

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14
(Report by the Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 7 March 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has received an update on the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Huntingdonshire and considered the contents of the Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan for 2013/14. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 In considering the contents of the report, the Panel has enquired about the cost of producing the Business Plan and have been informed that the District Council operates a framework agreement with the necessary consultants which enables the Authority to make some savings. In addition, the Council is able to recover some of the administrative costs from the CIL fund.
- 2.2 In terms of the list of infrastructure projects identified within the report, Members have enquired why reference is made to the Grid at Eaton Socon. In response, the Panel has been advised that the Business Plan identifies all the infrastructure requirements required to support all growth within the District. These will subsequently be prioritised. The Panel has been assured that although this project has been identified as critical, it is not being put forward for CIL funding. Members have noted that at this point the Huntingdon West Link Road is the only proposed recipient of CIL receipts for 2013/14. As further funding becomes available work will be undertaken to identify additional projects for funding.
- 2.3 Comment has been made that the list of infrastructure projects does not include any projects to support the Environment Agency in addressing the potential impact of climate change and the infrastructure deficit in the District's waterways. Members have been informed that the list of projects is based upon the infrastructure requirements which have been suggested by members of the Growth & Infrastructure Group. The Environment Agency has been involved with the Group. The Panel has also noted that the Plan is based on Infrastructure needs arising from growth and is not intended to fund infrastructure deficits.
- 2.5 The Panel has discussed the governance structure, which has previously been approved by the District Council's Cabinet. In doing so, Members have received an explanation of the process for preparing the Business Plan which will be submitted to the Cabinet on 21st March 2013. If it is not approved, it will be referred back to the Growth & Infrastructure Group for further consideration.
- 2.6 With regard to the governance structure, the Panel has enquired at what point the local community will become involved in the process. Members have

previously suggested that there should be representation from parishes and the rural areas on the Growth & Infrastructure Thematic Group. In response, Members have been informed that the need to engage and work with the town and parish councils has been recognised, particularly in light of recent announcements with regard to the 'meaningful proportion' that will be allocated to the area in which the development is occurring. It has been explained that for the preparation of the next plan, there will be a longer time-frame to engage with local communities and it will be important to understand the requirements of individual parishes. In this respect, Members have emphasised the need to engage and involve parishes at an early stage especially if they wish them to contribute to major projects.

- 2.7 In response to a question regarding the baseline data which had been used within the Plan, Members have been informed that CIL funding needs are based on the current charging schedule. Members were of the view that it should be made clear that the Plan is based on current values and that they will be indexed in the future. Comment has also been made that elements such as targeted growth funds and the Priority Schools Building programme are missing from the Plan. It should be updated to include an exhaustive analysis of funding opportunities.
- 2.8 In addition and having recognised that there would be an annual review, concern has been expressed that the Growth & Infrastructure Group, which drives CIL expenditure is also responsible for the monitoring arrangements. The Panel has been advised that monitoring will be undertaken within the District Council and an investigation of possible software packages is currently being undertaken. There will be a requirement to produce and provide monitoring reports on progress on a regular basis. The Panel will wait to see the monitoring proposals before making a further recommendation on this matter.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the discussions of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) as part of their deliberations on this item and to note specifically their comments on the need to:-
- ❖ involve town and parish councils and minor villages within the process;
 - ❖ index base costs
 - ❖ investigate channels of additional funding; and
 - ❖ develop a more detailed and robust monitoring plan.

Contact Officer: **A Roberts, Scrutiny & Review Manager**
☎ **01480 388015**
✉ Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk