

Minutes

Community Development Group

28th October 2020



Present

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
Mrs C Dervish	Apologies	Mrs L Walters	No
Mrs D Garrod (Chairman)	Yes	Miss M Weeks	Yes
A Hensman (Vice-Chairman)	Yes	Mrs S Wilson	No
Mrs I Parker	Yes	B Wright	Yes
Mrs J Pell	Yes		

1 **MINUTES**

DECISION: The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Development Group held on 19th February 2020 were approved as a correct record.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

3 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked, or statements made.

4 **SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO VACCINATIONS – DRAFT REPORT**

INFORMATION: Councillor Mrs D Garrod, Chairman of the Community Development Group, introduced the report. Members were reminded the scrutiny review into 'Vaccinations in the Braintree District' represented the first review that the Committee had undertaken as part of its work programme for the Civic Year 2019/20. The topic of Vaccinations was selected for scrutiny review in response to a national movement to increase the uptake of childhood vaccinations, especially for diseases such as Measles and Rubella, and also a local strategy focus on how vaccination uptake could be improved in localised areas across the East of England.

It was reported that the main aims of the scrutiny review were to establish which Authority was responsible for vaccination and immunisation in the Braintree District, whether there were any notable issues in relation to vaccine uptake and how this compared with uptake across the wider Mid-Essex area. A briefing paper was provided to Members of the Committee by NHS England (East of England branch) at the meeting on 30th October 2019; the paper included details of the Essex Vaccination Oversight Committee (EVOC)

and gave Members a clearer indication of what the rates of vaccination uptake were in the Braintree District when compared with the wider Mid-Essex area.

Members agreed that the data provided by NHS England seemed to suggest that the level of vaccination uptake in the Braintree District was in alignment with the vaccination rates for Mid-Essex, and that the County as a whole frequently demonstrated levels of vaccination uptake that were slightly above that of the national average. It was therefore concluded by Members that there did not appear to be any major issues regarding vaccine uptake within the District. As the Committee had met with the substantive Terms of Reference of the scrutiny review, it was subsequently agreed that there was no further scope to make any recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Chairman explained that the report provided the Council with a summary of the scrutiny review into vaccinations and the actions that the Committee took in order to reach the conclusions drawn.

DECISION: That Members:-

1. Reviewed the draft report for the Scrutiny Review into Vaccinations in the Braintree District.
2. Authorised the Chairman to finalise the draft report, prior to its submission to Full Council, and to give authority to Governance Officers to make any necessary administrative changes to the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To finalise the draft report for the Scrutiny Review into Vaccinations in the Braintree District, prior to its submission to Full Council.

5 **SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO COMMUNITY WOODLANDS – DRAFT REPORT**

INFORMATION: The Chairman, Councillor Mrs D Garrod, introduced the report.

It was reported that as part of their scrutiny review into the topic of ‘Community Woodlands,’ Members were required to establish a clear definition of what constituted a community woodland when compared with that of a regular woodland, and from this to undertake research into the background of community woodlands and examples of these within the Braintree District (e.g. James Cooke Wood in Witham). Members also explored the impacts of woodlands on climate emissions and other ecological benefits, as well as the community benefits of woodlands in the form of a cost/benefit review.

In order to support Members’ evidence gathering, officers in the Landscapes team were able to provide the Committee with much of the necessary background information through verbal presentations at evidence gathering sessions with Members. The Landscape Services team identified a number of key evidence streams for the Group and gave suggestions as to appropriate external representatives and partners of the Council who could attend meetings and help to inform the review (e.g. the Witham Tree Group).

It was emphasised that as part of their scrutiny review, Members of the Community Development Group also acknowledged the work of the Climate Change Working Group and gave careful consideration towards ensuring that there was no crossover with the work programmes of the two respective Groups, so as to avoid any duplication of work.

The Chairman then invited Members to raise any comments or make any potential amendments in respect of the draft report. A general comment was made in regard to the 'Essex Forest' project that was being undertaken by Essex County Council, which included funding for the purchasing of new trees for planting. A request was also raised for some minor amendments to Recommendations 6 and 9 of the report, the details of which were as follows:-

Recommendation 6

Officers agreed to insert some additional wording at the end of the recommendation in order to stress that new trees would require irrigation in the early years after being planted. The recommendation would therefore be amended as follows (changes highlighted in red):-

"The Council should exercise its right to insist to developers that certain species of tree be planted at development sites with a more robust approach to ensure appropriate trees are planted and maintained (using the Tree Strategy and associated policies) with irrigation in the early years following planting."

Recommendation 9

It was requested that further information should be provided in respect of the proposed public 'woodlands' website as to the location of woodlands within the District that were owned by other public bodies as well as the Council, such as Essex County Council and the Forestry Commission. The recommendation would therefore be amended by officers as follows (changes highlighted in red):-

"The Council considers the development of a public 'woodlands' website ("public" being all woodlands that were under the ownership of public bodies, including Local Authorities and charities) which local residents could utilise in order to make suggestions on ways that the maintenance of existing woodlands could be improved, or new locations for tree planting."

DECISION: That Members:-

1. Reviewed the draft report and finalised the content and draft recommendations to ensure that they were in keeping with the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Review and the evidence gathered.
2. Authorised the Chairman to finalise the draft report, prior to its submission to Full Council, and to give authority to Governance Officers to make any necessary administrative changes to the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To finalise the draft Scrutiny Review Report into Community Woodlands prior to its submission to Full Council.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 7.36pm.

Councillor Mrs D Garrod
(Chairman)