

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 Thursday, 9 February 2012.

- PRESENT: Councillor P M D Godfrey – Chairman.
- Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I J Curtis, J W Davies, P Godley, G J Harlock, and C R Hyams.
- Co-opted Members Mr D Hopkins and Mr M Phillips.
- APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Harty and J S Watt.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor N J Guyatt and Councillor D M Tysoe.

72. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 10th January 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

73. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor C R Hyams declared a personal interest in Minute No. 75 by virtue of being a Member of Huntingdon Town Council.

74. 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 from the period 1st February 2012 to 31st May 2012. Members were advised that a report on Community Infrastructure Levy Governance Principles would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel would be invited to attend the meeting for consideration of this Item.

Having noted that a report on Funding for CCTV had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny (Social Well-Being) Panel, the Scrutiny and Review Manager undertook to circulate the report to interested Members. It was then suggested that, as there would not be a Panel meeting in May, the Bearscroft Farm Urban Design Framework would be submitted to the Panel and Cabinet in June.

75. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

(Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Councillor for the Environment, was in attendance for this Item.)

Pursuant to Minute No. 11/36, the Panel received a presentation by Mrs S Pledger, Cambridgeshire County Council's Flood and Water Manager, on flood risk management. Members were advised that the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy was the product of a series of reviews and Acts that had been passed following nationwide flooding in 2007. Mrs Pledger reported that the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership was made up of local District Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and three of sixty-three local Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs).

Members were acquainted with the five objectives of the Strategy, one of which was "to ensure appropriate development in Cambridgeshire". The Strategy considered the impact of climate change and specified how Cambridgeshire County Council would exercise strategic oversight over flood risk management. As part of this, the County Council had to maintain a register of assets for flood risk management, adopt, approve and maintain sustainable drainage systems in new developments, regulate flows of ordinary water courses outside IDBs and plan for, and manage, any flood emergencies. The County Council was also tasked with investigating instances of flooding in order to establish responsibility and identify solutions to problems.

Having raised the ongoing matter of flooding in Yaxley, Mrs Pledger and the District Council's Project and Assets Manager undertook to visit the site and carry out the necessary investigations. Further to this, the Panel recognised the need for continued research into the causes of flooding. Equally, ownership of water courses and land and infrastructure adjoining them could be very complex. The production of the Register of Assets for Flood Risk Management was, therefore, an important development.

Having noted that the new arrangements strongly emphasised joint working and that partner organisations had concurrent powers, Members queried whether this would disperse responsibility for preventing and responding to flooding. In response, it was stated that, under the legal framework that had been established, a single authority usually had statutory responsibilities for particular aspects of flood management with others having permissive powers. The District Council largely had permissive powers.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Pledger for her attendance at the meeting.

At 7.35pm Councillor I J Curtis joined the meeting.

76. ROLL FORWARD OF CORE STRATEGY - LOCAL PLAN PROJECT PLAN

(Councillor N J Guyatt, Deputy Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, was in attendance for this Item.)

Councillor N J Guyatt introduced a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the new Local Development Scheme. The Scheme outlined the timetable for the preparation and delivery for the new Local Plan.

The Panel discussed the fact that the process leading to the adoption of the new Local Plan would require significant levels of resources. Members raised concerns that although the Council's Development Plans Team would take the lead in preparing all Development Plan Documents, monitoring reports and the Statement of Community Involvement, specialist consultants would be required for certain aspects of the Plan's production, which would be costly. However, they were advised that provision had been made in the budget for this purpose.

Having noted that the Plan should be prepared based on a Strategy which sought to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, Members reiterated their previously expressed concerns regarding the Council's lack of influence over the implementation of infrastructure works.

Members drew attention to the difficulties the planning service would face while the new Plan was being developed owing to the uncertain policy position that would exist, particularly as the Government had not finalised its position on planning. In light of these concerns, the Panel was advised that contingency plans had been developed in relation to travellers' sites and wind farms, which would be used until the necessary policies were adopted. Having acknowledged the need to complete the process expeditiously, Members expressed doubts whether the Council's partners would be able to complete the work required of them sufficiently quickly to enable the timetable in the Local Development Scheme to be met.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the new Local Development Scheme for publication and commencement on 24th February 2012.

(Councillor C R Hyams requested that it be recorded that he abstained from voting on this Item.)

77. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

The Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided an update on the receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements. As significant progress had been made in advancing older Agreements, Members decided that future monitoring of Section 106 Agreements would be conducted on a bi-annual rather than quarterly basis.

78. CAMBRIDGESHIRE FUTURE TRANSPORT STUDY

The Chairman advised the Panel of a joint scrutiny review of the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Project, which the County Council

and District Councils within Cambridgeshire planned to undertake. Owing to uncertainty over the future of the Project, Members decided to defer appointing a representative to the Review Group.

79. 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.

80. 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. The Chairman provided Members with an update on the Design Principles for Future Developments Working Group.

81. SCRUTINY

The Panel received and noted the latest Edition of the Council's Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the Council's decisions since the previous meeting. In response to a question by Councillor M G Baker the Scrutiny and Review Manager confirmed that the Cabinet had approved an indicative voluntary sector budget of £273,000 for 2013/2014.

Chairman