

Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13th March 2013



Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
P R Barlow	Yes	F Ricci	Apologies
C A Cadman	Yes	W J Rose	Yes
Dr R L Evans (Chairman)	Yes	A F Shelton	Yes
P Horner	Yes	J S Sutton	Yes
S A Howell	Apologies	J R Swift	Yes
R P Ramage	Yes		

38. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:

- Councillor Barlow declared the following Non-Pecuniary Interests:
 - In Agenda Item 5, Committee's Scrutiny Review of Transport and Access to Health Services across the District - Update on the Committee's Recommendations on the Hospital Hopper Service and Village Agent Service as a Non Executive Director of the East of England Ambulance NHS Trust.
 - in agenda item 6(b), Braintree, Halstead and Witham Citizens Advice Bureau and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency, as a Trustee and Board member of the Braintree, Halstead and Witham Citizens Advice Bureau.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, all councillors remained in the meeting for all items and took part in the debate and decision thereon.

39. **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

40. **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30th January 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. **COMMITTEE'S SCRUTINY REVIEW OF TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS THE DISTRICT - UPDATE ON THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE HOSPITAL HOPPER SERVICE AND VILLAGE AGENT SERVICE**

INFORMATION: Members noted the proposed changes in the provisions of the Hospital Hopper service and Essex County Council's continued funding of the Village Agent Service for 2013-14.

The Community Transport Coordinator provided the following responses to questions from members:

- There is one wheelchair accessible vehicle under the "Dial a Ride" scheme to provide a service for wheelchair users;
- The Hospital Hopper service covers the whole of the district and also provides transport to hospitals outside of the district;
- Based on passenger journeys in 2012-13, the Council is confident it will meet the demand for the service in 2013-14.
- Driver insurance for the Hospital Hopper service is through the voluntary drivers own insurance policy and allowable on a not for profit basis.

42. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP – AFFORDABLE HOUSING -BRIEF UPDATE**

INFORMATION: Councillor Barlow, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group added to the report that the Group may have to postpone a planned meeting as it was likely that the Group would be unable to have invited speaker attending a planned meeting.

DECISION: That the progress of the Affordable and Social Housing Task and Finish Group be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To monitor progress of the work of the Affordable and Social Housing Task and Finish Group.

43. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP – BRAINTREE, HALSTEAD AND WITHAM CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT VOLUNTARY SUPPORT AGENCY**

INFORMATION: Councillor Cadman drew the attention of members to an email he had sent to Councillor Wilson, Chairman of the Braintree, Halstead and Witham Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency (BDVSA) Task and Finish Group raising a number of issues on the provision of the CAB service outside of the three towns.

The Chairman agreed that the issues raised would be passed on to the Chairman of the Group.

DECISION: That the progress of the CAB and BDVSA Task and Finish Group be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To monitor progress of the work of the CAB and BDVSA Task and Finish Group

In a discussion on additional meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, all members supported such meetings. Members were of the view that additional meetings would enable the Committee to further develop its ability hold the Executive to account and its policy development role. Members also recognised that additional meetings raised issues in terms of officer resources. The Chairman agreed to explore the possibility of the additional meetings of the Committee with officers.

44. **DECISION PLANNER**

DECISION: That the Decision Planner for the period 1st March 2013 to 30th June 2013 be received and noted.

45. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2012-13**
-SCRUTINY OF THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

INFORMATION: Members carried out a scrutiny review of specific projects within the Community Safety Partnership programme with invited speakers as follows:

Theme	Project	Speakers
Education	Fire Break Mark II	James Taylor, Essex Fire and Rescue Service
Prevention	Integrated Offender Management	Adam Colby, Essex Probation
Domestic Abuse	'Responding to Domestic Abuse' Workshop	Rita Milton Safer Places

The meeting adjourned at 8.03pm to enable members to carry out their scrutiny review and reconvened at 8.33pm.

Members provided the follow feedback on their scrutiny reviews:

Education - Fire Break Mark II

- The Fire Break project is providing excellent results;
- With funding only £10k, the project has resulted in 24 young people from troubled backgrounds gaining significantly in terms of self esteem and respect for others;
- The project had gained from Essex Fire and Rescue Service being viewed as impartial by children and young people.

Prevention - Integrated Offender Management

- The Probation Service is sharing a facility with the local police which helps in the development of a "joined-up" approach between the organisations;

- Members thought there might be a role to involve village agents in the work of offender management.

Domestic Abuse 'Responding to Domestic Abuse' Workshop

- The project aims to raise awareness of the safer places organisation and accessing the service;
- The project also helps in directing people to refuge;
- Schools are visited to raise aware of the project and domestic abuse issues;
- Support schemes are also provided to help women in a controlled environment regain their self esteem and build a new life;
- Members though there would advantages, particularly in looking for any further funding, if the benefits of the project could drawn out in terms of the number of people referred to the service and those able to build a new life as a result of using the service;
- Members also thought the project would need to continue in some form as domestic abuse issues will continue to be present.

Open Discussion

In considering possible recommendations in the Committee's report on its scrutiny review of the CSP, members suggested the following:

- The Firebreak project should have a follow up arrangement with the aim of ensuring that those young people how have gained certain qualities as a result of attending the project maintain those qualities;
- The transfer of funding of certain CSP projects to Whole Essex Community Budget might provide greater security of funding;
- Much of the CSP Annual Partnership Plan appears to be driven by the police and criminal justice system limiting the amount of true partnership working;
- Consideration should be given to providing greater prominence of other issues community safety issues e.g. Anti Social Behaviour;
- Public communication of the CSP including clarity and the use of plain English in documents could be improved;

In response to the suggestion on the CSP Annual Partnership Plan being driven by the police and criminal justice system, the Chief Executive acknowledge the use of crime statistics and trends but advised that other information was also used. She cited moving targets with the CSP Annual Partnership Plan picking up on current trends.

In response to a question, officers also agreed to look into the provision of Neighbourhood Watch within CSP.

45. **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX**

INFORMATION: The Chief Executive advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex was looking beyond just direct policing and had given positive messages in terms of understanding the local context, victim support, and prevention and education. The PCC will not be setting numerical targets for the reduction of crime but wishes to see all crime in the County reduced.

The Chief Executive added that the PCC holds the budget for community safety and that the funding mechanism for the CSP is unclear. The PCC has no power over CSPs and is only required to have regard to CSPs. The introduction of the PCC has not resulted in any changes to legislation on CSPs. That said, it is clearly sensible for the CSP and PCC to work closely together.

The Chief Executive advised that she will keep all members informed on the development of the PCC - CSP relationship and the CSP funding mechanism.

46. **URGENT BUSINESS**

INFORMATION: The Chairman agreed that Councillor Shelton could provide information on the introduction of the Clinical Commission Group for Mid Essex given that it was timely and this was the Committee's last meeting in this civic year.

Councillor Shelton reminded members that the Clinical Commissioning Group for Mid Essex would come into force on 1st April. The Group will be putting forward proposals on how services in the area will be provided. He moved that representatives of the CCG be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to explain the Group plans and how they might improve the delivery of services within the district. This was approved.

DECISION: That representatives of the Clinical Commissioning Group for Mid Essex be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to explain the Group plans on how they might improve the delivery of services within the district.

The Chairman thanked the Guest Officers and Guest Speakers for their valuable contributions to the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 9.30pm.

Dr R L Evans
Chairman