

Forest Heath District Council

MINUTES of the **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall on Thursday, 24 October 2013 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

T Simmons (Chairman)	R D S Hood
M J Anderson	T J Huggan
D W Bimson	M J Jefferys

Councillor W Hirst, in his capacity as Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture was in attendance for Agenda Item 7 (Presentation on his Portfolio and current work projects).

Councillor R J Millar, in his capacity as Cabinet Member for Families and Communities was in attendance for Agenda Item 8 (Member Locality Budget Review).

Also in attendance:

N Anthony, Head of Leisure, Culture and Communities
R Baldwin, Cultural Services Development Officer
C Brain, Scrutiny Officer
L Cocker, Arts and Heritage Officer
C Manning, Families and Communities Manager (1 November 2013)
A Wilson, Director

Councillor R D Everitt, Cabinet Member for Communities, St Edmundsbury Borough Council

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C J Barker, G Jaggard, J W McGhee and A J Wheble.

SUBSTITUTES

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

753. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

754. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2013, were unanimously accepted by the Committee as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

755. **ITEMS FOR CALL-IN**

There were no items the subject of call-in.

756. **COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION – REQUESTS RECEIVED**

No Councillor Call for Action requests were received.

757. **PRESENTATION BY COUNCILLOR D W HIRST, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, LEISURE AND CULTURE (VERBAL)**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor W Hirst, Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture, who had been invited to the meeting to discuss his Portfolio and current work projects, with particular emphasis on the work of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board / current projects with other agencies in improving healthy lifestyles countywide, as well as leisure and sport which related to a previously submitted work programme suggestion.

Councillor Hirst provided a broad overview of his Portfolio which identified the following areas of activity:

- (1) Museums – Home of Horseracing Project. A target was set to raise £15.2m and the total raised was £15.4m. Tenders had been sent to six companies and to date three had been returned. A Project Executive Board had been set up, which included the Portfolio Holder. The Board met monthly and provided the Board did not go over the limit of the tender then the Board made the decisions. Once the tender had been awarded, the contractor would start work in January 2014 on a year's contract. Another tender would be issued in the middle of 2014, to fit out the museum to be completed by the middle of 2015 with the aim of opening the museum in September 2015. The break-even figure for the museum was to attract 45,000 visitors which would bring a number of benefits to Newmarket. Work would commence in the middle of 2014 to look at signage, lighting and parking implications.

Mildenhall Museum – This had reopened following refurbishment and was strongly focused towards attracting school children. The Council had invested £750,000 into the Mildenhall Museum and with the Council's investment into the Home of Horseracing Project this would be a real boost to tourism.

- (2) Health – This was split into various groups:

- The Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board was made up of 22 members, comprising members and officers from Suffolk County Council, local clinical commissioning groups, NHS England, HealthWatch, the police the voluntary sector and district and borough councils. The Board set the priorities for Suffolk, being:
 - Every child in Suffolk has the best start in life
 - Suffolk residents have access to a healthy environment and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
 - Older people in Suffolk have a good quality of life

- People in Suffolk have the opportunity to improve their mental health and wellbeing

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for health at St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council took it in turns to sit on the Board for a year. Currently, Cllr Hirst was the Council's representative who was involved in the older people priority for Suffolk. The Portfolio Holder was currently involved in encouraging activities for older people by working on a village's project covering Nordic Walking and Zumba.

The Government had devolved the responsibility of Public Health to County Councils. Suffolk County Council had been allocated £26m to spend on public health, including the four priorities mentioned above.

