
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Report of the meetings held on 4th March and 1st April 2014

Matters for Information

43. SIX MONTH MONITORING REPORT ON ORGANISATIONS IN RECEIPT OF THREE YEAR GRANT AID AWARDS

The outcome of the Voluntary Sector Working Group's meetings with each of the Voluntary Organisations in October 2013 has been reported to the Panel. The purpose of these meetings has been to review each organisation's performance against the acceptance agreements made with the Council during the first six months of the 2013/14 financial year.

All voluntary organisations have demonstrated a wealth of enthusiasm in their own area of work. Specific mention has been made of the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations and its role in acting as a conduit between the District Council and the numerous voluntary organisations within the District. The Working Group is of the view that there is some merit in building on the strengths of Hunts Forum to establish it as an overarching unit within Huntingdonshire. The performance and activities of other voluntary organisations and suggested areas for development have also been reported.

Members have concerns over the reported performance levels of Rural Cambs CAB and the future sustainability of all organisations. The latter is of particular significance given that the County Council only awards funding on an annual basis.

There is a need for better links to be established between the District and County Councils funding for voluntary organisations. It is considered that joint aims should be established. With the exception of Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations, all appear to operate in isolation. There is a need to drive forward and encourage innovative and creative working within the voluntary sector.

The Panel has concurred with the Working Group that dialogue should be held with relevant parties to establish a presence by Rural Cambs CAB at the Maple Centre. Questions have been raised about the volume and types of enquiries received by Rural Cambs CAB in the Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots areas and whether the service is able to cope with increased levels of demand arising from the welfare reforms. It has been noted that the organisation has received

£240,000 from the Big Lotto Fund. Huntingdon Town Council also offer Rural Cambs CAB £5,000 of funding in kind through reduced premises rates at the Town Hall and is currently considering a request for the organisation to open on Saturday mornings. There is an opportunity for this extended service to be made available at the Maple Centre.

The Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal will refer a suggestion that Huntingdon Shopmobility should be transferred to the Huntingdon BID at the next Huntingdon BID meeting.

There is an evident need for the Working Group to continue its investigations and to take forward the issues raised by Members at the meeting. The Working Group particularly has been tasked with exploring how voluntary organisations could work under a common structure and with undertaking further review meetings at the end of Year 1 of the organisations' grant funding arrangement terms.

44. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY – POLICE AND CRIME PANELS: THE FIRST YEAR

The Panel has considered the outcome of a national review of Police and Crime Panels in their first year of operation. As the Council's representative on the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel, Councillor J D Ablewhite has explained how the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel fulfils its role in scrutinising the Police and Crime Commissioner. He is of the view that there is a need for the Police and Crime Panel to adopt a more robust approach to its work and to start exploring specific areas of concern such as the amalgamation of Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Police Force and its impact upon Huntingdonshire.

The Panel has concerns over public accessibility to the Police and Crime Commissioner and differs in its opinion of what the Commissioner regards as an operational matter as opposed to a political one. The example referred to at the meeting is speeding. It has been confirmed that the Commissioner is not legally allowed to interfere in operational decisions made by the Police Force but the view has been expressed that the Commissioner appears to be disengaged from the public. There is, however, an opportunity for the public to ask questions at Police and Crime Panel meetings.

The Panel has drawn attention to the finding within the Centre for Public Scrutiny's report that few Police and Crime Panels can demonstrate a tangible impact on the local community. The view has also been expressed that Huntingdonshire is not fairly treated when it comes to the allocation of Police resources in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Members have then commented on the Commissioner's lack of engagement with the press and that there is a need for him to have greater public visibility. Members have warned that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Panel should be wary of the general inability of Police and Crime Panels to

influence the work of Commissioners. The Panel has requested sight of the Commissioner's Annual Report.

Given the Panel's concerns it has been decided to submit questions to the Police and Crime Panel at its meeting on 19th March 2014. Councillor I C Curtis has attended the meeting to present questions submitted by the Panel on the Commissioners level of engagement with communities and how he determines whether decisions are treated as political or as operational. In terms of the former, the Commissioner has appointed an individual to undertake public engagement activity on his behalf. With regard to the latter, the Police and Crime Panel has appointed a Working Group to explore the matter further.

45. LOCALISM

The Panel has made a request for the Cabinet to develop the work initiated at the Parish Conference held in December 2013. It has been recommended that a scheme of funding should be established for Parishes, including grants, as a means of encouraging and supporting them in developing Community Plans.

