

**COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
(OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

26 JUNE 2013

PRESENT:

Councillors Marshall (Chairman), Warfield (Vice Chairman), Mrs Woodward (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Allsopp, Mrs Evans, Humphreys and Ms Perkins.

Also Present: Mrs S Arnold (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr J Topham (Locality Public Health Partnerships and Community Lead – East Staffordshire, Lichfield and Tamworth)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Bacon, Fryers, Isaacs and Pearce. Councillor White had notified the Chairman that, due to the conflict of interest with his Staffordshire County Council role as Cabinet Support Member for Care, he felt that his membership of the Committee was no longer appropriate and had asked for his place on the Committee to be reviewed.

(In accordance with Council Procedure No. 17 Councillor Greatorex attended the meeting).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Woodward declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 (Living Well in Staffordshire – Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013–2018) in view of her involvement with Children’s Charities.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2013 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2013 be approved as a correct record

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to the Committee’s terms of reference, particularly with regard to the Scrutiny of Health.

The Committee noted that a devolved arrangement for the scrutiny of health operated in Staffordshire and that the responsibilities of each partner were set out in a Code of Joint Working Arrangements. However, in the light of the Francis Report on Mid-Staffordshire Hospital the Overview and Scrutiny Co-Ordination Group had raised concerns that there was a lack of clarity in relation to the Council’s responsibility for scrutinising local NHS premises.

To address this it was agreed that the Chairman of the Committee would write to the Chairman of the County Council’s Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee to seek clarification and the draft letter circulated to Members of the Committee was endorsed.

RESOLVED: (1) That the letter circulated to Members of the Committee be sent to the Chairman of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

to seek clarification on the role of the District Council with regard to the scrutiny of NHS establishments.

(2) That the revised Terms of Reference be submitted to Council for endorsement.

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

The Chairman welcomed Mrs S Arnold, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, who gave a presentation setting out the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner and outlining the Police and Crime Plan that was being finalised for publication.

Details were given of the Staffordshire Police budget and how the Police Commissioner intended to deliver more for the tax payers' money. Examples were given of new initiatives that were being introduced and plans for the future.

With regard to the Police and Crime Plan key themes were outlined including tackling the causes of crime before they became a problem, enabling victims to get the support they needed, the prevention of offending and reduction of re-offending; and enabling individuals and communities to feel safer. The presentation concluded with a look at cross cutting themes, partnership governance and the next steps for the Police and Crime Plan.

A number of questions were asked, including the response to incidents on Police Authority borders and the use of Police cautions in instances where they were deemed inappropriate such as domestic violence. Mrs Arnold stressed the importance of Police Authorities working together and confirmed the intention to be tough on prolific offenders.

The desire for more joined up working was welcomed and questions were asked about how this would be achieved. It was explained that the Police Commissioner was seeking to establish a new type of Board bringing together relevant Chief Executives, with accountability in the governance arrangements and an emphasis on delivery.

The importance of good resolution on bodycams was highlighted and further clarification was given on the 'victim surcharge'. In response to a question about commissioning and the resources allocated to Community Safety Partnerships it was advised that there would be a desire to provide funding where there were real and identifiable outcomes.

Community engagement was discussed and it was confirmed that under the 'Lets Talk' initiative the Police Commissioner would be visiting venues across the Police Authority. It was confirmed that in addition to listing venues on their website the Council would be informed of events in Lichfield District.

RESOLVED: That Mrs Arnold be thanked for her presentation.

LIVING WELL IN STAFFORDSHIRE – HEALTH AND WELL BEING STRATEGY 2013 – 2018

The Chairman welcomed Mr J Topham (Locality Public Health Partnerships and Community Lead – East Staffordshire, Lichfield and Tamworth) to the meeting and a report was considered on the draft Health and Well Being Strategy for Staffordshire produced by the Health and Well Being Board (HWB) that had been established in response to the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

With growing pressure on limited public resources the Strategy emphasised the need for a fundamental change in provision with more investment in preventative services and 'a shift of resources currently used in intensive, reactive services to invest in services that identify needs at the earliest stage and stop them getting worse'.

The strategy considered priorities, identifying twelve areas for action. It also explored how shifting resources could provide significant improvements and financial savings and identified areas where system changes needed to be made to ensure all parts of the system worked together to deliver the agenda set out in the Strategy.

The Committee welcomed the Strategy and its direction whilst acknowledging that there would be difficult conversations in the future when choices over the allocation of resources had to be made.

Attention was drawn to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy consultation questions. It was agreed that Members would respond individually and a response would be sent on behalf of the Committee.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Health and Wellbeing Strategy be noted.

(2) That in addition to individual responses to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy consultation, a response would be sent on behalf of the Committee.

PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING OF HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

The Committee was advised of proposals to procure a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council and other District and Borough Councils in Staffordshire.

