

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 14 April 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **14 April 2004** when there were present:

Cllr T Livings (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs T J Capon (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr C J Lumley
Cllr P K Savill
Cllr D G Stansby

Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr P F A Webster

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr M G B Starke

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
S Neville	Residential Service Unit Manager
C Thomas	Emergency Planning & Health & Safety Manager
C Nicholson	Solicitor
S Garland	Community Safety Officer
M Martin	Committee Administrator

ALSO ATTENDING

J Bruce Chairman, Southend NHS Trust

174 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

175 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs M A Starke declared a personal interest in item 7 on the agenda by virtue of being a member of the Castle Point and Rochford Housing Partnership Board.

176 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions and in response to Member questions the following was noted:-

Housing Best Value Sub-Committee (Minute 471/03)

Officers advised that the revised guidance and assessment criteria from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister were still awaited. Members agreed that if

this had not been received by the end of June, officers should proceed with drawing up the specification for the housing needs study so that it could be brought to this Committee prior to the Summer recess. (HHHCC)

Review of Policies and Services for Young People within the District (Minute 49/04)

Officers advised that responses from schools and other local authorities in respect of their provision for young people would be brought before Members of this Committee during the next few weeks. (CD(F&ES))

Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan – Update (Minute 69/04)

Members noted that a second draft of the Business Plan was being finalised for discussion with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and would be brought to this Committee prior to the Summer recess. (HHHCC)

Review of Policies and Services for Young People within the District (Minute 103/04)

Members noted that details of the organisations had been collated and should be publicised by the end of June. It was noted that whilst the figure had originally been quoted as 200, this would reduce once account was taken of the various sub-groups. (CD(F&ES))

Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

177 SOUTHEND HOSPITAL – NHS FOUNDATION TRUST CONSULTATION

The Committee welcomed John Bruce, Chairman of the Southend NHS Trust to the meeting to update Members in respect of Southend Hospital's consultation with staff, healthcare partners and the local community prior to making a decision as to whether to apply for foundation trust status.

The following points/areas of concern were noted:-

- Foundation Trust hospitals were part of the National Health Service.
- There was a need to consult on governance arrangements and service strategies.
- Local people, patients and staff could become Members and as such would then be consultees.
- This would enable the hospital to consult a much wider audience on not only issues of patient care but also on other concerns, such as car parking.
- It was anticipated that the problems associated with car parking would be addressed by moving certain services away from the main hospital site.
- Foundation Trust status could lead to even greater bureaucracy than currently existed.

- Members of the Trust would elect representatives to form a Board of Governors, who would take strategic decisions for the Trust and the Board of Directors would be involved with operational decisions.
- It was envisaged that there would be less central control and more local involvement of the public and staff; this would in turn enable the hospital to be more responsive to local needs.
- Foundation Trust status would attract funding from central government which would lead on in time to more healthcare services being developed.
- The current target of patients in the Accident & Emergency department being seen within 4 hours was unlikely to improve dramatically.
- There would be no change in the arrangements of shared cancer care with Basildon.
- Southend Hospital would take note of the experiences of other hospitals who had recently opted for trust status, whilst recognising its own distinct position.
- The earliest date for foundation trust status to take effect would be 1 October, but it was likely to be later.
- It was envisaged that all hospitals would be foundation trusts within the next five years.
- Southend Hospital does not currently have a significant shortage of staff and still attracts good doctors/consultants.
- The planned Diagnostic & Treatment centre would need to be at least as accessible as the hospital and it would be necessary to ensure that appropriate bus services were available.

Resolved

That officers respond to the consultation from Southend Hospital NHS Trust based on the above comments, as well as individual responses to the questionnaire from Members of the Committee. (HHHCC)

178 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION STRATEGY/COMMUNITY SAFETY – IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST VALUE ACTION PLAN

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive, which updated Members on progress made in respect of the action plan for the Local Best Value Review of Community Safety agreed by this Committee on 15 April 2003. Members requested that future update reports provide more factual evidence and fewer generalisations.

In response to Member questions, the following was noted:-

- The Community Safety team had been out on “two general public sessions” – these had been to community groups.
- The Council is actively engaged in providing advice and information sessions around community safety.

- Officers were seeking direction from the Police regarding Hate Crime initiatives. Members requested that officers write to the Police in order that any response be documented.
- That “hate crime” related to crime focussed at vulnerable groups in society.
- The damage caused recently by groups of young people was regarded as criminal damage, for which the Police would take appropriate action.
- The “Too Fast, Too Furious, Too Dead” campaign was aimed particularly at young people.
- The bid for Home Office funding for the graffiti protocol had been successful.
- That one of the reasons why crime/perceived crime is not reported to the Police appeared to be due to difficulties encountered when trying to contact them by telephone.
- The Council makes use of a company based in Braintree, which is able to provide a local mediation service for victims of crime.
- A funding bid to the Home Office for £1,500 for 2004/05 to enable additional victim support to be provided had been successful.
- The domestic violence outreach advice service in the District had commenced last September, and operated once a week.
- As a result of the Anti Social Behaviour Act, the Police would be able to designate key areas where they can exercise appropriate powers to disperse groups of people. Their decision would be based on anecdotal evidence supplied by the public together with statistical evidence.
- The risk project launched on 10 March included addressing such issues as drug taking, joyriding in stolen cars and issues associated with relationships.
- All bids to the Home Office for drug and alcohol initiatives in 2004/05 had been successful.

Other updated information requested by Members would be the subject of a separate briefing to Members of the Committee.

Resolved

That officers provide a Crime and Disorder briefing to Members. (CE)

179 EMERGENCY PLANNING BEST VALUE REVIEW UPDATE – THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES BILL

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, which updated Members on Emergency Planning Best Value Review matters with specific focus on the published Civil Contingencies Bill.

Members noted that accountability would rest with the District Council in respect of meeting the risk-assessed and unexpected threats to their communities and the importance of joint working with other authorities.

Resolved

That the full implications for the District Council of the emerging legislation in respect of the proposed Civil Contingencies Bill be the subject of a further report to this Committee during the autumn cycle of meetings.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Chairman

Date