

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **28th March 2017**.

Present:

Cllr. Chilton (Chairman)

Cllrs. Burgess, Feacey, Hicks, A. Howard, W.Howard, Krause, Link, Miss Martin, Mrs. Martin, Smith.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Cllr. Miss Martin attended as Substitute Member for Cllr. Aaby and Cllr. Smith attended as substitute member for Cllr. Michael.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Aaby, Michael.

Also Present:

Cllr. Bradford.

Head of Culture, Health Parking and Community Safety Manager, Senior Policy, Performance & Scrutiny Officer, Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer, Member Services Officer.

357 Declaration of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Feacey	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" as the Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Bureau.	359

358 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 28th February 2017 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

359 Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk

The Health Parking and Community Safety Manager introduced this item and explained that the Council's duties in terms of safeguarding had increased significantly over the past few years. However, ABC was not an investigative

authority but had statutory responsibility to report all of its findings. Awareness training had been delivered to staff over the last year, and the level of training received was tailored to the level of interaction with the children and adults at risk that each staff member had. A bi annual audit had been completed and the returning mark was 100% compliance, and the Council's safeguarding was recorded as 'sound' by the Audit Partnership.

The Chairman then opened up this item for discussion, and the following questions/comments were made:

- A Member asked whether it was possible to quantify the problem in the Borough. The Health Parking and Community Safety Manager explained that it was not currently possible because a variety of agencies collected different segments of information, but this was certainly a consideration for the future.
- The Chairman raised the question as to whether Members should also receive training on Safeguarding and if it could form part of their Induction. The Committee agreed that it was important for Members to be trained since they were interacting with ward members and were sometimes the first point of call before officers. The Health Parking and Community Safety Manager agreed that the training would be beneficial, but it would need willingness from Members since previous sessions had not been well attended.
- In response to a question asking whether all Members should be DBS checked, the Health Parking and Community Safety Manager explained that it was not possible to issue a blanket check for all Members; each check was dependent on the individual's circumstances. He stated that it was important to achieve a balance since not all staff or contractors working within the Council required specialist training, and the criteria varied depending on individual roles.
- A Member made reference to the E-Learning portal for Councillors and suggested that training for Members could be delivered via several methods to ensure that those unable to attend a face to face training session were still able to access the training electronically. The Chairman agreed and suggested opening up the training to Parish Councillors as well.
- The Committee discussed digital safeguarding training and the Health Parking and Community Safety Manager talked about the Safety in Action programme that was delivered to almost all Year 6 students in the borough over a two week period in June. Consideration was being made to provide something similar to residents in sheltered housing accommodation.
- The Committee discussed various ways of reporting and to whom. The Health Parking and Community Safety Manager outlined the procedures for reporting - these included in person to any member of staff, via the web or email. He also highlighted the importance of trusting gut instincts and assured Members that all lines of enquiry were followed up and incorporated an audit trail so that checks could be made throughout. Bi-monthly meetings

were held with a group of lead safeguarding officers, and because the issue was constantly shifting, the Council had to ensure it could adapt to new threats and risks.

- A Member asked about slavery and exploitation in both urban and rural areas and what was being done to tackle the issue. The Health Parking and Community Safety Manager advised that this issue was a priority of the Community Safety Partnership and the lead agency was Kent Police as they were the lead on investigating organised crime. He added that staff entering premises to undertake inspections had received the safeguarding training and therefore knew what signs to look out for and report if necessary.
- The Portfolio Holder thanked the Health Parking and Community Safety Manager and other officers for all of their hard work on the report. With reference to the Council receiving the award for 100% compliance after previously being recorded as 'weak', the Portfolio Holder said he was confident that this improvement would continue going forward.

Recommendation:

- i) That safeguarding training form part of the induction training package for new Councillors**
- ii) That level 2 safeguarding training sessions are made available for Borough Councillors**
- iii) That consideration be given to making safeguarding training available to Parish Councillors**

360 Programme setting for Overview & Scrutiny

The Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer introduced this item and explained that Members were invited to identify and submit ideas for topics to be considered by the Committee for inclusion in the Overview & Scrutiny annual work programme. These should be submitted via e-mail to him by April 10th. A draft report would then be circulated to Management Team.

The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following questions/comments were made:

- Several Members had already submitted their ideas for consideration; one of which was the Relocation of Ashford Water Treatment Works. It was noted that this topic had been under consideration by the Committee recently and engagement with Southern Water had shown that due to the estimated £200-300 million cost associated with relocation, it was extremely unlikely Scrutiny in this area could lead to any effective outcomes. One Member said that the water companies should be scrutinised since Ashford was a growth town and the Committee needed to be aware in advance of their plans in order to review and comment. The Group agreed that a visit to the Treatment Works site could be beneficial and give Members the opportunity to ask questions at

source.

- The Chairman said that any topic ideas would need to be concise and have a defined scope, but could be ward specific. The Senior Policy, Performance & Scrutiny Officer explained that the Work Plan sought to provide an overarching programme of longer term work, and was about key strategic and significant issues affecting residents of the Borough.
- Members were encouraged to hear that the Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer had recently attended a Water Planning meeting hosted by KCC, which included attendance by water and utilities companies. A summary from that meeting would be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The following list encompassed the ideas put forward by Members at the meeting:

- Relocation of Ashford Water Treatment Works
- An understanding of the Planning process
- Air Quality
- Junction 10A and widening of the A28
- Youth engagement
- Scrutiny of Cabinet Member forward plans
- Rented accommodation conditions
- New sewer in East Ashford

361 Future Reviews and Report Tracker and Topic Selection Flowchart

Resolved:

That the Report Tracker be received and noted.

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Clare Ricketts:
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