

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

21 MAY 2012 - 2.30PM



PRESENT: Councillor Jolley (Chairman), Councillor Chambers (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Booth, Mrs Bucknor, Cornwell, Hodgson, Miscandlon, Scrimshaw, Stebbing and Sutton.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Peachey

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Butcher (until 3.20pm), Clark (until 3.20pm) and Melton (from 3.10pm until 3.20pm)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jane Bailey, Rob Bridge (until 3.20pm), Anna Goodall, Carol Pilson and Mark Saunders (until 3.20pm)

OS1/12 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Councillor Jolley welcomed Councillor Sutton and Councillor Hodgson to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The minutes of the meeting of 2 April 2012 were confirmed and signed subject to the following amendments (additions underlined):

- Minute number OS40/11, bullet point 13.

The first sentence now reads: Councillor Hodgson asked if the residents in the Waterlees and Staithe area are visited and asked about what they would like to see take place at Community House.

- Minute number OS40/11, bullet point 27.

The first sentence now reads: Councillor Cornwell asked that with regards to swimming galas from outside Fenland taking place at the Manor Leisure Centre, do these events have an effect on local use.

Members also made the following comments:

1. Councillor Cornwell asked if bullet numbers can replace bullet points for ease of reference;
ACTION: JANE BAILEY
2. Councillor Booth stated that officers had previously agreed to circulate a copy of the Risk Register to the panel, but as yet members have not received this document. Rob Bridge clarified that the panel wanted the same Risk Register that had gone to the Corporate Governance Committee, and agreed that he would circulate; **ACTION: ROB BRIDGE**
3. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked who was responsible for ensuring that officers follow up on actions from Overview and Scrutiny meetings. Councillor Jolley stated that as the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, he should be making sure that those actions have happened, but officers should be taking responsibility for those actions themselves too;
4. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that reading through the minutes there are several responses that she is not happy with, and that are not acceptable responses to questions asked;
5. Councillor Booth stated that as the Older People Action Plan will be coming back to the panel in 6 months, as agreed at the last meeting, perhaps the questions will be answered in full then;
6. Councillor Sutton asked if the minutes could go out to the panel members in draft form for

comment before they are published. Councillor Jolley stated that the draft minutes are sent to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for approval before they are published;

7. Councillor Jolley requested that named actions for officers are clearly added to the minutes to ensure that all actions are carried out following meetings. Anna Goodall agreed that this will be done in future.

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

OS2/12 CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH (AWH) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Jolley asked members to agree a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to represent Fenland District Council on the AWH Scrutiny Committee and a member as a substitute.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the guidelines refer to a District Link Officer, and asked who this was. Councillor Cornwell stated that Jane Belman is the County Link Officer, and confirmed that there should also be a named District Link Officer at FDC. Anna Goodall confirmed that she is the named District Link Officer;
2. Councillor Booth stated that in future this role should be offered to all members and not just to those who are currently Overview and Scrutiny members, as although Councillor Cornwell is very experienced and knowledgeable, someone else may have better or more relevant experience in this area in the future;
3. Councillor Jolley proposed that Councillor Cornwell be the representative and that Councillor Stebbing be the substitute for the AWH Scrutiny Committee.

Members agreed that Councillor Cornwell would be the AWH Scrutiny Committee representative for Fenland District Council and that the substitute would be Councillor Stebbing.

(Councillor Sutton declared his personal interest in this item by virtue of the fact that his wife is employed by the NHS)

OS3/12 PROCUREMENT REVIEW

Councillor Clark presented the Procurement Review to the panel, providing them with the necessary context and objectives of the review and details of progress to date.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Chambers stated that with regards to the forecast capital programme being largely funded from forecast capital receipts, do officers foresee a problem with this. Rob Bridge stated that he does not foresee a problem with this as long as the situation is monitored carefully; we have land which is potential capital to come back to the Council at the right time. The Capital Programme comes to Cabinet on a regular basis, giving members the opportunity to reshape that programme;
2. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to the Drainage Board Levies, she understands that there are no income benefits to the council. Rob Bridge stated that we are levied by the drainage boards to pay £1.2 million. Rob Bridge reminded members that Middle Level Drainage Boards are attending an Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting later in the year;

