

19 NOVEMBER 2013

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Tuesday, 19 November 2013.

p Cllr Mrs P Jackman (Chairman)
p Cllr S P Davies (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

p J E Binns
p D A Britton
ap Mrs P J Lovelace
ap B D Lucas

Councillors:

p A D O'Sullivan
ap N S Penman
p D J Russell
p M S Wade

In Attendance:

Councillors:

Mrs D M Brooks (Portfolio Holder, Health & Leisure)
Mrs J Cleary (Portfolio Holder, Housing & Communities)
S Clarke
Mrs M McLean
Mrs C Ward

Tenants' Representatives:

Mr M Akerman and Mr E Phalen

Also in Attendance:

Mike Jones, Community Development Facilitator, New Forest Youth Support Service, Rob Carroll, Public Health Manager, Hampshire County Council and Chief Inspector Rowlinson, Hampshire Constabulary for Minute Nos. 25 & 26.

Officers Attending:

Mrs S Bennett, D Brown, B Byrne, G Miles, Ms A Righton and Ms M Stephens, and for part of the meeting, Mrs N Luddington.

22. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were made by members in connection with an agenda item.

24. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

25. SEXUAL HEALTH AND YOUTH SERVICE PROVISION IN THE NEW FOREST.

Mr M Jones, Community Development Facilitator, New Forest Youth Service and Mr R Carroll, Public Health Manager, Hampshire County Council were in attendance and made a presentation on sexual health and youth service provision in the New Forest.

The Panel was informed that sexual health in the New Forest was good. The New Forest had the lowest acute sexually transmitted infections (STIs) rate and had the lowest chlamydia diagnosis rate in Hampshire. The prevalence of HIV infection was also low at 0.7% per 1000 people aged 15-25 in 2010 compared to 2% in England.

Local statistics for the New Forest and Hampshire showed low teenage conception rates, with a steady decline in the number of teenage pregnancies. There had been a 19.5% reduction in the New Forest since 1998. These reductions were largely due to the strong working partnerships that had been developed throughout Hampshire and good local practices which included: - contraception services in all GP practices, outreach clinics in FE colleges and sexual health promotion practitioners.

The Panel was also informed that the primary role of Youth Support Services (HCC) was to commission services aimed to assist young people in all aspects of their lives, including support for young people leaving care, educational support, housing advice and support, sexual health and health and wellbeing. Support was provided in many settings such as local HUBs (youth clubs as was) and drop-in centres.

In response to a concern raised at a previous meeting regarding sexual health provision for young people in New Milton, the Panel was informed that a weekly sexual health clinic was held at New Milton Health Centre, on Thursdays from 5-7pm (outside of normal practice hours). The number of young people using this service had increased, so much so, that additional space was being sought at the clinic in order to see more patients. The service was widely promoted through the HUBs and HCC's 'getiton' website, schools, other drop-ins and health centres. Members expressed concern regarding whether the service was discreet enough for young people. And queried whether the access to the clinic, through the main doctor's surgery where normal patient times often over-run, might deter young people from using the clinic. Members were informed that alternative venues for the clinic would be investigated.

In response to questions members were advised that support for young parents was available at local children centres. Provision and support for young parents was also a priority for the New Forest Health and Wellbeing Board which was currently examining this issue.

A member queried whether there was sufficient evidence or data to show whether the recent changes to youth services had had any impact on young people, particularly those in danger of entering the youth justice system. Members were told that a data collection exercise was being carried out by HCC to determine levels of participation in schemes for young people but cautioned against relying on this data in measuring the impact, as the cohort of users would have changed. Nonetheless, members requested that this issue be investigated as an item for a future Panel meeting.

The Panel thanked Mr Jones and Mr Carroll for an interesting and informative presentation.

26. SUBSTANCE USAGE IN THE NEW FOREST.

The Panel received a presentation from the Partnership Intervention Manager, the Community Safety Co-ordinator and the Chief Inspector, Hampshire Constabulary on substance misuse in the New Forest.

Members were informed of the detrimental effects that different types of illegal drugs had on the body and how to spot and report illegal drug usage. Drug usage and its relation to crime were also highlighted and it was noted that year to date crime figures for the New Forest showed considerable reductions in drug related crime.

Chief Inspector Rowlinson explained that Hampshire Constabulary had implemented a Drug Enforcement Strategy which aimed to reduce the threat and incidence of drug related violence as well as reduce the demand and supply of Class A drugs.

The Panel noted that tackling drug related crime was not just a task for the Police but required a multi-agency approach to reduce the supply and demand for drugs and build relationships among partner organisations and the public to take the matter forward.

The Chairman thanked the Partnership Intervention Manager, the Community Safety Co-ordinator and the Chief Inspector for an informative presentation.

27. PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE NEW HOUSING STRATEGY (REPORT A).

The Panel considered the proposals for developing and acquiring additional affordable housing units in the District.

The Affordable Housing Project Board, after examining the most cost effective way to provide sufficient levels of affordable homes, had agreed that the Council should expand its original plan to develop homes on Council owned land and prioritise the purchase of homes from developers under Section 106 agreements. Procuring homes under this new arrangement offered the Council the most cost effective means of obtaining new affordable homes.

In relation to the types of properties developed, the Head of Housing confirmed that demand in terms of type of housing (numbers of bedrooms) and the area would be taken into account when developing properties.

The Panel supported the proposals set out in the new housing strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Panel supports the proposal for the development of affordable housing for the District.

Action: Dave Brown

28. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES.

The Portfolio Holder for Health & Leisure reported that Hampshire County Council would shortly be considering a report regarding the future of Cranleigh Paddock Dementia Unit. The Portfolio Holder was happy to announce that the report recommended the retention of the unit. She also reported the success of the re-opening of New Milton Health and Leisure Centre following its refurbishment.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Communities reported that a letter would be sent to District Council tenants advising them on the outcome of the decision regarding Cranleigh Paddock. The Portfolio Holder also reported that the Affordable Housing Project Board would shortly be recommending to the Cabinet (and then the Council) that the New Milton Estate New Build project be approved.

29. WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT B).

The Panel considered their future work programme as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel's work programme set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes be agreed.

CHAIRMAN

Attachment: Minute 29 – Appendix 1

Work Programme 2013/14

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	TIMING/UPDATE ON PROGRESS
Housing			
Changes to the benefits system/spare room subsidy and universal credit	To examine how the changes to the benefits system/spare room subsidy has impacted on low income families and housing tenants. Same for universal credit.	Possible joint meeting with the Corporate Overview Panel. Initial officer report to Panel then detailed report in 18 months examining universal credit/Task & Finish Group	January 2014 (initial investigation) September 2014 (to examine universal credit)
Empty Homes	To review the number of empty homes within the District and the progress of Housing Officers in bringing them back into use	Report	June 2014
Tenancy and Allocation Policies	Consider the impact of the policies	Report to Panel	January 2015
Crime and Disorder			
Reoffending Rates in the District	To examine strategies to reduce reoffending rates in the District	Report	March 2014
Children and Young People			
Child poverty and the provision for children and young people	To examine child poverty and deprivation in the New Forest and the services available for young people in the District	Report with discussions with specialists	January 2014
Leisure			
Review of Health & Leisure Centres	Examine how well the centres are contributing to the wellbeing of the District	Report with discussion with Healthy Living Coordinator/external agencies	January 2014

CURRENT TASK & FINISH GROUPS

Rough Sleeping