Approval was sought for the Council to participate in the procurement and management of the contract with the HIA through a Participation Agreement which included a service specification, a governance structure, terms of reference and a delegation agreement for services provided to the District Council by the successful provider.

The key benefits of bringing together a range of services through one single provider were outlined. Consideration was then given to proposed revisions to the Council's Housing Assistance Policy that would enable the new HIA provider to continue to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants.

It was noted that where insufficient funds were available to approve a Disabled Facilities Grant cases would be held on a waiting list for a maximum of six months. Concern was expressed about what would happen if the six month period was exceeded and it was agreed that a report be submitted to the Committee in twelve months time so that the arrangements could be reviewed.

RECOMMENDED: (1) That Cabinet be recommended to approve the District Council's participation in the county wide contract for a HIA service that will deliver disabled facilities grants and other services.

(2) That it be recommended to Cabinet that approval be given for the Council enter in to the Participation Agreement.

(3) That the governance arrangements, which would include a county wide steering group to manage the contract and formal representation from the Council, be recommended to the Cabinet for approval.

(4) That the proposed revisions to the Housing Assistance Policy be noted.

(5) That the arrangements be reviewed by the Committee in twelve months time.

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

It was reported that the Community Right to Challenge, introduced by the Localism Act 2011 enabled 'relevant bodies' specified in the legislation to submit an expression of interest in running council services.

The Council would be required to consider expressions of interest and, if accepted, carry out a procurement exercise for the service.

Members considered the introduction of a scheme which would meet the Council's obligations in relation to the Localism Act 2011.

The Committee agreed that an annual one month window for the submission of expressions of interest gave focus to the scheme and a framework for final submissions. However, it was felt that the wording of the scheme should clarify that the 'annual window' for submissions did not preclude discussions taking place with interested parties throughout the year.

RECOMMENDED: (1) That expressions of interest under the Community Right to Challenge be accepted annually between 1 and 30 June commencing in 2014.

(2) That the scheme be worded to clarify that discussions regarding the provision of Council services could take place throughout the year.

(3) That power be delegated to the Director – Finance, Revenues and Benefits working with the Strategic Director - Community, Housing and Health to reject expressions of interest that fail to meet the criteria as set out in the statutory guidance.

(4) That the applicant be notified within thirty days of the close of the set period for receiving expressions of interest as to how long the Council will take to consider the submission and notify them of the decision.

(5) That a maximum period of 90 days be set for the consideration of expressions of interest.

(6) That the period between an expression of interest being accepted and a procurement exercise commencing be set at between thirty days and six months depending on the complexity and value of the

proposed change in service provision, and that there be an undertaking to provide more specific timeframes in response to individual submissions.

(7) That a guidance document, decision and notification periods be published on the Council's website as required by the legislation.

PERFORMANCE MANGEMENT OF ONE YEAR ACTION PLANS

Members were advised that following discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group, performance monitoring reports on relevant activities and projects would be submitted to each Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These reports would be produced twice a year and would provide an update of progress against projects and milestones contained in the One Year Action Plan.

Consideration was then given to the performance outturn of the Community, Housing and Environmental Health Portfolio against the One Year Action Plan 2012/13.

The Committee acknowledged that the Fit For the Future Programme would impact on the Council's ability to achieve the high level activities set out in the Plan for Lichfield District and therefore the Plan would need to be reviewed and revised to reflect the reduction in resource availability.

With regard to the Action Plan's commitment to heritage, tourism, arts and culture reference was made to talks taking place with Lichfield Cathedral. It was suggested that discussions involving heritage and tourism should include the Parishes in view of the contribution they could make and the benefits of a District wide approach.

In response it was advised that the Cathedral Group was not initiated by the Council and had a very specific focus but the Council was open to discussions with groups across the District. The Council's role as an enabler was emphasised together with the need to ensue that initiatives extended beyond the boundaries of the City of Lichfield.

There was agreement that the City and District had considerable potential as a tourist destination and, in view of the commercial benefits tourism could bring, this potential needed to be explored and fully realised.

Whilst it was understood that the heritage, tourism and culture agenda was primarily within the remit of the Operational Services, Leisure, Tourism and Communications (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee it was suggested that an overview of the Arts and Culture strategy would be beneficial for Members of the Committee. The Chairman advised that this could be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group but in the meantime he would discuss the possibility of a joint meeting with the Chairman of the Operational Services, Leisure, Tourism and Communications (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee.

RESOLVED: That the outturn report and accompanying statistical analysis be noted.

WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme and the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Work and Forward Plan be noted.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: “That as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972”

IN PRIVATE

PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING OF HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

A confidential addendum to the report on the Procurement and Commissioning of Home Improvement Agency Services (Item 7 on the Agenda) was provided.

(The Meeting Closed at 8.50 pm)

CHAIRMAN