

---

# **Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)**

**Report of the meeting held on 8th December 2015.**

---

---

## **Matters for Information**

---

### **29. REVIEW OF PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

The Review of Planning Enforcement has been presented to the Panel. Members have been informed that Officers have investigated a more efficient way of enforcing. The current working policies had been established in 2010, however the aim of the review was to create up to date policies to enable Planning Officers to act upon enforcement cases sooner.

The Panel has noted that the review has encompassed communication to Town and Parish Councils. The Council do not have the time resource to update Town and Parish Councils on all enforcement cases, therefore the onus is upon the Town and Parish Councils to ask for updates. In total, 11 recommendations have been proposed, they are:

- delegating decision-making on cases to Area Enforcement Officer and Team Leader;
- reducing the number of planning applications dealt with by the Enforcement Team Leader;
- enhancing the enforcement's capacity to deal with planning applications arising from enforcement cases by using Development Management Officer;
- introducing new time targets for enforcement case milestones and closure;
- closing old cases;
- setting targets for carrying out the first site visit;
- prioritising cases after the first site visit;
- managing the expectations of stakeholders;
- improving communication with stakeholders;
- updating the Council's Enforcement Policy; and
- a series of process improvements.

In response to a query regarding the process improvements Members have been informed that the improvements are in respect of making the processes and procedures of planning enforcement more efficient.

Members have asked if there is an electronic based system which can be accessed by the Towns and Parishes for updates. In response the

Panel has been advised that Officers will investigate if Members have the ability to access the existing information for updates.

Following a discussion concerning the large developers who abandon a site before they have completed their obligations, the Panel has been informed that the software package, Obligation Tracker, is being developed to assist the tracking of obligations. If a developer does leave a site without fulfilling their obligations then the Council can apply a registration with the Land Charges Service. As this could affect the developer's house sales the aim is to encourage the developer to fulfil their obligations.

With regards to the IT costs, Members have been informed that the Council has contacted the supplier to enquire the cost of running the software but has not received a response.

### **30. HUNTINGDONSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLANNING**

The Panel has been updated on the current position with regards to the Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Planning. Members have noted that the Panel will receive future update reports in June and December of each year. In addition the Panel will receive an update report on the progress of the Local Plan in March 2016. Members have been informed of the infrastructure projects in progress, which are:

- A14 Trunk Road;
- A428;
- A1;
- Oxford to Cambridge Expressway;
- East West Rail; and
- A141 Huntingdon to St Ives.

The Panel has noted that the projects could not be delivered by the Council alone and has recognised the requirement to work with partners. In response to a query regarding potential funding and increased partner cooperation, Members have been informed that the Government's drive to devolve powers and funding to local areas presents an opportunity for the Council to work more closely with partners the enable to delivery of infrastructure to support growth.

In response to a query with regard to the timescales of the current infrastructure projects, Members have been informed that the A14, A428, A1 and A141 projects are currently subject to a Development Order Process. The Panel has been advised that timescales can be difficult to establish however the projects are more likely to be completed in collaboration with partners.

With regard to the Local Plan, the Panel has expressed concerns that Cambridgeshire County Council's traffic modelling is not in accordance with the required standard however Officers are confident that the traffic modelling would be complete in time for the Local Plan to be submitted.

### **31. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY GOVERNANCE**

The revised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Governance and proposed confirmation of continued CIL funding towards the costs of the Huntingdon West Link Road has been presented to the Panel.

Members have noted that the Growth and Infrastructure Group has been responsible for directing the preparation of the draft Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan and project development for the delivery of major sites. The Panel has viewed the proposed changes with regard to the governance of CIL and has included:

- removal of the Growth and Infrastructure Group from the Local Strategic Partnership framework;
- a revised Terms of Reference for the Growth and Infrastructure Group; and
- revised Membership of the Growth and Infrastructure Group to include three District Councillors, in addition to the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing.

Members have recognised that appointments to the Growth and Infrastructure Group are a Cabinet decision however the Panel has requested the inclusion of the Chairman of the Development Management Panel (DMP), as well as a Member each from the Social Well-Being and Economic Well-Being Panels. As the Chairman of DMP is currently a Member of the Environmental Well-Being Panel it is not thought necessary to appoint an additional Member from the Panel. In addition Members have expressed a preference for the inclusion of a Member who is not from the leading Conservative Group.

Following a concern regarding Town and Parish Councils spending of CIL, the Panel has been informed that every Town and Parish Council that has spent CIL has a responsibility to report to the Council how they have spent the CIL funding. In addition Members have been advised that any Town and Parish Council whom has spent CIL in the year 2014/15 will have to report to the Council by 31st December 2015.

With regard to concerns that CIL funding has been committed to a single infrastructure project, Huntingdon West Link Road, the Panel has been advised that as the CIL fund grows in the future there will be opportunities to prioritise the use of CIL funds towards other infrastructure projects.

### **32. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

The Panel has been updated on the Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide which has clarified how the Council will support local communities that wish to embark upon community planning initiatives. Members have been advised that when viewing the guide on-line the customer will be able to access various hyperlinks to guide them to further planning information.

Following a discussion regarding parishes working together in the creation of a joint Neighbourhood Plan, the Panel has been advised that the Guide sets out the process to assist such development.

---

### **Other Matters of Interest**

---

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

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the Notices of Key Executive Decisions which has been prepared by the Executive Leader.

#### **34. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS**

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies. Members have been informed that a Working Group on Public Open Spaces is being considered and that a scoping paper will be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

#### **35. WORKPLAN STUDIES**

The Panel has received details of the studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members have been informed that the Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council has expressed surprise at how the budget proposals are communicated and Cambridgeshire County Council will be recommunicating the information.

Members have been advised that a date for the Impact of Cambridgeshire County Council Budget Proposals on Huntingdonshire and the residents Task and Finish Group will be set in the near future and that Members of the Group will be informed in due course.

T D Sanderson  
Chairman