The Chairman has held initial discussions with the Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities and the Managing Director on how the Council will respond to the issues raised at the Parish Conference. The Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities strongly supports Community Planning and has stated that Parishes should be encouraged to engage in this process. Furthermore, the District Council should work alongside Cambridgeshire ACRE with a view to re-launching and providing support to Parishes for Community Planning.

There is a need to differentiate between Community Planning and Neighbourhood Planning. The former covers matters outside of planning considerations but can help communities to prepare for Neighbourhood Plans. It is expected that Towns and larger villages will include matters relating to housing and transport within their Community Plans with smaller villages in more rural areas focussing upon other aims. Community Plans are where Localism can be best expressed whilst also helping to improve community resilience.

Community Plans will provide benefits not only for the Parishes themselves but for the District Council as well. The Plans will encompass a number of wide ranging matters such as improving the health of communities, supporting older people, maintenance of drainage and ensuring that standards are maintained for roads, etc. They must continually be followed-up to ensure they are acted upon and that aims are being achieved. There is a need for Parishes to review their Plans at regular intervals.

If there is support for the principles of Community Planning, the Council will need to manage the Community Planning process so that they are realistic and achievable. It may be necessary to involve

Cambridgeshire ACRE to take advantage of its considerable experience and expertise.

The Panel has debated whether the Community Chest funding of £30,000 can be utilised for Community Planning and whether any financial support should be provided to Parishes for this purpose. Members are of the view that this is not an appropriate use of the Community Chest but that a separate budget should be established to stimulate and incentivise the development of Community Plans with Parishes being able to apply for grant funding to enable them to undertake this work. Applicants would be asked to demonstrate how their Plan will benefit the community in addition to meeting certain criteria.

The proposal has been considered at the Executive Leader's Strategy Group in March 2014. There has been recognition that some form of support should be provided to Parishes. It has been agreed that a follow up workshop event will be arranged for Parishes to deliver training on how to develop Community Plans which will be undertaken in conjunction with Partners.

46. HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL: REVIEW OF THE YEAR AND 16 POINT PLAN FOR 2014/15

The Panel has received a presentation from representatives of Circle Healthcare and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital reviewing the activities of the Hospital over the 2013 calendar year. It has been two years since Circle took over responsibility for operating Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust through a ten-year franchise agreement. Circle's management approach is one of empowerment, where clinicians take responsibility for and make decisions on the services and facilities they are involved with at the Hospital.

The Hospital continues to strive to become one of the top ten District General Hospitals in the Country. Circle's 16 point plan for 2014/15 sets out how this will be achieved. There has been a noticeable improvement in quality standards over the previous two years and the Care Quality Commission has ranked the quality of care at the Hospital as "green", which is the highest available ranking. The Maternity Ward has also been awarded CNST Level 3 status for safety and the Hospital's Accident and Emergency targets are continually being met, with Hinchingsbrooke regularly featuring within the top ten best performing facilities across the nation. In addition, patient referral waiting times from GPs to the Hospital are being achieved and the Hospital has an 80% referral rate in its "Friends and Family" test which demonstrates positive patient experiences. There have been no outbreaks of infections and all relevant targets are being achieved.

Significant improvements have been made to the Hospital's finances over the previous two years but further improvements are needed. In order to achieve a balanced budget last year, Circle invested £3.7m of its own money into the Hospital. This year's outturn position is likely to reveal a £700,000 deficit, which again will be met by Circle.

The total £4.4m will eventually be paid back to Circle. This will happen before any profits are returned to the Hospital. The Hospital is currently negotiating with the Clinical Commissioning Group on its commissioning agreement to take into account the increase in demand for services by patients choosing to have their treatment there. The projections were underestimated last year resulting in over activity in some service areas thereby impacting upon the Hospital's use of temporary and agency staff.

The Panel has questioned the Hospital about recent articles in the local press on staff morale, the types of issues raised by patients not wishing to refer their friends and family, increases in demand for services, its level of expenditure on temporary and agency staff, the adoption of a 24/7 approach to care and whether estimated waiting times could be displayed in the Accident and Emergency Department. The Hospital has agreed to look at the absence of support from Macmillan Nurses from the Acorn Cancer Support Group, waiting times for patients referred from GP's to the Accident and Emergency Department, whether staffing levels for patients suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's are adequate together with the common feeling of isolation and the need for adequate care to be provided in the community provision as a means of preventing unnecessary Hospital admissions.

