

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) was held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 7 October 2014.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors R C Carter, M Francis, R Fuller,  
Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere,  
Mrs R E Mathews and Mrs D C Reynolds.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R S Farrer and S M Van De Kerkhove.

### **40. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 2nd September 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Lancaster, Managing Director to the meeting.

### **41. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No interests were declared by the Members present.

### **42. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Panel received 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 Executive Leader for the period 3rd October 2014 to 31st March 2015.

It was noted that a report on the Council Tax Support Scheme would be submitted to the meeting in December.

### **43. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL REPORT**

With the benefit of an introduction by the Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal, Councillor T D Sanderson, the Communities Manager introduced a report by the Head of Community (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the activities and outcomes of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership in 2013/14. Members also were advised that the report detailed costs associated with support for the Partnership and commented on those challenges presented by the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The Panel was reminded that the Partnership had been established in accordance with Sections 5–7 and 11 of the Crime & Disorder Act

1998 which required responsible authorities to work together to protect their local communities from crime and help people feel safe and do all that was reasonable to prevent crime and disorder in the area. The Partnership comprised representatives from the District and County Councils, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CCG and the Probation Service. Other organisations were invited to participate as appropriate.

Funding for the partnership was now allocated to the Partnership from the Safer, Stronger Community Fund by the Police & Crime Commissioner and in 2013/14 this amounted to £28,000. Members noted details of the projects towards which funding had been allocated in 2013/14 and the cost to the Council in taking the lead in supporting and chairing the Partnership. It was explained, however, that the latter had now transferred from the District Council to the Chief Inspector thus reducing the costs previously incurred by the Council. The Communities Manager undertook to advise Councillor Mrs Jordan of the estimated cost of the District Council's future support for the Partnership.

Having been acquainted with the composition of the Community Safety Team and the priorities of the service over the period 2014-17, the Panel proceeded to discuss the delivery and cost effectiveness of the service.

Having established that Community Service Grant of £24,000 had been allocated by the Police & Crime Commissioner for 2014/15, the Panel questioned whether any cost analysis of the service had been undertaken to demonstrate the value and cost effectiveness of the Partnership. The Executive Councillor and Communities Manager agreed to undertake this exercise in the future.

Through questions, it was understood that the priorities of the Partnership over the period 2014-17 reflected those set by the police. It was made clear that prevention of crime generally was the overriding and continuing priority for the Partnership although not listed specifically as a priority.

Although not mentioned in great detail, the Panel recognised the valuable contribution made by the CCTV service as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour. As the service had transferred to Community Division, the impact of CCTV would be reflected in future reports.

Having been briefed on the implications for the Partnership of the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and noted that the Partnership was currently seeking to secure efficiencies and savings, the Panel agreed to consider at its forthcoming away day whether it wished to have the opportunity to engage in the outcome of the review at a future meeting.

#### **44. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING**

By reference to a report by the Head of Customer Service (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel received and noted the performance and activities of the Customer Services Team over the period January to June 2014.

Although the report had formerly been submitted to the Economic Panel, COMT had taken the view that it was more appropriate if performance monitoring of customer services was undertaken by the Social Panel. The timeliness of the management information presented would be adjusted to reflect the work programme of the Panel in future. It also was noted that a review of progress on the Customer Services Strategy would be submitted to the Panel shortly.

Looking at the detailed performance information, it was explained that key measures were speed of response and quality of service (based on feedback received) arising from day to day operation of the service.

In response to a question on the rationale for the potential transfer of the Call Centre to Pathfinder House which appeared to be contrary to the shared service approach currently favoured by the District Council, the Head of Customer Service confirmed that there were still opportunities to establish the Call Centre as part of the Strategic Partnership with South Cambridgeshire/Cambridge City but in the short term, the likelihood was that the service would be relocated to Pathfinder House. Regarding a suggestion for joint services with Town Councils, the Panel noted that there was little advantage in partnership of this nature with the towns and concern that it could duplicate the existing response offered by the County Council.

In terms of the future, the Panel understood that it was the Council's intention to encourage the public to make greater use of online services rather than rely on the telephone or face to face contact. It was reported that a smartphone app was already used extensively by visitors to One Leisure and it was hoped to extend the facility to other parts of the organisation.

Regarding speed of response to enquiries at the Call Centre, the Head of Customer Service accepted that resilience to sickness absence required improvement and that there might be an opportunity to call on Customer Services staff in these circumstances should the team be located on the same site. It was made clear that any temporary staff exchange would not be to the detriment of customer services. However, there was also an opportunity to call in additional staff as cover in the event of concern.

Regarding the transfer of the team to Pathfinder House, the Panel was informed that staff had welcomed the opportunity to have closer contact with their colleagues and other services.

The Panel concluded their discussion by looking forward to future reports on the opportunity there might be to encourage increased visitors to the Council's website.

#### **45. AFFORDABLE HOUSING - UPDATE ON STUDY**

Councillor R Fuller updated the Panel on the progress of the study on affordable housing. The Working Group had had the opportunity to discuss that part of the new Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 relating to affordable housing provision at a meeting when the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy also was

present.

Councillor Fuller added that the Working Group was keen to examine opportunities to deliver additional affordable housing, reduce the number of families waiting for affordable housing and question why individuals appeared to remain on the waiting list without any potential to secure a housing offer. Brief mention also was made of current viability issues which severely impacted on the number of affordable units able to be offered by developers.

A written report on the most recent meeting would be submitted to the November Panel.

#### **46. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH COMMITTEE**

The Panel received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Cambridgeshire Health Community held on 11th September 2014 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

Councillor Carter, the Panel's appointed representative, reported that Uniting Care Partnership had been selected as the Preferred Bidder to improve older people's healthcare and adult community services across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and parts of Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire. The services would provide urgent care for adults aged over 65 including inpatients as well as A&E services, Mental Health Services for people aged over 65, community health services for adults over 18 and other health services which support the care of people aged over 65. It was understood that the Partnership would spend the next six months preparing and putting everything in place to be able to start delivering services on 1 April 2015.

Members were hopeful that Uniting Care Partnership would be able to give a presentation to the Panel on how the new services would be delivered in Huntingdonshire.

#### **47. WORK PLAN**

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

#### **48. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING PROGRESS)**

With reference to the recent report by Radio Cambridgeshire on complaints made by residents of Luminus Homes, the Managing Director reported that, as the responsible Housing Authority, the District Council had appointed an independent investigator to establish whether there was evidence to substantiate the allegations that had been made. Subject to the outcome of the review, the Chairman indicated that the Panel could become involved if it was apparent that Luminus needed to be held to account.

The Chairman reported that a meeting of the Hinchingbrooke Hospital

Joint Working Group would take place on 21st October when he hoped to raise three items which related to the circumstances around the death of a particular patient, the contents of a letter from the Care Quality Commission regarding hospital services and the latest financial position.

#### **49. SCRUTINY**

The 148th edition of the Digest of Decisions was received and noted.

In respect of page no 38, the Chairman explained that whilst the Economic Panel had received an update on the progress of the delivery of the 'Facing the Future' programme as a whole, it would be his expectation that updates on specific items would be submitted to relevant Panels in due course.

Regarding the review of the effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Panel, the Panel commented that, in future, similar reviews of other Panels should not be undertaken by the respective Chairmen because of a potential conflict of interest.

Members confirmed their continued interest in receiving copies of the Digest.

Chairman