- The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for West Suffolk was based in St Andrews in Bury St Edmunds. The Group had a £250m budget to fund GP's etc. The Portfolio Holder had joined a Clinical Engagement Group which met regularly to discuss and assess their performance. The CCG had inherited all the contracts from the NHS. A key contract for the Portfolio Holder was the "Out of Hours" service. The current contract was with Harmoni which expired in March 2015. The CCG had started to look at the details of the contract and the Portfolio Holder was in discussions regarding putting a case forward for having an out of hours base in Newmarket to be written into the new tender document. Currently there were out of hours facilities located in Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill covering West Suffolk.
 - Forest Heath Health Forum met on a quarterly basis and comprised the heads of the various health bodies who discussed and develop the health services for the district. The issue of obesity was of central concern to the group. A campaign had been launched to address the issue, particularly with children.
- (3) Leisure – Anglia Community Leisure (ACL) operated the leisure facilities in Mildenhall, Brandon and Newmarket. The Council funded ACL £730,000 per year which would be reduced by £100,000 over the next three years. Discussions were taking place in making the leisure centres a hub for local sports clubs e.g. the Scaltback school site in Newmarket, ACL had submitted a proposal to Suffolk County Council to run the site as a sports hub. The Council also had a good programme of participative sports for young people and the aim was to extend this into the general community.
- (4) Open Space – Brandon Country Park was owned by Suffolk County Council and attracted 180,000 people. Forest Heath provided £22,000 per year to help towards running the facility. The Brecks Partnership had been dissolved. However, there was an outstanding lottery bid of £1.6m. £90,000 had been received and a decision would be taken in March 2014 as to whether the remainder of the lottery bid would be awarded. If awarded the money would transform the Brandon area.

- (5) Princes Foundation - A major study was carried out by the Princes Foundation on all aspects of Newmarket. The study was funded by Suffolk County Council, Newmarket Town Council and Forest Heath District Council. A Control Group had been formed to look at education; planning; tourism; and traffic with the aim of getting as many stakeholders involved in taking forward the recommendations from the Princes Foundation and produce action plans. The first meeting of the overall group was held on 23 October 2013.

The Committee discussed the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions of the Cabinet Member. Discussions were held on the lack of open space in Newmarket; whether private sector providers should be involved in developing leisure facilities in the Brecks to which the Portfolio Holder and Officers provided comprehensive responses.

In response to particular questions raised, the Cabinet Member advised:

- (1) It was acknowledged that obesity, particular in young people was an issue and a programme had been developed which was being run in three schools to encourage more exercise and healthy eating. Discussions were taking place with the CCG and ACL. The Council was committed in continuing the programme to tackle obesity in the District.
- (2) A meeting had been held with Newmarket Football Club to discuss the potential use of the George Lambton playing fields and the Council was awaiting feedback on what use they could make of the land which was in a central location in Newmarket.
- (3) ACL produced figures on a quarterly basis for each of its leisure centres which showed through-put; loyalty card usage etc. Forest Heath met with ACL quarterly. Recently the two leisure trusts (ACL and Abbeycroft) had decided to come together and they met monthly. The Portfolio Holder attended both the monthly and quarterly meetings. At the quarterly meetings detailed figures were provided to assess the performance for each of the leisure centres. The Cabinet Member agreed to come back to the Committee with a response as to whether some or all of the detailed figures could be made available to Members/the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, due to confidentiality as the Leisure Trusts were in competition with other leisure providers.
- (4) There were currently four multi-use games areas in Forest Heath (two in Newmarket, Brandon and Red Lodge). A levy fund was made on all new houses built, which could be used to increase the number of multi-use games areas across the district. The Cabinet Member agreed to take on board the Committees comments for additional multi-use games areas on large housing estates in Newmarket.
- (5) The Cabinet Member agreed to explore the development of well signed footpaths as a leisure activity to encourage health and fitness across the District.

- (6) A Home of Horseracing Business Plan was produced which contained the detailed breakdown of how the visitor figure of 45,000 was calculated for the project to break even, which the Portfolio Holder was happy to provide Members with upon request. The Project Executive Board next year would be looking into the full implications of transport, infrastructure, signage etc.
- (7) The CCG's were made up of General Practitioners (GP's) and they represented the majority of the Board on the CCG. They had programmes in place, including obesity which were delivered through the GP surgeries. The advantage of the CCG's was that they were run by GP's and when they had a key focus, like obesity, they trained people and they had programmes which they worked people through which was an ongoing activity.
- (8) It was acknowledged that there was no out of hours service in Newmarket. Under the current terms of the contract, Harmoni had to provide medical facilities which could be reached within a 30 minute drive rather than located in a specific town and those requirements were currently being met, which was difficult to challenge. The current contract expired in March 2015, and the best way to secure a base in the Newmarket area would be to stipulate that need when drafting the new contract and the Portfolio Holder was hopeful that this would be specified in the tender document.
- (9) The Portfolio Holder agreed to raise the issue of Lyme Disease in Thetford Forest (associated with infected ticks) with health practitioners.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Councillor W Hirst for his presentation. There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the presentation.

