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## **Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers)**

**Report of the meetings held on 5th January and 2nd February 2016.**

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### **Matters for Information**

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#### **1. HUNTINGDONSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP'S PERFORMANCE 2014/15**

Chief Inspector Laura Hunt, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, has given the Panel a presentation on the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership's Performance and the crime statistics for Huntingdonshire.

The Panel has been informed that Cambridgeshire Constabulary now have a responsibility to record all reported crime regardless of whether there is any evidence that the crime has taken place.

Members have been advised that overall crime in Huntingdonshire has reduced however has been an increase in the reporting of particular crimes. One trend that has been identified is the increase in violent crime, including crime not causing injury, which has been linked with domestic abuse crime.

The Panel has been acquainted with Cambridgeshire Constabulary's five priority areas which are:

- Dwelling Crime;
- Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Serious Sexual Offences; and
- Emergency Response.

In response to questions submitted by Members regarding grooming and the Police response time, Chief Inspector Hunt informed the Panel that the Constabulary has carried out training and refocused their priorities in order to tackle grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Following a question regarding drugs, the Panel has been informed that there is a problem with drug suppliers from the cities, in particular London, coming to the District and using the homes of vulnerable drug users. Chief Inspector Hunt has informed Members that this is an issue which the Constabulary are working to resolve.

The Panel has noted that despite the complexities of telephone and internet fraud, action can be taken at local level to assist in the prevention of fraud. Awareness raising and education is key to ensure that people do not fall victim to fraud.

Concern was raised in connection with the lack of Police response to incidents in St Ives as a result of the night time economy. In particular advice has been given to licence holders that the Police do not want incidents to be reported as it is unlikely that there would be a response. Chief Inspector Hunt has stated that the advice given has been incorrect and it is important that all incidents are reported.

In response to a question regarding dispersal orders and individuals carrying weapons in a public place, Members have been informed that dispersal orders would not be used for such incidents and that stop and searches should be used instead.

## **2. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT FUNDING 2016/17 TO 2019/20**

The Panel has received a report on the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding 2016/17 to 2019/20. Members have been informed that the Council's three year funding arrangement with the voluntary sector is ending on 31st March 2016 and the report sought the views of Members to inform a future funding arrangement.

The Panel has been presented with five options for future voluntary sector funding budgets, which are:

- Option 1 – make no change to the level of funding, currently at around £236k, allocated by the Council to the voluntary sector;
- Option 2 – reduce the budget over the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), such that in year 4 the reduction of 38% is achieved;
- Option 3 – reduce the budget in year 1 but then provide an equal annual payment equivalent to the same total amount of spend as Option 2;
- Option 4 – reduce the budget to the value of the MTFS in year 4 with immediate effect; or
- Option 5 – stop funding the Voluntary Sector with immediate effect.

Members have noted that for the three years up 2015/16 the Council have provided grants to the following voluntary sector organisations:

- Rural Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Disability Information Services Huntingdonshire;
- Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations;
- Care Network;
- Huntingdon Volunteer Centres; and
- Huntingdon Shopmobility.

The Panel has been advised of three options with regards to the allocation of funding for the voluntary sector.

- Option A is the continued funding to all the organisations that the Council funds;
- Option B seeks to reduce the number of organisations funding directly by the Council and engage with umbrella organisations that through their funding supports others; or
- Option C is to develop a joint commissioning approach for voluntary sector services at a District level with Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Panel has expressed their concern with the timing of the options report as it has not given Members the requisite time to fully consider the options available. Members have further highlighted concerns that the report does not detail the effects a reduction of funding would have upon organisations or the advantages the work of the organisations have upon the District.

In addition the Panel has outlined their concerns that the Voluntary Sector will only be given one month's notice before a potential reduction in funding following consideration of the budget in February 2016.

Whilst the Panel has not supported the recommendations of the report they have supported the continued funding of voluntary sector organisations at the current level for 2016/17 whilst a Working Group investigates future funding options.

### **3. ANNUAL EQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT 2015**

The Annual Equality Progress Report 2015 has been presented to the Panel. Members have been informed that the Council are looking to introduce a more proportionate and effective response to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Panel has been advised that it would be up to individual managers to ensure equality compliance. This is seen as a more efficient use of time and resource compared to the model of monitoring equality compliance from a central location.

In response to a question regarding equality, the Panel has been informed that the Equality Duty consists of a general duty and several specific duties, which are intended to help public bodies meet the general duty. The general duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

**4. RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING WORKING GROUP**

The Panel has received a response from the Cabinet to findings and recommendations of the Affordable Housing Working Group. Members have been informed that the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Working Group have been fully considered and endorsed by the Cabinet. In addition the Cabinet has agreed that the Council should take legal advice to explore the options to protect local houses for local people on rural development schemes.

**5. HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AND COLLABORATION WITH PETERBOROUGH**

The Panel has received a presentation from Lance McCarthy, Chief Executive Officer of Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust on the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Improvement Plan update and collaboration with Peterborough.

The Panel has been informed that the hospital had been inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in October 2015. The Hospital's rating has been raised from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires Improvement', but remains in special measures as the new governance structures have not had sufficient time to bed in. The CQC will be inspecting the hospital again on 10th - 12th May 2016. During the inspection the CQC has stated they have seen material improvements since their last inspection.

