

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 1a, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3TN on Monday, 5 December 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor P M D Godfrey – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, J W Davies, P Godley, G J Harlock, D Harty, C R Hyams and J S Watt.

Co-opted Member Mr D Hopkins.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor I J Curtis and Mr M Phillips.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors D B Dew and M F Shellens.

55. MINUTES

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs M Banerjee as a Member of the Working Group referred to in the resolution of Minute No. 51, the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 8th November 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

57. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of key decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Executive Leader of the Council for the period 1st December 2011 to 31st March 2012. Members were advised of changes to the dates on which a number of items would be brought forward for consideration.

At 7.15 pm Councillor M G Baker joined the meeting.

58. ROLL FORWARD OF THE COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY - ITS LOCAL PLAN

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the factors that suggested the Council should update its Core Strategy. Members were informed that the updated Strategy would need to be based on sound evidence, which would be produced in partnership with colleagues across Cambridgeshire and the Local Enterprise Partnership area. It would provide Huntingdonshire with a suitably robust ongoing local planning policy and development framework.

Members accepted that this exercise would be costly, however, as a significant part of it related to the Enterprise Zone, a series of bids had been submitted for funding from income streams previously established by Cambridgeshire Horizons. This would mean the cost would be partially spread across the Local Enterprise Partnership area. The Council's work could be completed from within existing resources.

Having regard to the proposal to use the existing Core Strategy as a basis for the work to be undertaken, some Members expressed the view that, instead, this work would need to be started from scratch. However, as the process leading to the development of the Enterprise Zone was likely to commence imminently, it was acknowledged that there was a need for work on the Core Strategy to be completed expeditiously. These strands of work would, therefore, proceed in tandem.

In response to a question by Councillor D Harty, Members were informed that any housing developed on the Enterprise Zone area would be in addition to the numbers of houses specified in the Strategy. Following a further comment that some villages would welcome some additional provision, it was reported that the Council currently was looking at ways this might be achieved. The Council also would revisit its policy on affordable housing.

In light of the constraints on the Council in terms of imposing planning conditions for the completion of infrastructure works when granting permission for development, Members recommended that an updated local infrastructure strategy should be developed. Furthermore, Members recommended that the Council should establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Highways Agency and the County Council on road provision and the local infrastructure generally.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to:

- a) confirm formally the Council's intentions to review and update its Core Strategy and endorse a proposal for the Council to produce a new Local Plan, including an updated local infrastructure strategy as set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report now submitted, in order to achieve this;
- b) in the interim, given the ongoing discernible growth demands on the area, maintain its support for the adopted Core Strategy as a sound basis for making relevant planning decisions;
- c) endorse the commencement of work, with partners as may be applicable, on compiling an updated local evidence base. That evidence base will identify what growth will be needed and how that additional growth could be appropriately and sustainably accommodated, and
- d) require the Head of Planning Services to bring forward an updated Local Development Scheme (which will

outline the timetable for preparing and delivering this new local plan.)

(In accordance with paragraph 14.5 of the Council Procedure Rules, Councillors P Godley and C R Hyams requested that it be recorded that they voted against recommendation b) above).

59. RAF BRAMPTON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

(Councillors D B Dew and M F Shellens were in attendance for this Item.)

Councillor D B Dew introduced a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a summary of comments received during consultation on the draft RAF Brampton Urban Design Framework and responses to them. The Panel noted that, with one exception, there was broad support for the development of the site. The remaining area of objection related to Brampton Park Theatre. To overcome these objections, it was suggested that the final Urban Design Framework should include reference to potential options for retention of the theatre building, which would then be subject to negotiation with any future developer.

Councillor M F Shellens advised the Panel of the extensive public consultation that had been undertaken throughout the development of the Urban Design Framework. Members supported the positive way in which the Framework had been produced. Given that it had been arrived at through consensus, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the report be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.

60. DRAINAGE ISSUES

Consideration was given to a petition presented by Parish Councillor Mrs A Rees in respect of sewage overflow at Windsor Road and Main Street, Yaxley. The petition had been referred to the Panel from the Council meeting on 2nd November 2011. Members were advised that the Executive Leader of the Council had written to Anglian Water expressing his concerns over the flooding problems in Yaxley and a response had been received. Although Anglian Water's response addressed the particular instance of flooding referred to in the petition, Members were not satisfied with Anglian Water's programme generally to prevent problems with the drainage system in the District from occurring and to respond to sewerage system failures.

Members were advised that residents in Hemingford Abbots had experienced similar problems. Other instances when the drainage system had proved inadequate were also reported. It was then suggested that the Environment Agency had enforcement powers that it might use in such situations. Given the lack of powers the Council had to influence Anglian Water, Members requested the Executive Leader of the Council to write to the Environment Agency to highlight their concerns and to ask it to ensure it used its enforcement powers when it was merited. It was hoped that this would prompt Anglian

Water to make improvements to the drainage infrastructure and to its response to flooding.

The Chairman thanked Parish Councillor Mrs A Rees for her attendance at the meeting.

61. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) informing them of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members requested sight of an update on the A14 when it became available.

62. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS

With the aid of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was advised of progress on issues that had been previously discussed. It was anticipated that a report on waste collection policies would be available for the Waste Collection Working Group to view in late January.

63. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest summarising the Council's decisions since the previous meeting. Members were advised that the Voluntary Sector Working Group had concluded its investigations and the findings would be reported at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being).

The Panel questioned whether any of the planning issues that had arisen at Hartford Marina had also materialised at Buckden Marina. It was agreed that an update on this and any action taken would be circulated to Members.

Chairman