

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 8 October 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor G J Bull – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, K M Baker,
Mrs M Banerjee, J W Davies, G J Harlock,
Hopkins and Ms L Kadic.

Mr D Hopkins – Co-opted Member.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I C Bates, K J Churchill, D A Giles, D Harty and Mrs D C Reynolds.

31. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 10th September 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

33. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel considered and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 3rd October 2013 to 31st March 2014. Members noted that the items entitled "Carbon Management Plan" and "Green Deal" had been deferred to the Panel's January 2014 meeting.

34. MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY JOINT PROCUREMENT

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

Pursuant to Minute No 13/27, the Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided further information on the joint procurement of a Materials Recycling Facility service for the bulking, sorting and onwards processing/sale of recyclable materials. In introducing the report, the Head of Operations reported that at its September 2013 meeting, the Executive had requested that the final Invitation to Tender (ITT) document was considered by the Panel prior to final approval being sought from the Cabinet. Having explained that there would not be sufficient time for the Panel and the Cabinet to comment on the final draft ITT and that the Council's Section 151 Officer would be actively involved in the procurement

process, the Panel reiterated its previous recommendation that the decision on the ITT should be delegated to the Head of Operations following consultation with the Executive Member for Environment.

In noting that Members would have an opportunity to review the tenders once they had been received and following receipt of confirmation that a single price would be paid to all authorities, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to delegate the decision on the Invitation to Tender to the Head of Operations following consultation with the Executive Member for Environment.

35. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING - IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARGES

(The following item was admitted by the Chairman as a late urgent item under Section 100B (3) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 to enable the impact of additional income on the draft revenue budget to be considered by the Council in December 2013).

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

With the aid of a report by the Service Manager, Environmental Management (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel gave consideration to a proposal to introduce charges for its Street Naming and Numbering service. In his introductory remarks, the Executive Councillor for Environment referred to the pressures on the Council to achieve savings and to generate income opportunities wherever possible. The Project and Assets Manager went on to explain that a number of other local authorities, including East Cambs, South Cambs and Cambridge City had already introduced charges for their Street Naming and Numbering service and that the fees proposed had been based on those of the other Cambridgeshire authorities.

Clarification was received that in the case of new developments, the developer would be expected to meet the costs of naming and numbering. Furthermore, it was confirmed that the proposals did not include the imposition of charges for street name plates. There was a separate budget for this purpose.

The Panel questioned the legislative provision for charging for the service and in doing so, requested the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to confirm that the Council had the powers to make such charges. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to confirmation being received from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that the Council has the power to make such charges, the Cabinet be recommended to approve the introduction of charges for Street Naming and

Numbering services as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted.

36. A14 IMPROVEMENTS - HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION

(The following item was admitted by the Chairman as a late urgent item under Section 100B (3) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 to enable the Council to meet the public consultation deadline).

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

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking endorsement of a draft response to a consultation being undertaken by the Highways Agency on the proposed A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme. The consultation period ended on 13th October 2013.

By way of background, the Transport Team Leader reported that the Highway Agency was conducting a non-statutory public consultation exercise on the scheme. A further statutory public consultation would be undertaken in spring 2014 and the construction works were planned to commence in late 2016. An explanation was then delivered of the proposals for the A14 from Ellington heading eastwards and from the A1 at Alconbury heading south. Members' attention was drawn to a number of key issues arising from the proposals including the introduction of a Toll Road between the A1/A14 junction and Swavesey. It was further noted that the Council would have a significant role to play in the determination of the Development Consent Order application which it was hoped would be given approval in late 2014.

In response to a question by a Member, it was confirmed that the Highways Agency would be responsible for the removal of the Huntingdon Viaduct. Following further questions about traffic near Brampton, the Transport Team Leader reported that the overall intention was to avoid creating any new traffic movements.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to

- (a) inform the Highways Agency of the Council's support for the A14 improvements scheme as proposed, reiterating that the Council's approved local financial contribution would be conditional upon the overall scheme including the removal of the Huntingdon Viaduct and the creation of an improved new local road network for Huntingdon, with construction works commencing by 2016; and
- (b) further inform the Highways Agency that if the scheme is to include a tolling element, this must be collected in a free-flow fashion and the daily

charge must be maintained at a level which is as low as possible (to be agreed) at the lower end of the charging scale i.e. £1 for cars and £2 for HCV's over an appropriate extended time period to be agreed between all the funding partners.

37. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVOLVEMENT IN IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AREAS FOR SAVINGS

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

The Panel gave consideration to a report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking the Overview and Scrutiny Panels' involvement in identifying priority areas for savings for the Council. In explaining the background to the report, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing drew the Panel's attention to the fact that the Council had to save an additional £3,694,000 by 2018/19 and that significant changes would need to be made to the way the Council currently operated.

The Corporate Team Manager explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels had been called upon to assist with undertaking a review of the Council's services and prioritising areas where savings might be achieved. Owing to the extent of the work required, it was suggested that non urgent items should be cleared from the Panels' Agendas for November and December 2013 with a further two meetings of each Panel being held over this period. The Panels were being asked to prepare proposals for a delivery review programme for presentation to the October Cabinet meeting for approval. There was a need for all reviews to be completed by December 2013 to enable the outcome of the Panels' exercise to be reported to the Cabinet's January 2014 meeting.

The Panel discussed a template, which had been developed to provide a range of information for each service area, including their statutory duties, service standards and current performance, manpower including any vacancies and financial data including historic spending.

38. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to consultation or negotiations in connection with labour relations between the authority and employees of the authority.

39. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVOLVEMENT IN IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AREAS FOR SAVINGS

Pursuant to Minute No. 13/37, the Panel gave consideration to an example of a completed template. Members received an explanation of each element of the template enabling them to gain a feel for the

information that would be presented at their forthcoming meetings.

The Panel received clarification of various aspects of the review process and of the level of information that would be provided within the templates. Members discussed a number of points of detail. Their attention was then drawn to a suggested programme of meetings containing the service areas to be considered by the Panel in November and December 2013. Having acknowledged the need for additional Panel meetings, it was suggested that there should be flexibility in the programme to allow for reassessment of earlier reviews and prioritisation. In addition, it was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen would be meeting at regular intervals to review their collective progress. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Panel's involvement in identifying priority areas for savings as outlined within the report prepared by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources be endorsed;
- (b) that additional Panel meetings be held on 20th November and 4th December 2013; and
- (c) that the Cabinet be informed of the Panel's proposals for a delivery review programme at its October 2013 meeting.

40. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

41. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social Well-Being and Economic Well-Being.

42. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions. The Chairman reported upon the outcome of a recent site visit to the Great Fen and commented on the level of attendance by Members. He went on to report that he would be returning with the Vice-Chairman on 18th October 2013 to undertake a visit to the recently renovated Rhymes Reed Bed area of the project.

It was reported that Officers were not yet in a position to meet with the Working Group to consider the first draft of the Tree Strategy. In

noting that the Wind Turbine Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would be resubmitted to a future meeting of the Panel, comment was made that there was a need for the document to be introduced at the earliest possible opportunity but it was necessary to ensure it was sound and appropriate for Huntingdonshire. Finally, the Panel reiterated its wish to scrutinise the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group.

43. SCRUTINY

The 137th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman