

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 November 2017**.

Present:

Cllr. Chilton (Chairman);
Cllr. Ovenden (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Bartlett, Burgess, Feacey, Hicks, Krause, Macpherson, Miss Martin, Mrs. Martin.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bradford, Shorter.

Head of Health, Parking & Community Safety, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications, Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer, Member Services Officer.

Apologies:

Cllr. A Howard, Knowles.

237 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bartlett	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" as a Member of the KCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	239
Feacey	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" as Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Bureau	239

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Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 24th October 2017 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

239 Overview of Priority Health Issues for Ashford

The Head of Health, Parking & Community Safety introduced this item and explained that the report contained information on the work undertaken by the Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board as well as priority public health issues for the Borough. She

added that the report also trailed some issues raised during the O&S Meeting with the Clinical Commissioning Group, but that it was important to remember that their objectives were much broader than the Council's, and the impact of their Sustainability Transformation Plan (STP) had yet to be understood.

The report was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions and points were raised: -

- A Member had recently attended the KCC Overview & Scrutiny meeting where A&E care in East Kent was discussed, and the option of creating a super hospital in East Kent and closing the A&E department at the William Harvey Hospital was being considered. He urged Members to engage in the consultation process and invited them to become Members of the East Kent NHS Foundation Trust. The Head of Health, Parking & Community Safety added that Members also explore other supporting avenues including the Ashford CCG Community Networks and Patient Participation Groups.
- The Portfolio Holder for Health, Parking & Community Safety talked to the Committee further about the STP and the CCGs intention to transfer services away from a hospital environment and shift towards more community led care. There was a clear need to promote a change in culture to encourage people to take care of themselves in order to prevent illness further down the line.
- Some Members had visited Farrow Court; the Council's recently re-modelled Sheltered Housing Facility. Eight of the units there were KCC led for the intermediate care of people coming out of hospital, but unfortunately, there seemed not to be the appetite to enter further into these type of arrangements with the Borough Council.
- A general discussion then ensued regarding healthcare across Kent and the increasing pressures on infrastructure. Members and Officers agreed that the CCG were not engaging with partners and needed to be held to account; it was recommended that a representative from the CCG be invited back to discuss the STP and hospital plans with the O&S Committee. A suggestion was made that a representative from KCC also attend the same meeting so that transport services could be discussed in conjunction with health care. A Member pointed out that other methods of transport were available to the elderly and infirm including the KCC dial-a-ride service and the Ashford Volunteer Bureau's car scheme.
- The Chairman asked what, if anything, was in place for tenants in private rented accommodation that may experience problems in relation to housing conditions. The Head of Health, Parking & Community Safety explained that the Private Sector Housing Team were able to assist with these issues. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT referred to the Homelessness Reduction Act. He explained that the Council Tax and Welfare Reform Task Group had been considering the implications of the Act in detail and it could be worthwhile to invite Officers to provide the Committee with an update.

- A point was raised regarding ensuring access to affordable sport and leisure facilities.
- Consideration was given to the night time economy in the Borough and problems that could arise from excessive alcohol consumption. An increase in the number of people visiting the town at night time was expected once the Elwick Place Development was completed, and the Portfolio Holder for Health, Parking and Community Safety explained that licensees needed to work together with the Police and Local Authority to ensure a vibrant and safe environment for visitors.
- CCTV in the Town Centre was discussed and the Head of Health, Parking & Community Safety explained that funding of £250k to improve CCTV had been granted in 2015 and the first phase of that project had been to implement a single operating platform to enable viewing of multiple images on fewer terminals. This was now complete and the second phase was underway, which was to replace the cameras in Tenterden before moving onto Ashford. A Member suggested a risk assessment be undertaken to review and identify any blind spots.

Recommendations:

- That
- i) The Report be received and noted,
 - ii) The Committee endorse the Council's current health and wellbeing activities,
 - iii) The Committee encourage all Members to actively engage with the Council's health and wellbeing agenda and promote where possible those activities that further this agenda as relevant to the Corporate Plan,
 - iv) The Committee encourage all Members to actively engage with the East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust over the urgent, emergency and acute medical service options to ensure the services are protected and developed at the William Harvey Hospital.

240 Report of Air Quality Task Group

The Chairman of the Air Quality Task Group introduced this item and thanked Officers and the Task Group for all of their hard work. He added that the aim was for Ashford to be at the forefront of Air Quality issues.

The report was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions and points were raised: -

- In response to a question asking whether sewerage odour had been studied in the report, the Chairman of the Air Quality Task Group explained that the initial investigations had been undertaken in relation to deaths attributable to air

pollution only, but it was a live document and other factors for examination would be added in as time progressed.

- Members discussed the Governments budget announcement that £500 million had been allocated to encourage the purchase and use of electric cars, and facilitate improvements to supporting infrastructure. All agreed that Ashford should make a bid for a portion of that funding.
- A Member talked about the need to be realistic when placing restrictions on Listed Buildings concerning windows and insulation. He suggested a review be undertaken since the biggest outlay for residents was the cost of fuel.

Resolved:

That the Report be received and noted and the Committee endorse all of the Recommendations within it.

241 Quarter 2 2017/18 Performance Report

The Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer introduced this item and alluded to the highlights listed on paragraph 7. He reminded Members that all of the information was also available via the online dashboard.

The report was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions and points were raised: -

- A Member asked whether the Council considered retail feasibility when granting leases to new tenants in the Town Centre. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT explained that this was not something the Council would get involved with since it was a decision for each individual business to take. The only consideration for the Council was around licensing issues.
- A suggestion was made that square footage be included in the criteria for measuring vacancy rates, to ensure it was fully representative. The Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer agreed to refer this point to relevant Officers.
- Members discussed investment in the Town Centre and the public's concern that the Council's focus was primarily on Elwick Place. Some Members felt that it would be beneficial for the Cabinet to discuss Town Centre plans with other Members, in order to alleviate any concerns.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

242 Future Reviews and Report Tracker and Topic Selection Flowchart

The Chairman asked if the Committee were happy to defer December's O&S meeting owing to the forthcoming Budget Scrutiny meetings and all agreed.

He then asked for any suggestions for discussion at future meetings. A Member suggested the STP be added for spring 2018 and asked whether the Town Centre Plans could be considered, in the form of a pink paper report. The Chairman stated that commercial sensitivities would have to be considered in setting any such item as part of the work programme. Pending its approval by Cabinet, a future review of the Clean Air strategy was suggested and agreed.

The Chairman then closed the meeting and thanked Members and Officers for their input and wished them all a Happy Christmas.

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Clare Ricketts:
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