758. **MEMBER LOCALITY BUDGET REVIEW (REPORT NO: OAS13/440)**

(Following the shared services restructuring Cathy Manning would be taking up the position of Families and Communities Manager on 1 November 2013).

The Committee received Report No: OAS13/440, presented by the Cultural Services Development Officer, which updated Members on the Member Locality Budget Scheme, launched in July 2012. 62 projects had been supported to date to the value of £50,308. This was an evolving scheme, which had great potential in supporting the new Families and Communities Strategy. Examples of where this had worked well were provided, which had opened up additional avenues for officers to engage with the community/residents.

Each Member had a budget of £2,500 each financial year, to be awarded to community groups in their Council Ward. The aim of the funding was to support projects or activities that would improve the community or environment and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Attached as Appendix 1 to Report No: OAS13/440, was a list of 39 projects approved in 2012-2013, with a total expenditure of £28,070 and attached at

Appendix 2 was a list of 23 projects approved to date, for the financial year 2013-2014, totalling £22,238.

The Committee discussed the report and asked a number of questions of the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities and officers. In particular discussions were held on the monies spent to date and the remaining balance of the scheme to be used by the end of March 2014; Parish Councils being able to enhance community projects; audit trail for members on monies spent; quarterly updates for each member on the locality budget, to which the Cabinet Member and Officers provided comprehensive responses.

The Committee noted that Members in 2012-2013 received the full allocation of funding (£2,500) when the scheme was launched in July 2012, with the remaining balance being rolled over for one-year only into the financial year 2013-2014.

The Chairman suggested the funding could be reduced to £1,000. The Committee discussed this in detail and felt that it was too early to consider reducing the amount of funding allocated to Members as the scheme was still evolving and felt it should be reviewed in a year's time. The Committee was advised that it would receive an annual update on the scheme at its meeting scheduled for 24 April 2014. The Cabinet Member confirmed that monies not spent in the financial year 2013-2014 would not be rolled over into 2014-2015. There was still a learning curve for both Members and the community in accessing the locality budget scheme. He welcomed the comments from the Committee on the scheme as it needed to be tailored to Forest Heath.

The Chairman suggested to the Committee that pump priming could be used usefully to include for one-year only revenue funding as opposed to capital funding to help community organisations to develop so they had time to raise funds for the next year. The Cabinet Member responded by stating that projects needed to be sustainable to produce long-term benefits. The scheme was about encouraging communities to take more responsibility and trying to get them to think much longer term. The Cabinet Member welcomed examples of where Members felt revenue funding could make a difference to an organisation, and officers could then look into the feasibility. Discussions were then held on how a community organisation might want to acquire a community asset; how to set up a group; what were the risks etc. which the Council would be interested in helping with. However, whether that help would be via the locality budget or another route would need to be looked at further.

The Committee supported the locality budget scheme and there being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the progress of the Scheme and that an annual update would be presented to the Committee on 24 April 2014.

759. **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (VERBAL)**

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Order 2010 required that Members should scrutinise the authority's use of its surveillance powers on a quarterly basis.

The Monitoring Officer had advised that in Quarter 2, no such surveillance had been authorised. There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, Quarter 2 update.

760. **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (REPORT NO: OAS13/441)**

The Scrutiny Officer presented Report No: OAS13/441, which provided an update on the current status of the Committee's Work Programme and any Task and Finish Groups appointed by the Committee. Attached as Appendix 1 to the report were details of progress made on the work programme, with an outline of the current position of the Joint Task and Finish Group attached as Appendix 2.

The Committee was advised that the presentation from the principals on educational achievements, scheduled for 24 October 2013 had been postponed due to two of the principals having prior engagements and the recent change in leadership at another school. Ongoing discussions were being held and the session would be rescheduled for early 2014.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the current work programme.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.