

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL



2 APRIL 2012 - 2.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Jolley(Chairman), Councillor Chambers(Vice-Chairman), Councillors Booth, Mrs Bucknor, Cornwell, Farmer, Hodgson, Miscandlon, Peachey, Scrimshaw and Stebbing.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Butcher, Cotterell, Garratt and Owen (until 3.30pm)

OBSERVING: Councillors Seaton and Sutton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Bailey, Jane Bailey, Richard Cassidy, Sarah Gove, Phil Hughes, Geoff Kent, Alan Pain and Carol Pilson

OS39/11 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 20 February 2012 were confirmed and signed subject to the following amendments (changes underlined):

- Minute number OS33/11, bullet point 24.

The first sentence will now read: Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to anti-social behaviour issues, people know when the PCSO finishes their shift for the evening, therefore shift patterns for the PCSO's should change so that people do not know when they have finished.

- Minute number OS33/11, bullet point 13

The last sentence now reads: Mick Gipp agreed that the numbers would be made available to members;

- Minute number OS33/11, bullet point 1

The last sentence now reads: Mike Winters confirmed that was correct, officers are instructed to do what ever is necessary to carry out their duties;

- Minute number OS 37/11, bullet point 3

The bullet point now reads: Councillor Farmer asked why the company 'Atkins' were chose to write this report given his understanding of their own accident record, and how many others were considered for the job. Gary Garford confirmed that Atkins were the only contractor approached for the work, and stated that we wanted to get an independent view and approached Atkins as the County Council contractor for highways advice;

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

OS40/11 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - LOCALISM

Councillor Owen presented the Progress of Corporate Priority - Localism Report to the Panel.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the report refers to the number of homes that have received Disabled Facilities Grants to enable them to carry out modifications on their

property and asked if we know the number of people who apply but are not successful, or who enquire. Councillor Owen stated that we do not currently keep a record of this, as residents are asked to call back to apply at a later date, when more funds will be available, agreed to find out if any information is recorded when people enquire about this grant;

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how are we letting young people know about the deposit scheme, how do they know we can help. Councillor Owen stated that when people register as homeless they are notified of the housing schemes available to them. Sarah Gove confirmed that they are in touch with people on a one to one basis to assist with each case individually;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked where are we getting the figures for rough sleepers, as 7 seems a very low number, and she is aware of 3 currently sleeping in Lloyds Bank. Sarah Gove stated that the figures come from partners, usually police and fire authorities, and explained that they are aware of the rough sleepers in Lloyds Bank and will be attending that site the next day;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how far have we got at establishing a Credit Union in Fenland. Councillor Butcher stated that we are still looking into the project at the moment. Sarah Gove stated that we are developing a report for Cabinet to bring this project into Fenland;
- Councillor Farmer asked that with regards to a Credit Union, why has this never been looked into before and what are the advantages and disadvantages of having one in this area. Councillor Owen stated that people need money and will obtain from where ever it is available without fully realising what they are getting into. If a Credit Union is in place it will limit the opportunity for loan sharks in that area;
- Councillor Farmer asked if setting up a Credit Union will cost this council any money. Councillor Owen stated that he was not able to answer that question at this time as they are still working on the report;
- Councillor Miscandlon asked what is being done concerning the houses of multiple occupancy being reported. Councillor Owen stated that they are all treated in the same way. Sarah Gove confirmed that the 13 that we know about are licensed, the other 597 houses of multiple occupancy are being looked after in the same way to ensure that people are safe;
- Councillor Farmer asked how we have identified that there are 597 houses of multiple occupancy. Sarah Gove stated that these figures are as a result of the decent homes survey. The definition of houses of multiple occupancy are as follows: in a 3 story property 5 people or more living together who are unrelated and in a 2 story property 3 people or more living together who are unrelated;
- Councillor Bucknor asked if it would be possible for members to be provided with a list of these properties within their ward. Councillor Owen confirmed that this would be possible;
- Councillor Cornwell asked when will the Community Cohesion Action Plan be available. David Bailey stated that officers are working on that now, we have identified the key points and are now populating actions from that list, it is expected that it will be ready in 4/5 weeks;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked what are the key points. David Bailey stated that the key points are:
 - Delivering formal and informal ESOL (English as a Second Language) training;
 - Ensure that clear guidelines, including principles of confidentiality, are produced for key partners in the Fenland Strategic Partnership Board regarding deployment of bilingual assistants and officers;
 - To address the issues of overcrowding in domestic premises that lead to tensions around waste management, fire, noise, nuisance and anti social parking, neighbourhood disputes and community tensions;
 - Maintaining up to- date New Arrivals and Travellers Packs;
 - Establish an effective community mapping process including migrants, Gypsy Travellers and other minority groups;
 - Organise and promote an ongoing schedule of community engagement activities and entertainment which will celebrate the diversity of Fenland and its resident's cultures and traditions;

