

17 MARCH 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, 17 March 2015.

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  
B D Lucas

**Councillors:**

p Mrs M McLean  
ap 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)  
R L Frampton

**Officers Attending:**

M Devine, G Miles, Ms A Righton, Mrs J Stainer and Ms M Stephens and for part of the meeting J Knight, R Topliss and Mrs S Wilkes.

**Tenants' Representative:**

Mrs A Murphy

**31. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

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

**33. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**34. UPDATE ON THE INTEGRATION OF THE COMMUNITY ALARM AND OUT OF HOURS FUNCTIONS INTO THE CCTV CONTROL ROOM (REPORT A).**

The Panel noted the progress made since combining CCTV and the community alarms which had been initiated by a member task and finish group. The transition had been successfully completed.

The 14 members of staff were now in multi-skill roles and continued to develop through ongoing experience and training. The service dealt with a large amount of interaction with vulnerable and distressed members of the community. The Panel noted that the out of hours call handling service had been successfully brought back in-house.

The business development of the service continued and the Council had recently been awarded a contract to monitor the lifeline calls of 1<sup>st</sup> Community based in Eastleigh.

Cllr Frampton asked a number of questions regarding the welfare of staff, particularly in relation to staff turnover and the 12 hour shifts operators were required to work, as well as sometimes dealing with aggressive and abusive callers out of hours. He questioned whether, in order to safeguard staff, the Council should adopt the practice of recording all out of hours calls. Officers would consider this suggestion. The Civil Contingencies and CCTV Manager explained that staff shift patterns were currently under review. Employees were given four rest days after their 12 hours shift, and so far this arrangement seemed to be working well.

The Panel discussed the affordability of alarms and the number of donation units in circulation for use of those in hardship. Members were informed that the cost of individual alarms was approximately £96.

The Panel were pleased to hear of the progress being made by the CCTV and Community Alarms team despite a challenging year and congratulated the Head of Service, the Civil Contingencies and CCTV Manager, and the team for their hard work.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the information contained in the report be noted;
- (b) That the CCTV and Community Alarm team be thanked for their hard work; and
- (c) That the recording of all out of hours calls be pursued by officers.

Action: James Knight

**35. COUNCIL HOUSING ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE 2012/13 – 2014/15 (REPORT B).**

The Panel considered the Council's approach to the delivery of new council housing and the options available to increase council housing stock, as well as the progress of the Council housing acquisition & development programme over the last 3 years.

Members congratulated officers on their achievement in the number of houses that had been built/acquired to date. They hoped that this momentum would continue to bring about more housing for residents. Members were assured that officers continued to look at the demand of the types of housing needed particularly one bed house and large sized properties, to keep pace with the changing housing needs of residents.

The purchase of former council homes previously sold under the right to buy scheme continued to be the Council's primary means of securing new properties but other options such as new builds would be pursued in the future.

Tenant Representatives expressed the view that the Council had taken appropriate and necessary steps to increase and regain its housing stock.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) That the information contained in the report be noted; and

(b) That the Portfolio Holder, Head of Housing & Customer Services, Housing and Estates and Valuation Officers be congratulated on their hard work and achievements to date.

Action: Richard Topliss

**36. CHILD POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (REPORT C).**

The Panel considered a report of the Child Poverty Task & Finish Group and their recommendations.

Members discussed the complex nature of the subject matter and the vast range of work being undertaken in this area by many partnership organisations and charities across the District. Members were pleased to hear that the workshop held by the Task & Finish Group, where representatives from external organisations had attended had been successful, and hoped that the contacts made at the networking sessions would go some way to avoid duplication of work and assist in the sharing of information between partners.

The Panel agreed that more work could be done by the Task & Finish Group to explore further how the Council could improve its services in helping to mitigate the effects of child poverty. They suggested that the Task & Finish Group should reconvene following the May elections.

The Panel thanked Cllr Mrs McLean for her hard work and contributions to this task and finish group as she would be stepping down as a councillor in May.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the actions set out in Appendix 1 to Report C to the Panel be approved and recommends their presentation to the relevant Portfolio Holders for consideration; and
- (b) That it be noted that the Panel suggest that the Task & Finish Group be reconvened after the May elections to investigate this subject further through the suggested items set out in Appendix 2 to Report C to the Panel.

Action: Martin Devine

**37. ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT TASK AND FINISH GROUP.**

The Panel noted that a meeting of the task & finish group had been held in February 2015 to review how the covenant had been progressing. The Group found that the measures within the Covenant were all being carried out and that the Covenant was functioning as intended.

The group had discussed a letter from Anna Soubry MP, the Minister of State for Defence Personnel and Veterans, which had asked that local authorities appoint an 'Armed Forces Champion' to ensure continued delivery of the Covenant. The Group appointed Cllr Goff Beck as the Armed Forces Champion.

It was suggested that a further meeting of the Task and Finish Group would take place in 2016 to monitor progress with the Covenant.

Action: Greg Spawton/Melanie Stephens

**38. WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 (REPORT D).**

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

The Panel agreed that the June meeting should start at the earlier time of 5.00pm to allow more time to discuss the work programme. Members of the new Panel would be contacted with details nearer the time.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Panel's suggested work programme set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes be agreed; and
- (b) That the Panel meeting on 16 June 2015 start at the earlier time of 5.00pm.

Action: Melanie Stephens

**39. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES.**

The Portfolio Holder for Health & Leisure advised the Panel that various activities had taken place with regard to sport and leisure, an email outlining this would be sent Panel members shortly. The Portfolio Holder was pleased to report that the Health and Leisure Centres were doing well with gym and swim memberships at a record high. She thanked officers for their hard work achieving this.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Communities reported that the Community Safety Officer post was now vacant and the recruitment process was underway. The domestic homicide review was still in progress. The Portfolio Holder echoed the Panel's praise of the hard work of the CCTV and Community Alarm Team. The Portfolio Holder advised that the housing programme was progressing well. Officers were now working on reviewing accommodation within sheltered housing schemes. Tenants would be fully consulted throughout this process. Officers were also examining ways to improve tenant involvement in the Council's decision making. Members valued the views and participation of tenants and supported this.

CHAIRMAN

**Attachment:** Minute 38 – Appendix 1

(COMP170315)

## Work Programme 2015/2016

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	TIMING/UPDATE ON PROGRESS
<b>HOUSING</b>			
Welfare Reform Impacts	To examine the impacts of welfare reform on tenants and residents	Presentation to Panel	June 2015
Armed Forces Community Covenant	To review the progress of the Community Covenant.	Task & Finish Group Report to Panel	March 2016
<b>CRIME &amp; DISORDER</b>			
Community Safety Partnership	To fulfil our statutory duty	Invite representatives of the Community Safety Partnership to the Panel's meeting	September 2015
Domestic Homicide	To receive a report on the domestic homicide panel	Report/Presentation to Panel	November 2015
Integration of the Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Trust	To monitor the impact of the integration of these services	Panel Update	When appropriate
<b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE</b>			
Child Poverty in the New Forest	Task & Finish Group	Report interim findings to Panel	June 2015
<b>HEALTH</b>			
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

<b>LEISURE</b>			
Sedentary lifestyles and how the council can engage residents into healthier lifestyles/exercise	Presentation by Sports & Play Development Officer	Report to Panel	June or September 2015

**Current Task & Finish Groups**

- Armed Forces Community Covenant
- Child Poverty