Members have noted that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have one of the most financially challenged health economies in England. In order to face the challenge, the System Transformation Programme led by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group has been set up. The System Transformation Programme will be scrutinised by the regulator in June 2016.

The Panel has been informed of Hinchingsbrooke's collaboration work with Peterborough and Stamford Hospital Foundation Trust and the timetables for the completion of work. The two hospitals have agreed to work collaboratively to reduce duplication and the cost of back office functions and support the future sustainability of services. In addition the regulator has asked the hospitals to review the potential organisational form.

Following a question regarding the collaboration with Peterborough, Mr McCarthy has informed Members that the collaboration could involve the migration of staff at times of necessity in order to increase resilience and maintain service levels. In addition back office functions will be rationalised.

Members have expressed concern that reducing back office functions could have an impact upon patients and have been informed that with every single cost improvement scheme there is an assessment which analyses the risks. Mr McCarthy has advised the Panel of the findings of a recent assessment of back office functions which show that

Hinchingbrooke Hospital's administration costs are 40% higher than expected and that the total cost of back office functions could be reduced by 15-20%.

The Chairman has emphasised the importance of retaining a sustainable hospital at Hinchingbrooke to serve residents of the District. Mr McCarthy has outlined the four options for collaboration which are: do nothing; remain independent but collaborate with back office functions; maximise collaboration but remain independent; or merger. However before a merger could commence, both hospital boards would have to agree before the idea goes to the regulator.

Members have queried whether there would be a public consultation for the possible merger, as it was noted that technically it would be an acquisition of Hinchingbrooke, as Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals are a Trust and Hinchingbrooke is not; therefore not requiring a public consultation.

In response Mr McCarthy has explained that all options are still being considered and no decisions have been made. He stated that in the event of an acquisition there would be public engagement but not a formal public consultation. The Panel has been reassured that Hinchingbrooke would not be acquired without justifying the decision to the public.

Following a concern from Members regarding the special measures status of Hinchingbrooke Hospital, Mr McCarthy has stated that the management have been disappointed that the Hospital remains in special measures. The CQC are returning in May 2016 and the management are confident that the hospital will improve upon their status.

## **6. ONE LEISURE STRATEGIC PLAN SCOPING REPORT**

The Panel has received the One Leisure Strategic Plan scoping report. Members have been reminded of the background to the Strategic Plan at One Leisure. The Panel has been advised that the service aims to produce a commercial return by 2019/20.

Following a question regarding the innovation of One Leisure, Members have been advised that One Leisure does not have unlimited resources and therefore are unable to offer everything to everyone. Instead the service will focus upon particular markets for sustainability and growth. The Panel has been informed that currently One Leisure hold a 60-70% market share of the leisure market within Huntingdonshire.

In response to a question on running fitness classes within old peoples' homes and schools, Members have been informed that classes have already taken place and that the service is looking at expanding this provision. With regards to schools, there has been a decline in the number of pupils taking part in physical activity however the service is working with the schools to get pupils more involved.

Following queries with regard to achieving a commercial return and the £2m loss, the Panel has been informed that the £2m loss is historical and the service is forecast to return a surplus of £350k in this financial year. Members have been advised that the meaning of commercial return is that the service would have surplus funds to reinvest. It does not mean that admission prices will rise to unacceptable levels.

The Panel has requested that their thanks be recorded to Councillor R B Howe and the management of One Leisure for their hard work with improving the service.

## **7. SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE 2016-2021 SCOPING REPORT**

The Panel has received the Sports Facilities Strategy For Huntingdonshire 2016-2021 scoping report. Members have been advised that the Strategy has an inventory of all the sports and leisure facilities within the District and not just Council owned facilities.

The Panel has been informed that following the expiry of the previous Strategy in 2014, the new Strategy has been updated and refreshed. The Strategy will assist with Officer's requests for contributions from developers when they submit planning applications as the Strategy would list the facility deficiency within the District.

The Panel has suggested that there may be higher rates of participation with the swimming pools if the pools were warmer. The Panel has been advised that the problem with the suggestion was that One Leisure swimming pools cater for both competitive and recreational swimmers who prefer different temperatures to each other therefore the decision was taken to retain the temperature at 29°C.

Following a question with regard to public rights of way and why they have not been included within the Strategy, Members have been informed that the Strategy has covered built sports facilities however public rights of way would be considered for future inclusion.

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### **Other Matters of Interest**

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

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

## **9. WORKPLAN STUDIES**

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

**10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (COMMUNITIES AND CUSTOMERS) – PROGRESS**

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings as well as having received the opportunity to discuss issues arising from the Decision Digest. Members have been informed that the Review of Elderly Care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Working Group would re-start in the near future.

The Panel has been informed that the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire County Council Budget Scrutiny Working Group has signed off a note on the findings of the Group. There has been a suggestion that time will be set aside at the beginning of the Municipal Year 2016/17 to scrutinise next year's County Council's budget. It has been confirmed that the Notes will be circulated to the Members of the Working Group.

S J Criswell  
Chairman