- Hold an (annual) school welcome and induction event for migrant and Gypsy Traveller parents, with representatives of related public services invited to attend;
 - Develop a programme for work with the young indigenous population and their parents promoting good relationships with the migrant , Gypsy Traveller and Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities;
 - Encourage the local media to report positive stories about Gypsy Travellers, migrants and other minority groups positive role in the community;
 - Improve access to mental, sexual health and contraceptive/ general health and wellbeing advice/ services in both clinical and non- clinical settings;
 - To work with Children's Social Care to respond to the increased levels of referrals to the Social Care Intake Team;
 - To address street drinking amongst members of the migrant community in market towns.
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she is particularly interested in looking at the makeup of the community and has a number of concerns regarding cohesion;
 - Councillor Hodgson asked if residents in the Waterlees area are still visited and asked about what they would like to see take place at Community House. Councillor Owen confirmed that this is still happening;
 - Councillor Booth asked why when officers visit Waterlees, Staithe and Clarkson Wards do they not also visit the Kirkgate Ward. Councillor Owen stated that the need is taken from the deprivation statistics, and it would appear that they are in less need of this intervention;
 - Councillor Scrimshaw asked what is being done to lessen rural isolation. Councillor Butcher stated that we are working with the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Project looking at alternative travel solutions for people living in rural areas;
 - Councillor Peachey stated that with reference to the Council investment to support rural communities section of the report, it is not clear what work has been carried out on Benwick Village Hall, and asked was it a rebuild or a refurbishment. Councillor Butcher confirmed that the work was a rebuild on one side of the old building;
 - Councillor Cornwell asked how many New Arrivals Packs were distributed. David Bailey stated that 5000 have been distributed, however these have now been changed to folders and update sheets can be printed to keep them up to date;
 - Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if the New Arrivals Packs are available on our website. David Bailey confirmed that the New Arrivals Packs are available on the Fenland Website in various languages;
 - Councillor Cornwell asked that with regards to the Ageing Well Workshop, what outcomes do we have from this event. Councillor Butcher state that this was a very useful event, there will be three taking place altogether in different areas and we hope to get some feedback once they have all taken place;
 - Councillor Jolley stated that the Golden Age Fairs are very successful, and everybody appreciates the hard work that Councillor Cotterell puts into them;
 - Councillor Booth stated that the Golden Age Fairs are managing to get very good attendance numbers, and asked how are we attracting those people. Councillor Cotterell stated that word of mouth amongst those people attending lets many people know about events coming up and we circulate leaflets;
 - Councillor Bucknor asked that regarding the Community Alarms what type of alarm are they. Sarah Gove stated that the alarms are the industry standard;
 - Councillor Cornwell asked that with regards to maintaining physical activity levels in older people, how successful are the events arranged. Councillor Garratt stated that these events are very popular and that between 40 and 60 people attended the Tea Dances, he agreed to pass on attendance figures for other events;
 - Councillor Hodgson asked for clarification that with regards to community grants update how do car schemes operate. Sarah Gove stated that volunteer drivers register their car and they are then paid mileage for hospital trips;

