlighted the benefits of the CCTV service particularly to the Police who despite their considerable use of the service have indicated that they will be unable to make a contribution towards its running costs. The Panel has drawn attention to the reliance of the courts on CCTV during prosecutions and the possibility that the absence of CCTV evidence could affect the outcome of trials.

The Panel formally received two petitions in respect of CCTV at their September meeting, both of which had insufficient signatories to be submitted to full Council. The first petition was presented to the Panel by Councillor J W Davies and requested that a camera was installed in the 'Chubb Stream' area of St Ives. Councillor Davies had organised the petition following a public meeting at which residents expressed strong views about a serious criminal incident in the area and about street drinking and associated crime in the same area.

The second petition was presented by the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for the Ingram Street/Ouse Walk area of Huntingdon. The area's residents have concerns over the decommissioning of a CCTV camera in Ingram Street car park, Huntingdon. The petitioners expressed disappointment at the lack of consultation prior to the camera being decommissioned and the removal of the cover from the camera which, if it had remained in place, they feel might have served as a deterrent while the wider issue of CCTV provision is under consideration. The Panel has asked for further information on the matters raised and requested the reinstatement of the cover on the camera in the Ingram Street car park, Huntingdon.

10. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

The Panel has been provided with an update on the receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements. Members have been given an assurance that there is little possibility that the Council will have to repay contributions because agreements have expired before their specified completion dates. It is no longer the practice to include expiry dates in agreements.

11. RESIDENTIAL TRAVEL PLAN

The Panel has reviewed the draft Residential Travel Plan Guidance, prior to its submission to the Cabinet. The Guidance has been developed by the County Council in discussion with the City and District Councils. It requires developers to introduce a package of measures that promote sustainable travel within new residential developments by encouraging the use of more sustainable travel options, such as walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing and car clubs which, in turn, will reduce the contribution of road transport to air pollution, thereby supporting reductions in greenhouse gases.

The Panel was advised that planning applications for all developments which could potentially generate significant amounts of traffic movement will have to be accompanied by an RTP. The Guidance specifies the matters that RTPs will be expected to contain and what will happen to maintain the provisions of the RTP once the development has been completed. It is considered that the introduction of the Guidance will add robustness to the County Council's current policy position.

Members have focussed on the threshold above which an RTP will be requested. It is proposed that Huntingdonshire will require an RTP for any development with 80 or more dwellings. This is in accordance with national Guidance on Transport Assessment (Department for Transport, 2007). However, other District Councils have indicated they will use a lower figure. The Panel is of the view that the requirement to produce an RTP represents a significant burden for developers and that the figure proposed by Huntingdonshire is required for the policy to be viable.

The Panel has suggested that social housing agencies should be consulted on the Guidance. Some Members of the Panel have also commented on the apparent inconsistency demonstrated by the County Council by introducing the requirement for developers to produce RTPs when it is reducing its support for public transport.

At the conclusion of their discussions the Panel has endorsed the Cambridgeshire Residential Travel Plan Guidance.

Other Matters of Interest

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel has approved, for publication, the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11.

13. WORK PLAN

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies. In receiving an update on the Tree Strategy Working Group, Members have been advised that the Group has received a presentation on a successful tree planting project, which has taken place in Great Stukeley with the support of the Council's Tree Warden Co-ordinator. They have been advised that a draft tree strategy is currently awaiting comment from Officers prior to public consultation. Members have requested sight of the strategy prior to its formal adoption.

The Panel has established a working group to investigate the collection of waste in the District.

14. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of recent editions of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions, which has been prepared by the Leader of the Council. Members have requested sight of reports on a number of items, which fall within their remit.

15. SCRUTINY

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

P M D Godfrey
Chairman