3. Councillor Cornwell stated that the spend analysis includes the amount spent on procurement and asked if there is room for more opportunities for contracts and expenditure locally. Rob Bridge stated that the plan is that we will reduce the 21% expenditure that relates to 'specialist' contracts and increase the 5% expenditure that relates to opportunities for the local economy. Due to changes in the way that external auditors for the council are appointed, we will have the opportunity to appoint locally in the future. We constantly review to make sure that we deliver value for money;
4. Councillor Booth stated that 5% is already being spent with local businesses, and asked do we have a target that we want to reach for expenditure locally. Councillor Clark stated that we have no targets set at the moment; it is the Leaders intention to spend as much locally to improve the local economy. Councillor Jolley stated that we are trying to help the local businesses, and encourage growth in the area; targets will be put in place in the future. Rob Bridge stated that it would be difficult to put targets on this, it might be that due to the nature of requirements all business contracts could be awarded locally one year and none the next. He explained that FDC are now part of the Source Cambridgeshire portal, this allows us to see joint procurement opportunities;
5. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked when Fenland will be up and running on Source Cambridgeshire. Rob Bridge confirmed that Fenland are already part of Source Cambridgeshire and are shown as an affiliated member at the bottom of the website;
6. Councillor Miscandlon stated that he was concerned that smaller local companies were coming up against too many rules and regulations making it difficult for them to tender for contracts with the council, and asked if these rules and regulations have been relaxed. Councillor Clark stated that there is nothing in place at the moment to make it easier for local companies to win contracts, but this is something that will be looked at as part of the review;
7. Councillor Stebbing stated that as localised procurement becomes more profitable we would hope that this would encourage small companies to expand or move to Fenland. Councillor Clark agreed and stated that the more that we can offer locally and the more that we are seen to be doing this then it hoped that smaller businesses in the area have the opportunity to expand or that branches move to Fenland. Rob Bridge stated that the localisation of business rates means that economic growth in the area will drive the amount of funding that the council has, and create job opportunities for local people reducing the burden on the benefits system;
8. Councillor Booth stated that we need to look carefully at the complex rules that are in place, and take everything into account when looking to buy or appoint locally. Rob Bridge agreed and stated that we are doing our best to take everything into consideration, but we need to ensure that we are getting value for money. We will look at how we assess tenders in the future and this will include merits for local people but value for money is key;
9. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the cost to the council for stationery must be very high, and asked what the cost of paper is. Rob agreed that the cost for stationery is high and agreed to forward the costs of paper. He stated that the Leader is participating in a paper free pilot using an electronic tablet and that the council are improving the office technology to reduce printing costs; **ACTION: ROB BRIDGE**
10. Councillor Cornwell stated that one of the issues that we have to take into account is how contracts are packaged, as we may not be able to source a product locally as it may just not be available, but we can look at the distribution of that product once we have purchased it, and local people could be available to take on that role;
11. Councillor Booth asked how we are ensuring that orders placed will be dealt with in the Fenland area. Rob Bridge stated that some organisations have branches all over the country. Often the business address is the address that pays the business rates, and that may be out of the area, but where possible we look very closely to see where companies may employ people in the Fenland area; Where we have an ongoing contract that is difficult to control, but in the future we will be more aware of this;

12. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if we are going to promote this commitment to localised expenditure. Rob Bridge confirmed that following a presentation at Council, we will publish a press release.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Procurement Review Report and the progress to date.

Councillor Jolley thanked Councillor Clark, Rob Bridge and Mark Saunders for their attendance at the meeting today.

OS4/12 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2012/13 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. The meeting scheduled to take place on 11 March 2013 has a very full agenda, members suggested that the Progress of Corporate Priority - Streets Ahead Item may need to be broken up; **ACTION: ANNA GOODALL TO LOOK INTO THIS**
2. Members had previously looked to having the Leisure fees and Charges item earlier and had also asked that this included other fees and charges. Carol Pilson confirmed that Rob Bridge will be presenting the panel with a wider range of fees and charges to that meeting;
3. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if the Future Work Programme could be produced in a portrait format on the page; **ACTION: JANE BAILEY**

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2012/13 subject to the following:

- **Domestic Violence Review Final Report - to be added to the August meeting;**
- **Fenland District Council Representatives on Outside Bodies - to look at a way that members can regularly receive feedback on outside bodies, including Town and Rural representatives from Cabinet - to be added to the August meeting;**
- **Older People Action Plan - to be added after October.**

OS5/12 MARCH SANITATION POINT

Councillor Jolley stated that consideration of the March Sanitation Point should have taken place at the Fenland Tourism Board (FTB) and then agreed by Cabinet. This was not an item for discussion and decision making at Cabinet. The outcome of the item was correct, and for that reason did not warrant a call-in, but this subject was not focused on in the correct way. Therefore Councillor Jolley proposed that a recommendation goes to Cabinet as follows:

That any future matters concerning this issue are considered by the Tourism Committee who will have responsibility for making any recommendations to Cabinet. Any income associated with this venture should also be affiliated to the Tourism budget.

ACTION: ANNA GOODALL TO CIRCULATE COPY OF RECOMMENDATION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEMBERS

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Cornwell confirmed that neither officers nor members had discussed this decision with the FTB. He agreed that it does not warrant a call-in as the outcome is achieving what we want to happen, but the FTB may have had a different view on one or two things when making the decision. He stated that he fully supports the recommendation as this cannot

- happen again, it goes against the credibility of the board;
- Councillor Sutton agreed, stating that he fully supports the recommendation, and asked was the decision made by Cabinet due to the urgency of the item. Councillor Jolley stated that there was no reason to fast track this decision, it has not been focused in the right way, but the recommendation from this panel will ensure that this does not happen again;
 - Councillor Miscandlon stated that Fenland are going to charge £10 for the use of this facility, and asked if that charge was high enough. Councillor Cornwell stated that what ever the charge is, the equipment has to be simple to operate and that includes the charging system, 10 x £1 coins are quite easy to get hold of. He stated that boats have two types of facilities on board, built in or chemical, the cost for disposal if they were caravans would be included in the pitch fees, so £10 is really the top end charge that they are able to make for this facility.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed to recommend to Cabinet that any future matters concerning this issue are considered by the Tourism Committee who will have responsibility for making any recommendations to Cabinet. Any income associated with this venture should also be affiliated to the Tourism budget.

3.40pm

Chairman