
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Report of the meeting held on 8th September 2015.

Matters for Information

14. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Civil Parking Enforcement in the District. The Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities has highlighted details of the parking enforcement issue and makes the case for a more lenient view in the interests of economic development; a stricter regime could be seen to penalise local business owners. The Panel has been informed that in practical terms the costs of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) far out-weigh any benefits; therefore it has been suggested that the Council does not commit to becoming the agent for CPE in Huntingdonshire.

The Interim Head of Operations has added that following a lengthy consultancy report it has become clear that although the powers of enforcement and the revenue that it has the potential to generate are desirable, a whole new regime of regulations and extensive set up costs would be required. With a limited business case to support CPE, it has been advised that the Council do not adopt the scheme and that the Council works with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) on a broader traffic management plan which has the potential to positively affect parking issues locally.

Members of the Panel have questioned whether issues faced locally for residential parking have been taken into account. The Panel have been advised that although residential parking is a separate issue at this stage there are alternative ways of dealing with these issues other than heavy enforcement. Working with CCC and the Planning Department to ensure residents are provided with parking can be more effective in the long term.

A Panel Member has asserted that with a lack of Police statistics on unlawful parking the issues of local parking has not been considered in full. In response, the Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities has informed Members that they acknowledge that further information from the Police would have been useful but the cost justification of CPE remains inadequate with the annual overheads being unbearable by the Council in the current economic position.

Members have suggested that a further report be presented to the Panel with additional information from the Police regarding parking so

that the issue can be considered with further clarity and consideration can also be given that to the CPE decision in the future.

The Panel has endorsed the recommendations prior to their consideration by the Cabinet.

15. OPERATIONS REVIEW QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Operations Review Quarterly Update has been presented to the Panel by the Interim Head of Operations and the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment. The report has provided an opportunity for Members to scrutinise the St. Ives green spaces and play needs analysis and the new Garden Waste Contamination Policy prior to their adoption by the Council.

Members of the Panel have discussed issues regarding graffiti removal and problems surrounding bin collections. The Panel has been informed that particular area problems with graffiti are monitored by the Police and that the Council are working with the Police to identify repeat offenders. A Panel Member has suggested that reporting of incidents at particular geographical areas would assist in these investigations; the Interim Head of Operations has informed the Members that there is a new Members Contact Form which will help to gain some control over the issue with this type of feedback from Members providing trackable progress.

The Council are working to specifically target the requirements of local areas and projects that will help that need. Information has also been presented on the current green spaces provision and any gaps in that provision.

When considering the information on play provision in the area, Members have been informed that the needs analysis has indicated that there is a good level of provision and that these sites need to be maintained and expanded to other areas. A targeted investment approach is favoured, which will allow for affordable future proofing of these sites.

Members of the Panel have discussed the Council's Garden Waste Policy which has been amended to include a more customer focused approach, which includes answers to residents regarding why their bin may have not been collected. This will take the form of digital photography evidence, reasoning and education for those residents who may be repeat offenders.

16. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Q1)

In conjunction with the Panels for Economic and Social Well-Being, the Panel has received an update on progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2015/16 for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 June 2015. The report now also incorporates progress reporting for current projects being undertaken at the Council.

The Panel's discussions have centred on the planning application performance indicators. The Head of Development has informed Members that staffing issues have had an impact on the Team's ability to meet targets. Vacancies have now been filled, with a permanent Planning Services Manager (Development Management) recently recruited, and new processes have been put in place to improve performance and resilience. These measures are expected to rapidly improve over the coming months.

Other Matters of Interest

17. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies.

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

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies.

19. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel has received details of the studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

20. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest.

T D Sanderson
Chairman