

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 9th January 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor T D Alban – Chairman.
Councillors P L E Bucknell, S J Criswell,
J W Davies, Mrs A Donaldson,
Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere and L R Swain.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Chapman, D A Giles, Mrs J Tavener and D Watt.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs A Dickinson.

58. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(At 7.00pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor S J Criswell entered the meeting.)

59. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor T D Alban declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, in relation to Minute Number 61, as an employee of a company that engages in commercial activities with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group.

Councillor S Criswell declared a non-statutory disclosable interest, in relation to Minute Number 61, in respect to his role as a Cambridgeshire County Councillor.

60. 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 has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st January 2018 to 30th April 2018.

61. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY FUNDING

Mr Oliver Hayward of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Ms Cath Mitchell of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were in attendance to answer the Panel's questions on their respective organisations funding arrangements for the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency (CHIA).

Mr Hayward informed Members that CCC have funding agreements with the CHIA however there will be a reduction from 2018/19. Mr Hayward could not provide the cost or percentage of the reduction however he did state that a written response would be provided.

Ms Mitchell stated that the CCG had reduced CHIA funding by 60% and this equated to £36,400. The CCG has made the decision that, as of 2018/19, it is unable to fund the CHIA and that the Disabled Facility Grant Group and the District Councils were made aware of the decision in 2015/16. The CCG had reviewed the areas that it funds and the decision to stop funding for CHIA is because the CCG has no statutory obligation to fund the CHIA.

When asked was the impact upon CHIA and residents considered by the CCC and CCG before reducing funding, Members were informed that both the CCC and CCG had reviewed the core funding and, in the case of CCC, is reviewing opportunities to fund intervention at an earlier stage than CHIA would intervene.

A Member expressed their concern at the impact the decision to remove funding could have upon the mainstream health service. In addition, they questioned why the CCC and CCG decided to reduce funding at a time when the population of the area is growing and therefore there would be more demand on CHIA services. Mr Hayward stated that the CCC is using the funding, which would have gone to the CHIA, to fund two new posts which aim to source suitable homes. It was explained that it could be more beneficial that a suitable home is found as opposed to making an adaptation. In response, a Member replied that they are concerned that there are not enough suitable properties to realise CCC's plans.

The Panel was reminded that, in 2017, CCC voted for a 2% increase in Council Tax which was ring fenced for social care. Mr Hayward informed Members that the funding is still ring fenced for social care however CCC's central government funding for social care was reduced by a greater amount. As such, CCC has concentrated funding on reablement and domiciliary care.

In response to the question, does the CCC and CCG believe the CHIA remains viable after they have reduced their funding, the Panel was informed that both organisations believe it does remain viable so long as the CHIA increases its fees.

Ms Mitchell stated that the CCG is willing to discuss a collective funding arrangement as part of the Better Care Fund. At December's meeting of the Panel, Members had heard how the CHIA were making efficiency savings but will urge Officers to discuss collective funding arrangements with the Better Care Fund Partners.

Following the question, has the CCC and CCG looked forward to funding the CHIA beyond 2020/21, the Panel was informed that the CCG took the decision that it couldn't fund the CHIA from 2018/19 and that there is no provision to fund beyond then. Mr Hayward confirmed that the CCC agreement is for current financial year however, there is no agreement in place for funding beyond 2018/19.

After questioning Mr Hayward and Ms Mitchell, the Panel came to

following conclusions: Members recognise the offer from the CCG to work together with the Better Care Fund Partners and the willingness of Mr Hayward to provide written answers to questions he had little knowledge of. The Panel agreed to forward further questions onto Mr Hayward.

Members recommend that the Panel receives a presentation on adult social care in the next Municipal Year. The decision to receive the presentation will lie with the Members of Panel after Annual Council in May 2018.

62. CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU

Due to the personal circumstances of Rural Cambs Citizens Advice Bureau Chief Executive Officer, Dr Batul Dungarwalla, this item has been deferred to the Panel meeting on 6th February 2018.

63. CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

With the aid of a report by the Head of Community (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Corporate Enforcement Policy was presented to the Panel.

Members were given a brief introduction to the report and were informed that the Policy will outline a number of regulations that individuals and business are required to adhere to and states the sanctions if they are breached.

Following the introduction of the report, the Panel stated that they welcomed the approach of working across services. A Member added that they would like the Policy to specifically mention fly posting, unauthorised A Boards and Estate Agent signs. In response, Members were informed that the offences mentioned could be included as part of environment crime, although the Council has to balance what offences are a priority.

In response to a question regarding the handling of a fly tipping report by the Call Centre, the Panel was informed that the report would be forwarded to two departments, one to enforce and the other to clear up. The matrix within the Policy defines which department is responsible to respond.

Following a question on how the Council would enforce the Policy, the Panel was informed that ensuring that it is enforced consistently is important. The Policy has to be concise and understandable to residents and businesses. It also needs to be an effective deterrent. Members were informed that public reporting is crucial to the success of the Policy and publicising the Council's successful enforcement is important for public confidence in the Policy and the Council.

In response to a question about collaboration with other local authorities, in regards to persistence offenders, the Panel was informed that where possible the Council does share information with other local authorities however it is not a systemic as it could be.

Following a question regarding abandoned vehicles it was clarified that a report of an abandoned vehicle would be responded to within

three days but it wouldn't necessarily be removed.

The Panel commended the Policy and stated that the Policy is what is expected but urged that the Policy specifically states the offences of fly posting, unauthorised A Boards and Estate Agent signs.

64. HUNTINGDONSHIRE LIVING WELL AREA PARTNERSHIP

With the aid of a report by the Head of Leisure and Health (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Huntingdonshire Living Well Area Partnership was presented to the Panel.

The Panel was informed that the work of Huntingdonshire Health and Well-being Partnership and the Huntingdonshire and Fenland Area Executive Partnership are similar and as a result of a desire not to duplicate work, a Task and Finish Group was set up to review the existing arrangements. As a result, of the work carried out, the Group decided that both should merge into the Huntingdonshire Living Well Area Partnership, which will cover the remits of both previous Partnerships.

In response to a question, in regards to the exercise referral scheme, Members were informed that the scheme is funded through Public Health funding. Public Health has subsequently withdrawn the funding and the Council will now fund the scheme but will charge fees.

Following a question as to whether the move is positive, the Panel was informed that from a Council perspective it is the right move to make. There will be representatives from all the relevant organisations on the Partnership.

Members were informed that the Council's representative will be the Head of Leisure and Health and the Chairmanship would be held by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group. Also, the Officer representatives meet together and understand the health environment. In addition the Council have agreed to provide administrative support to the Partnership.

65. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel reviewed all Panels' work programmes since the last meeting.

Members were updated on the amendments to the work programme: the Twelve Month Review of Bearscroft Farm Local Lettings Plan was incorrectly allocated to the Panel's work programme and has therefore been moved to the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Customers); in addition the Community Resilience Plan will not be presented to the February meeting of the Panel.