- Councillor Cornwell asked with regards to the Chatteris Leisure Centre, do the future plans include a swimming pool. Councillor Garratt stated that the plans do not include a swimming pool. In time there may be a pool built in Chatteris;
- Councillor Farmer stated that there is a private pool in Chatteris;
- Councillor Cornwell asked that with regards to swimming galas taking place at the Manor Leisure Centre, do these events have an effect on local use. Councillor Garratt stated that it is clear that we have better facilities, and so it is good that they come to us to hold these events. A big gala will bring in 250 people, and for this reason we are happy to hire to them. We will always ensure that information goes out to users in plenty of time to let them know of changes to pool opening times;
- Councillor Peachey asked that with regards to the Soft Play Areas, are the visitor numbers and income reaching expectations. Councillor Garratt stated that the Soft Play areas have been very successful, there were no expectations set, but these figures will be a benchmark for next year, and we hope to see them rise further with more promotional work;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked that with regards to the 'Come back to us' project, it would seem that it is a fairly small number who actually come back to us to increase income by £2,300, what is the cost of this exercise. Councillor Garratt stated that the cost of this exercise is minimal, a text message is sent to previous customers to open up communication with them;
- Councillor Booth asked if we know why people stop using the facilities in the first place. Councillor Garratt stated that the reasons are mostly because of the downturn in the economic climate;
- Councillor Booth stated that in the future it would be useful to have a breakdown of that information, and asked if the use of the swimming pool use has been affected since the withdrawal of the Free Swimming scheme. Councillor Garratt stated that even since the withdrawal of the Free Swimming scheme we have seen an increase in swimmers;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked that with regards to the Wisbech Gets Physical project, is the Orchards School a part of that scheme. Councillor Garratt stated that he was sure that it was, but would confirm following the meeting;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the first five paragraphs regarding promoting Healthy Lifestyles are referring to last year, and asked what are the plans for this year. Sarah Gove stated that there are a range of activities arranged this year to promote Healthy Lifestyles in Fenland;
- Councillor Garratt stated that he and Councillor Curtis attended an Olympic Meeting and the Hudson Leisure Centre will be the venue for a Paralympic event in August. This is very good news for the whole area, we are planning to have a family fun event on the day too;
- Councillor Garratt stated that the Youth District Council's (YDC) Campaign this year is 'Respect and Dignity', posters and questionnaires have been displayed in secondary schools in Fenland and the findings will be analysed. The YDC are doing excellent work, and are already planning the next campaign which will be looking at getting young people ready for leaving school. They will be looking at applying for jobs, interview skills and compiling a CV. It appears from talking to the members of the YDC that not all schools offer the same support in this area, and this needs to change to give the young people in this area a better chance of gaining employment when they leave school;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that in Wisbech there are a number of organisations that help with these issues too, these organisations services are not aimed at school leavers but could offer some assistance. Councillor Garratt agreed to pass comments onto officers;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if a Wisbech Councillor had attended the Democracy Day event. Councillor Garratt confirmed that a Wisbech Councillor attended this event;
- Councillor Cornwell asked that with regards to GP Consortia, how are we going to make this more coordinated. Richard Cassidy stated that we are looking at how we can work better together for the benefit of the people in this locality;
- Councillor Farmer asked that with regards to the work placement programme, is there any more information available on this programme. Alan Pain agreed to circulate an update to members;

- Councillor Booth stated that we have received information about what has happened, but it would be useful in the future to have a table of what is planned for the coming year. Carol Pilson confirmed that this is something that can be incorporated into future reports;
- Councillor Booth stated that it appears that some of the items crossover. Carol Pilson agreed that there will sometimes be a crossover but that there are always clear objectives for each priority.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Progress in Delivering The Localism Corporate Objectives 2011-12 Report.

OS41/11 OLDER PEOPLE

Councillor Butcher presented the Older People Report to the panel.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Farmer stated that he did not feel that there was any context to the report as it is not clear how Fenland compares to the rest of the country. Councillor Butcher stated that the fact is that Fenland has more older people living here;
- Councillor Jolley asked if we have comparison figures for the rest of the country Councillor Butcher stated that we do not compare ourselves to the rest of the country;
- Councillor Farmer stated that historically people retire to this area due to the low property prices and the flat area is good for mobility issues. Councillor Butcher agreed that this was a major factor in the number of older people living in the area;
- Councillor Peachey asked that with regards to deprivation, are there concerns about the resources that this council has to meet the demand. Councillor Butcher stated that there are always concerns about finances, we work closely with partners and are always looking at government grants and funding to help with these issues;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she is worries about deprivation and about funding for the people of Wisbech. Despite the fact that this is a huge challenge we have to address these figures. Councillor Butcher agreed that it is not acceptable and in Fenland we will do all that we can to improve the lives of its residents;
- Councillor Booth stated that we are always going to be in the lower 50% and its just not good enough, we need to ensure that we are on top of these issues. Its about getting resources targeted and not always looking at the bigger picture. Councillor Cotterell agreed but stated that the money for better services has to come from somewhere;
- Councillor Stebbing stated that we have established that we have more older people in this area, and that the situation is going to get worse unless a there is a massive injection of cash. Councillor Butcher stated that we are always applying for new grants and funding, we are always looking for new ways to get cash into Fenland. Richard Cassidy agreed with Councillor Stebbing and stated that Cambridgeshire as a whole against the country is not poor, but there are pockets within Cambridgeshire that are not so good. We do look at where funding is best focused, and engage with the community on how that money is spent for the best outcomes in that area;
- Councillor Cotterell stated that people are living longer and so the problem here is getting worse naturally;
- Councillor Cornwell stated that we should not always think that if you are an older person living in Fenland that you are deprived. Looking at the report it would seem that one ward is doing nicely and others are not, more work needs to be done to understand more about why this is happening. Councillor Butcher stated that there are many reasons that people can be described as deprived, i.e. if you live in a village with no footpath and no street lighting you are described as deprived;
- Councillor Farmer stated that we do not know where the pockets of ill health are, and we do not know if they are people that are born and grew up in this area, or if they are people that have moved into this area, we do not have enough information;

