

Council 30 September 2013

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report by Cllr Ian Houlder Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This report covers the meetings of the Committee held on 17 July 2013 and 4 September 2013

17 July 2013

1. Quarter 1 Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications

- 1.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Order 2010 requires that Members should scrutinise the authority's use of its surveillance powers on a quarterly basis. In June 2010 it was agreed that this requirement should be fulfilled by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Monitoring Officer advised that in Quarter 1 no such surveillance had been authorised.

2. Decisions Plan: July 2013 to May 2014

- 2.1 Members considered the latest Decisions Plan, covering the period July 2013 to May 2014 and sought clarification on two items in the Plan, these being the future Seasonal Park and Ride for Bury St Edmunds and the Street Vending Policy and the Committee's recommendations from its A-Board review. Members were advised that the Seasonal Park and Ride had not been presented to Cabinet in July but had been progressed under the Chief Executive's urgency powers due to the short timeframe to implement the scheme in time for the Christmas Fair (as reported elsewhere on this Council agenda).
- 2.2 The Committee discussed the use of the urgency powers, specifically the safeguards in place to prevent the powers from being over used for expediency reasons and suggested that when the urgency powers were used, more detail should be provided to Councillors at the time of the decision and in the report presented to Cabinet or full Council.

- 2.3 Officers agreed to provide more detail in relation to the Seasonal Park and Ride for Bury St Edmunds when it was reported to this meeting of full Council (Report E127 refers), and the urgency powers would be looked at as part of the new review of the Constitution. Members were also advised that the A-Boards Policy was part of the Street Vending Policy which was currently out to consultation.

3. Work Programme Update and Proposals for Joint Scrutiny

- 3.1 The Committee now has a rolling work programme, whereby suggestions for scrutiny reviews are brought to each meeting, and if accepted, are timetabled to report to a future meeting. The work programme also leaves space for Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action. Members reviewed the current position of the work programme, and noted the items which were expected at the next meetings of the Committee.
- 3.2 The Committee reviewed the Task and Finish Group which was currently running and noted that the Joint Task and Finish Group to review new housing development sites across West Suffolk would commence its review shortly.
- 3.3 Members also discussed the general principle for carrying out joint scrutiny and resolved that wherever the subject matter was common and relevant to both districts, the Committee makes and considers invitations from Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to carry out joint scrutiny reviews for West Suffolk.
- 3.4 The Committee also considered a suggestion for scrutiny concerning "the feasibility of a rail link between Haverhill and Cambridge. A lengthy debate on the issue was held and taking into account the information provided by Councillor Cox and officers the Committee resolved to invite representatives of external organisations to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss future proposals around regional transport in West Suffolk, specifically links between Cambridge and Haverhill.

4 September 2013

1. Car Park Tariffs 2014/2015

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report which referred to Cabinet Report D190 (21 September 2012, Section 5(b)) which recommended the Committee receives a report each September outlining any recommendations from officers for changes to car park tariffs, including supportive evidence and justification for changes. The resulting recommendations would be considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee as part of the budget setting process on 26 September 2013.
- 1.2 Members were informed of the proposed recommendations and the justifications for changing the car park tariffs for 2014/2015, which was in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review carried out in 2012.

- 1.3 The Committee examined the proposed recommendations in detail. In particular detailed discussions were held on:
- (1) the Working Group established to look at the feasibility of various parking methods, including 'Pay on Exit';
 - (2) The 'Free from 3' parking initiative - Members representing Haverhill felt the 'Free from 3' was not yet making a difference in increasing footfall on Fridays and suggested a trial free period be held on Saturdays, but not from 3pm when market traders were packing up. Officers took on board comments raised and agreed to provide a written response to the request for some form of free parking on Saturdays and Christmas Eve; and
 - (3) the proposed late night shopping extension in the run-up to Christmas should make reference to Bury St Edmunds.
- 1.4 The Committee generally endorsed the proposed recommendations, subject to the above comments regarding Haverhill's 'Free from 3' parking and the late night shopping extension applying to Bury St Edmunds.

2. Decisions Plan: September 2013 to May 2014

- 2.1 Members considered the latest Decision Plan, covering the period September 2013 to May 2014. The Director informed Members that Cabinet on 10 September 2013 would be considering new approaches in managing unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments in the Borough through the use of pre-emptive injunctions. Members were broadly supportive of the principle of the proposal. The Committee did not request any further information or involvement in any of the current planned decisions.

3. Work Programme Update

- 3.1 The Committee now has a rolling work programme, whereby suggestions for scrutiny reviews are brought to each meeting, and if accepted, are timetabled to report to a future meeting. The work programme also leaves space for Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action.
- 3.2 The Committee considered as part of its policy development role two suggestions from officers to include within its work programme for 23 October 2013, a report on the 'Draft West Suffolk Consultation Statement and Guidance', which sets out how the Council would consult with people living and working in West Suffolk and for 4 December 2013, the 'Draft West Suffolk Joint Housing Strategy'.
- 3.3 Members were also advised the Council was currently being consulted on a 'Draft Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy'. The Draft Strategy would complement the Committee's planned piece of work on 4 December 2013, through informed external advice in discussing the general issue of travel links within the Cambridge sub-region, in particular between Haverhill and Cambridge,

- 3.4 Members reviewed the current position of the work programme, and noted the items which were expected at the next meetings of the Committee and resolved to include within its work programme on 23 October 2013 the report on the Draft West Suffolk Consultation Statement and Guidance and the Draft West Suffolk Joint Housing Strategy on 4 December 2013.

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