

20 JANUARY 2015

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, 20 January 2015.

ap Cllr Mrs P Jackman (Chairman)
p Cllr S P Davies (Vice-Chairman) (in the Chair)

Councillors:

p J E Binns
p D A Britton
p 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 L Cleary (Portfolio Holder, Housing & Communities)
G C Beck

Officers Attending:

B Byrne, M Devine, G Miles, Ms A Righton, G Spawton and Ms M Stephens and, for part of the meeting, Mrs P Lewis.

Tenants' Representatives:

G Waters and P Woodroof

Also in Attendance:

Dr Horswell, Principal Eaglewood Free School, New Milton – for Minute No. 24
Mr Hummerstone, Headteacher, Arnewood School, New Milton – for Minute No. 24

21. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Beck and O'Sullivan in Minute No. 24.

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

24. PRESENTATION FROM DR M HORSWELL

Cllrs Beck and O'Sullivan disclosed non-pecuniary interests as members of New Milton Town Council. They concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent them from remaining in the meeting to speak.

The Panel received a presentation from Dr Horswell, Principal of Eaglewood School, New Milton, a 'free' school which would serve vulnerable children.

The New Milton area had been ranked by Hampshire County Council in the top 20% for 'deprivation affecting children'. Having high levels of deprivation and, Dr Horswell stated a disproportionate number of children from 'troubled families' and thus poor school attendance, the case for additional specialist provision in the area for the most vulnerable children had been presented in a formal bid to the Department for Education in May 2014. The bid had been approved in July 2014.

Eaglewood School had been commissioned by local primary and secondary schools, with Arnewood Secondary School as its official sponsor, and would offer specialist provision for the most vulnerable children in the local community, whose emotional and social needs prevented them from attending a mainstream school. The new school would cater for 7-16 years olds and would open in September 2015.

Eaglewood would offer a personalised learning experience that engaged and motivated each student to achieve their potential. In addition to benefiting from the specialist teaching at the school, students would be encouraged to take part in an extra-curricular programme that promoted enterprise, collaboration and resilience. The school aimed to raise rates of attendance, increase rates of attainment and re-engage children back into mainstream school.

Admission to the school would be made through a set referral process and could be made anytime throughout the year. The school's published admissions number would be 72, and would have 1 teacher to every 6 students.

Dr Horswell explained that free schools were new state-funded schools. They were independent of local council control and had the freedom to respond directly to the needs of parents, children and the local community.

The Panel thanked Dr Horswell for his attendance.

25. PRESENTATION FROM CLLR BECK.

The Panel received an update from Cllr Beck, the Council's representative on the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP), on the work of the Panel in the last year. This included: -

- The Panel had formed three scrutiny working groups to examine rural crime, youth re-offending, and victims and witnesses.
- The Panel had kept a watching brief on the impact of the reduction in police numbers and would continue to monitor the situation.
- The Panel continued to meet regularly and would continue to monitor the progress of the action plans set out in the Policing Plan.

Cllr Beck expressed his concern regarding the progress of the implementation of the rural plan developed by the PCP and the general communication between the Commissioner's office and District councillors/officers. Members expressed concern regarding cuts to front line policing and how this would impact crime levels within the New Forest. Cllr Beck would continue to highlight these concerns to the Police & Crime Commissioner.

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

26. INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES - UPDATE (REPORT A).

The Panel received an update on the progress of the implementation of Introductory Tenancies since they were introduced in April 2014.

Introductory Tenancy was a 'probationary' tenancy put in place for 1 year, with the possibility of a 6 month extension where officers felt further monitoring would be required in terms of behaviour or rent arrears.

Introductory tenancies allowed officers to manage tenancies more robustly, by assisting, supporting and educating new tenants in maintaining a tenancy. On successful completion of the introductory tenancy, the tenancy reverted to a fixed-term tenancy.

Introductory tenancies were managed by the Council's Neighbourhood and Tenancy Management Officers and Rent & Arrears Recovery Officers, through visits, contact with tenants and if necessary, enforcement action.

During the period April 2014 – December 2014, 78 Introductory Tenancies were offered by the Council. The impact of this on the workload of Council officers was noted by members. Members acknowledged that this workload might increase with the introduction of Universal Credit, to the extent that additional staffing might have to be explored.

