

17 JUNE 2014

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, 17 June 2014.

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

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

p Mrs M McLean
p A D O'Sullivan
p N S Penman
p D J Russell

In Attendance:

Councillors:

Mrs D M Brooks (Portfolio Holder, Health & Leisure)
Mrs J Cleary (Portfolio Holder, Housing & Communities)
G C Beck

Officers Attending:

G Miles, Ms M Stephens and for part of the meeting Ms A Righton.

3. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 March and 19 May 2014 be signed by the Chairman as correct records.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

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

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP – STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT (REPORT A).

The Panel considered the Safer New Forest's Strategic Assessment for 2014/15.

Safer New Forest was the statutory Community Safety Partnership for the New Forest District. The Partnership consisted of a number of key agencies, including New Forest District Council and was concerned with tackling and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in the New Forest.

Members considered the overall performance improvements from the previous year's strategic assessment and the three-year rolling programme which would be finalised by the Partnership for adoption in September.

Members were pleased to note that there had been a reduction in all types of crime, with the exception of burglary. However the operational Joint Action Group would target resources, where necessary to reduce burglary incidents.

The Panel commented that the low crime rate in the New Forest was evidence of the hard work of the local police force, the Council's community safety team and the success of Safer New Forest Partnership in targeting crime.

The Panel congratulated the Head of Service, Portfolio Holder and the Council's Community Safety team for all their hard work and efforts in seeking to reduce crime levels within the District. They supported the document and its adoption.

RESOLVED:

That members' views as set out above be passed to the Safer New Forest and that the Strategic Assessment for 2014-15 be recommended for adoption.

Action: Annie Righton

7. UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL.

The Panel received an update from Cllr Beck, the Council's representative on the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel, on the work of the Crime Panel and the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner during the past year. This included: -

- Appointing a new Chief Constable and Deputy Commissioner
- Scrutinising budgets
- Scrutinising the Police Plan
- Setting the work programme for the Panel's scrutiny work

Cllr Beck informed the Panel that as part of national and local policing budget cuts it was likely that cuts would be made to the number of local police sergeants in the New Forest. Members expressed concern regarding cuts to front line policing and how this would impact on crime levels within the New Forest. Cllr Beck would highlight these concerns to the Police & Crime Commissioner.

The Panel noted the information presented and thanked Cllr Beck for his report.

8. EMPTY HOMES (REPORT B).

The Panel considered local and national policy issues relating to empty homes and the Council's work on tackling empty properties.

Bringing empty properties back into use could contribute to housing supply in the New Forest. It would also reduce anti-social behaviour, graffiti and vandalism, associated with long-term empty properties. As such it was a national and local priority to reduce the numbers of empty homes.

In 2013 the Council's Council Tax department undertook a canvass to ascertain the number of empty properties in the District. The results showed there to be a small number (109) of empty properties in the New Forest. Of these, only 14 appeared to be empty with no known reasons.

The Council had undertaken various initiatives to reduce the number of empty homes within the District such as increasing Council Tax for second homes and long-term empty properties.

Members were pleased to note that the number of empty properties within the District was low. The Panel agreed to review this position in a couple of years' time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Council's approach to tackling empty homes be supported.

Action: Greg Spawton

9. WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT C).

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.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES

The Portfolio Holder for Health & Leisure reported that the Health Development Policy Manager had taken maternity leave and it was hoped that her replacement would start shortly. Details of the work undertaken by the Health Development Manager would be circulated to members via email.

The Health and Leisure Centres were ahead of their budget targets and there had been good take up of the three month gym subscriptions.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Communities reported the following: -

- The Operational Joint Action Group, as the summer months approached, anticipated a slight rise in anti-social behaviour.
- Since the last Panel meeting, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act had received Royal Assent. The commencement date for the various sections within the Act varied; however the requirement to introduce a Community Trigger was commenced in May 2014, with the Home Office anticipating national compliance by Autumn 2014. Officers were currently working with the Police and other statutory agencies to propose uniform standards for adoption across the whole of Hampshire Constabulary's policing area.
- The Council was currently reviewing the way in which CCTV pictures were transmitted to the control room prior to a potential EU tender process. A launch of the full business plan for Community Alarms was expected to take place in the autumn once staffing and work to improve the record management and information systems for the in-house service was complete.
- Work on the Domestic Homicide Review was progressing well and most agencies had now completed their internal reviews.
- Work on the Housing development/purchase programme was progressing, with North Milton Estate developing well and work on Testwood Crescent starting soon. The Council was currently looking into dealing with two long term empty properties in New Milton.

CHAIRMAN

Attachment: Minute – Appendix 1

Work Programme 2014/2015

| ITEM | OBJECTIVE | METHOD | TIMING/UPDATE ON PROGRESS |
|--|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Housing | | | |
| Welfare Reform Impacts | To examine the impacts of welfare reform on tenants and residents | Report to Panel | November 2014 |
| Tenancy and Allocation Policies | Consider the impact of the policies | Report to Panel | January 2015 |
| Introductory Tenancy Implementation | Consider the impact of the Introductory Tenancy implementation | Report to Panel | January 2015 |
| Affordable Housing and Housing Programme Update | To monitor the progress of the housing purchase and development programme | Report to Panel | March 2015 |
| Crime and Disorder | | | |
| Troubled Families | To note the current position in the New Forest | Report to Panel | September 2014 |
| Killed & Serious Injured Task & Finish Group | To receive a final report on the work of the Group | Report to Panel | September 2014 |
| Appletree Careline | To review the progress of the new service | Report/presentation to Panel | September 2014 |
| Integration of the Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Trust | To monitor the impact of the integration of these services | Report to Panel | November 2014 |
| Anti-Social Behaviour and Victims/Perpetrators of Crime | To review progress in line with legislative changes | Report to Panel | Winter 2014 |
| Arson Crime in the New Forest | To examine the levels of arson crime in the New Forest and measures to control this. | Report/Presentation to Panel | March 2015 |
| Domestic Homicide | To receive a report on the domestic homicide panel | Report/Presentation to Panel | Winter 2015 |

| Children and Young People | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|---|
| Child Poverty in the New Forest | Terms of Reference for a Task & Finish Group (clearly defining what child poverty is) Task & Finish Group | Report to Panel | September 2014 for terms of reference then summer 2015 for final T&F group report |
| Health | | | |
| Work of Health & Wellbeing Board – Dementia | To gain a better understanding of the current work of the Health & Wellbeing Board & future aspirations | Report/presentation to Panel | Spring 2015 |
| Leisure | | | |
| Sedentary lifestyles and how the council can engage residents into healthier lifestyles/exercise | Presentation by Sports & Play Development Officer | Report to Panel | Summer 2015 |

MEETING DATES:

16 September 2014
18 November 2014
20 January 2015
17 March 2015