

---

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

**Report of the meetings held on 5th July and  
6th September 2011**

---

---

### **Matters for Information**

---

#### **10. SHARED HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES**

The Panel has considered a proposal to establish a shared Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils at its meetings in both July and September.

At the first meeting Members raised a number of questions and comments on the proposal relating to service quality, financial matters and human resources. Answers have been provided at the second meeting. In terms of service quality, assurances have been delivered that the customer satisfaction ratings for the HIAs in South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils match those of the Huntingdonshire HIA. A joint authority Management Board will be established to oversee and monitor the delivery of the service and performance reports on the work of the Agency will be submitted to the Panel in the future.

The absence of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils from the proposals has been discussed. The legal status of their respective Agencies has prevented these authorities from being a part of the proposals at the present time but both are keen to join the shared service in the future.

Anticipated cost savings to the Council are in the region of £25,000 to £30,000. However, Members have pointed out that there could be additional costs associated with investments in technology and the infrastructure required to establish the service.

The Panel has received assurances that all those employees affected will be fully consulted on the proposal. Following receipt of clarification on a number of other matters, the Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the proposals.

#### **11. ANNUAL REPORT ON ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTED BY GRANTS VIA SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS 2010-11**

A report on the performance of voluntary organisations in receipt of funding from the Council through service level agreements has been

received and noted by the Panel. All organisations that have a service level agreement with the Council are monitored against a set of agreed performance indicators and other organisational criteria on a quarterly basis.

Members' attention has been drawn to the two indicators where the performance targets set by the Council have not been achieved in the previous year and the reasons for the performance reported. Following a comment by a Member that the abolition by the Government of requirements to produce performance data means there is an opportunity to reduce the burden on voluntary organisations of providing such information to the Council, the Panel has been advised that this matter will be reviewed with the Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities.

Having been reminded that the outcome of a review of the funding arrangements for the voluntary sector is currently being undertaken, the Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the performance of the voluntary organisations referred to in the report.

## **12. ONE LEISURE FINANCE**

The progress made by the One Leisure Finance Working Group at recent meetings has been noted by the Panel. Matters discussed by the Working Group include the profitability of individual activities, return on capital investments and admission levels to each of the Centres before and after improvements were made.

## **13. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS: SCOPING REPORT**

The Panel has discussed the terms of its review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire. The Cabinet has requested the Panel to undertake the review and the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing has discussed with Members his ideas on how it might proceed.

The Panel has been made aware that comments have been received from Members and Partners that the Forums are not operating as originally anticipated and there are perceived problems with the areas covered by the Forums, for example, it is held that the North-West Huntingdonshire Forum covers too wide a geographic area. The Panel has, therefore, been tasked with investigating alternative community engagement models, whilst being mindful of the Council's duties in respect of Localism and of the management of funds received through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

A number of matters have been discussed including the level of public attendance at meetings, the issues raised, the choice of venues, police boundaries and the lack of active engagement on the part of Town and Parish Councils.

Members' attention has been drawn to Cambridgeshire County Council's review of Area Joint Committees and the suggestion has

been made that the devolution of decision making responsibilities should be considered during the review.

The Panel has formed the preliminary view that the Council should adopt a new model of community engagement, which places greater emphasis on the three tiers of local government. It is felt that smaller more localised area based Forums would operate more effectively than the present arrangements.

Councillors S J Criswell, J J Dutton and R J West have been appointed on to a Working Group to initiate the Panel's investigations. They will start by writing to County and District Council Members and Town and Parish Councils to elicit their views on the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire. These views will be reported back to the Panel in November.

#### **14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

The Panel has reviewed the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2010/11. Having been reminded that there is a constitutional requirement to produce a Report each year, Members have approved the draft for publication.

#### **15. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Panel has received an update on matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which includes the establishment of the Countywide Health and Wellbeing Board and the work of the Adult Social Care Working Group. A consultation is due to be launched by NHS Cambridgeshire at the end of September on the Redesign of Mental Health Services in Cambridgeshire.

---

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

---

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

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings. As Circle has not yet assumed responsibility for the management of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, an invitation to the company to report to the Panel in September on how the Hospital will be run has, therefore, been deferred to another meeting.

Brief updates have been received on the study undertaken by the Cambridgeshire Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of domestic abuse and the latest decision of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) Board on its future structure.

**17. 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 S J Criswell will shortly be attending a meeting of the Hunts Health Board, the pilot GP commissioning consortia in Huntingdonshire. A seminar for Members on this subject will take place in October.

Background information on the health implications of the night time economy and on the implications for the Council in terms of homelessness that will arise as a result of changes to the Housing Benefit system has been requested for submission to future meetings.

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

The Panel has been acquainted with details of recent editions of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions. The item entitled Gypsy and Traveller Policy Issues will be circulated to Members for information purposes when it becomes available.

**19. SCRUTINY**

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

S J Criswell  
Chairman