Members, along with Tenants' Representatives were pleased to hear that Introductory Tenancies were working well, particularly as they promoted the need to be a responsible tenant.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) That a progress report be submitted to the Panel in twelve months' time.

Action: Pauline Lewis

27. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SUPPORTING PEOPLE SERVICES (REPORT B).

The Panel considered the changes to the Supporting People (SP) Services in Hampshire and the impact on the New Forest District.

The Supporting People programme commissioned discretionary housing and community support services from district councils and third-party providers for people with lower levels of care need who required support to live independently.

In 2014 Hampshire County Council had announced that significant cuts to budgets would mean that the Supporting People programme would be absorbed into Adult Services, meaning that there would be no separate SP commissioning team at HCC. This would have a direct impact on residents in the District currently receiving support services.

Tenants' Representatives expressed concern regarding the loss of services to vulnerable people and the overall impact on general needs social housing in the District.

Members expressed the view that the Panel should keep a watching brief on this issue to monitor the impact the removal of services would have on New Forest residents.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) That an update be provided to the Panel in six to nine months' time.

Action: Greg Spawton

28. HEALTH AND LEISURE PORTFOLIO COMMUNITY GRANTS INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS (REPORT C).

The Panel considered the community grant applications received by the Health and Leisure Portfolio Holder and her initial assessment on each application.

The Panel expressed the view that the new process for allocating community grants worked well as it gave members the opportunity to express their views and comment before grants were allocated. They supported the proposed grants as set out in the report, which would be provided for in the 2015/16 budget.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be supported and that the Panel's comments be included in the Medium Term Financial Plan Report to the Cabinet.

Action: Martin Devine

29. WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT D).

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

Members discussed the need to review the progress being taken with the Armed Forces Community Covenant and suggested that the Task & Finish Group be reconvened to review the success of the covenant so far and to report back to the Panel in March.

RESOLVED:

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

Action: Melanie Stephens

30. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES.

The Portfolio Holder for Health & Leisure advised the Panel that the Eling Tide Mill project had been progressing well. The public health highlight report for the District had been published and this would be emailed to Panel members for information.

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

- Affordable housing purchase and building programme had been progressing well with over 100 new homes secured since 2012.
- The Community Alarms function now sat comfortably within the CCTV section and under the Public Health and Community Safety service. A full report on the progress of the service would be presented at a future Panel meeting.
- The combined service was on target to achieve the estimated year one savings and additional operational costs had been reduced, allowing for funding of a one year temporary post to assist with business development in year two. This should increase revenue and achieve further budget savings.
- The Council's Out of Hours calls had been successfully transferred to the CCTV Control room and the contract with Tunstall for providing this service had been terminated
- The CCTV service had not been negatively impacted as a result of the integration.

- Work would be completed over the next year to satisfy the Information Commissioner's updated code of practice.
- A CCTV maintenance tender was currently being reviewed in an effort to achieve efficiencies and savings to the service.
- The CCTV and Community Alarms services were separately audited last year 2014. A draft report had been received with some 'Medium' and 'Low' priority recommendations.

CHAIRMAN

Attachment: Minute 29 – Appendix 1

Work Programme 2015/2016

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	TIMING/UPDATE ON PROGRESS
Housing			
Affordable Housing and Housing Programme Update	To monitor the progress of the housing purchase and development programme	Report to Panel	March 2015
Armed Forces Community Covenant	To review the progress of the Community Covenant.	Task & Finish Group Report to Panel	March 2015
Welfare Reform Impacts	To examine the impacts of welfare reform on tenants and residents	Presentation to Panel	June 2015
Crime and Disorder			
Out of Hours Service/Community Alarms	To receive an update on the new service	Report to Panel	March 2015
Community Safety Partnership	To fulfil our statutory duty	Invite representatives of the Community Safety Partnership to the Panel's meeting	March 2015
Domestic Homicide	To receive a report on the domestic homicide panel	Report/Presentation to Panel	Likely to be end of year but dependent on Court Processes currently underway.
Integration of the Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Trust	To monitor the impact of the integration of these services	Panel Update	When appropriate
Children and Young People			
Child Poverty in the New Forest	Task & Finish Group	Report findings to Panel	March 2015
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	June 2015

Leisure			
Sedentary lifestyles and how the council can engage residents in healthier lifestyles/exercise	Presentation by Sports & Play Development Officer	Report to Panel	June/September 2015