On the question of revalidation and the need for enhanced levels of communication between GP's and consultants, the Hospital has acknowledged that this is an area for improvement. A work stream is being developed to improve communications next year.

Representatives of Circle and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital will return in a year's time to deliver a further update on the Hospital's progress and plans for the future.

47. CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP PUBLIC CONSULTATION – PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE OLDER PEOPLES HEALTHCARE AND ADULT COMMUNITY SERVICES

Representatives of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have attended the Panel's April meeting to acquaint Members with the current consultation being undertaken on improving older people's healthcare and adult community services. An outline has been provided on the reasons why there is a need to improve care for older people within the CCG area together with what services are being included within the proposals. These include community services for older people and adults, emergency hospital care for patients aged 65 and over, older people's mental health services and various other services that support the care of older people. Details of the events leading up to the consultation have been provided.

The aim is to appoint a lead organisation to be responsible for joining up care to enable different parts of the NHS to work better together. Accord Health, Care for Life, Uniting Care Partnership and Virgin Care Limited are the shortlisted bidders in a procurement exercise for

this role. Better clinical outcomes and patient experiences will be achieved. These will be measured through an Outcomes Framework. A number of common themes have arisen from the submissions made by the shortlisted bidders, which include delivering more joined up care for patients, better planning and communication, supporting older people to stay independent, improving community services and end of life care. The shortlisted bidders will submit full proposals to the CCG in July 2014, with the preferred bidder being selected in September 2014. The new service is expected to start in January 2015.

The Panel has reiterated its previous concerns over the lack of elected Member involvement in the process and the tight timescales for the mobilisation of the contract. Members have welcomed the intention to provide services that are joined up in their approach to delivery and they have noted the benefits that a multi-disciplinary team can bring to patients in terms of enhancing their experiences and providing a better level of care.

It is expected that there will be notable improvements to older peoples and adult services from January 2015 onwards which will be designed to reduce the risks to patients. This, and the training of staff on the adoption of new systems and practices, the implications of the proposals for Cambridgeshire Community Services, the need for the new provider to engage positively with local communities wishing to build community resilience, how the CCG will ensure the chosen bidder achieves satisfactory performance levels in the first year and the balance which needs to be struck in terms of accountability between the voluntary sector and the new provider will form the basis of the Panel's deliberations on its response to the consultation.

Given that the consultation period runs from 17th March to 16th June 2014 inclusive, the Panel has appointed Councillors R C Carter, S J Criswell, Mrs P A Jordan, J W G Pethard and S M Van De Kerkhove onto a Working Group tasked with formulating a draft response to the consultation on behalf of the Panel. The draft response will be submitted to the Panel's June 2014 meeting for endorsement.

48. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Panel has been advised of matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These include the procurement of the Older People's Programme, delayed discharge and the discharge planning review, performance on assessments and the NHS 111 service. The Panel also has been acquainted with reviews of adult social care, older people's services and mental health.

Other Matters of Interest

49. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its work programme at each of its meetings. The composition of the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Joint Working Group might need to be changed pending Cambridgeshire County Council's move to a committee system. A brief update has been delivered on the outcome of a recent meeting of the Elderly Patient Care Working Group and the work being undertaken by the Economic Well-Being Panel in monitoring the Facing the Future project.

The Panel has established a Working Group comprising Councillors I J Curtis, R Fuller, P Kadewere and S M Van De Kerkhove to investigate the policies and procedures of Registered Social Landlords to establish how services vary between different organisations and how they work with each other and with the Council.

50. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Support has been expressed for the study being undertaken by the Environmental Well-Being Panel on flood prevention within the District.

The Chairman has reported on the review being undertaken in conjunction with the other Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen on the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. It is suggested that a Select Committee style of working should be adopted. It has been confirmed that the Panel will continue to undertake external scrutiny work. Any changes should improve the Council's internal scrutiny working practices. Concerns exist about the time it takes the various Working Groups to complete their work. A suggestion has been made that the Panels should issue more frequent press releases when matters of local concern are being considered at meetings. Members have been encouraged to forward any further comments directly to the Chairman.

51. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has been acquainted with the Notice of Key Executive Decisions at each of its meetings. Members will have sight of the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency – 2 Year Review at future Panel meetings.

52. SCRUTINY

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

S J Criswell
Chairman