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that some of the statistics that are in this report go back too far and once again we are being asked to look at percentages and not figures, we need to have figures in these reports. We need to be more forceful getting the right people to listen to us about Fenland and their needs. Fenland needs to have proper long term plans;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that there is a big population of Eastern European families in this area, and very little is known about them. Councillor Butcher agreed that this is an issue in this area, and we are making efforts to involve everybody within the community, so that these families become part of the community too;
- Councillor Peachey asked that with regards to the grant situation do we know how this is divided. Richard Cassidy stated that it is divided on a demographic basis, the amount for Cambridgeshire is not very high as Cambridgeshire as a whole is not in great need;
- Councillor Miscandlon asked what is being done to address fuel poverty, are there fuel buying schemes set up in this area. Councillor Butcher stated that there are currently no fuel buying schemes set up in this area. Fenland was awarded £24,000 last year to help people who were experiencing fuel poverty. Councillor Cotterell stated that there is a lot of information about this at the Golden Age Events;
- Councillor Booth asked if Fenland have looked at EU funding. Councillor Cotterell stated that we have looked at all ways possible of getting more funding for Fenland;
- Councillor Farmer stated that with regards to smoking related deaths, it does not appear that figures are much higher in this area, and asked are we putting money into projects aimed at schools which could be better spent elsewhere. Councillor Butcher stated that the Kick Ash Programme was a very successful programme. It has been proved that those on lower earnings are more likely to smoke than those on higher earnings, this is down to education once again. We want people in this area to be healthy. It is worth noting that these programmes are not all funded by Fenland;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to the Golden Age Emergency Planning presentations to Parish and Town Councils, when is it expected that these will take place. Councillor Cotterell stated that this programme has already started, we have been visiting the most remote areas first and hope to get around the whole of the district by the end of the year;
- Councillor Farmer stated that this is not a statutory requirement for us, and asked if we are duplicating work carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council. Councillor Cotterell stated that we are visiting remote areas so that if an emergency situation should arise like no electricity for three days, those people would know exactly what to do and where to go for help and assistance;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she knew of a situation where word was spread using a social media website, and asked if it would be possible to set something up like that here for each Town and Parish. Councillor Cotterell stated that the website is being updated to incorporate these issues;
- Councillor Farmer stated that there is a tendency for people in the Fenland area not to go to the Doctor's surgery, however if we promote the flu jab this may encourage more people to go to see their GP. Whilst they are there they might mention some other problems that they are experiencing and can get help and information. Would this help with the number of winter deaths that happen in this area? Councillor Butcher stated that there are already a large number of people taking up the offer of a flu jab;
- Councillor Booth stated that with regards to the Assisted Bin Collections, although this is a good service we do also receive complaints, the reports need to be more balanced;
- Councillor Jolley stated that everybody is concerned about future problems because the age of the population and the fact that we are a low income area. We do not want to push the younger population away, it starts with education in schools, we need to get good teachers into schools to address the issues in the future. We need to address the education problem that we have in this area. Smoking and health problems are very serious issues in Fenland. There are some areas that are suffering because of the people moving into them. We do not have a magic wand, we need to work closely with partners to make changes;
- Councillor Butcher agreed with Councillor Jolley's points and added that we do need to look

at the younger population in the area too, we need jobs here to encourage young people to stay in Fenland;

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that we should ask Cabinet if we can seek special funding for deprivation specifically for Fenland. Councillor Cotterell stated that this already being looked into;
- Councillor Booth proposed that the panel note the report as it is and ask the Portfolio Holder to put together an action plan and report back to Overview and Scrutiny Panel in 6 months. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Mrs Bucknor and the panel agreed;

Councillor Jolley thanked all for attending the meeting today.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed to note the Older People Report and request that the Portfolio Holder returns in 6 months to present an action plan.

OS42/11 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2012/13 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2012/13 subject to the following additions:

- **Procurement - to be added to the meeting scheduled for 21 May 2012**
- **Middle Level Drainage Boards - to be added to the meeting scheduled for 6 August 2012**
- **Local Health Partnership Update - to be added to the meeting scheduled for 22 April 13**

5.00pm

Chairman