

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

7 APRIL 2014 - 2.30PM



PRESENT: Councillor Chambers (Chairman), Councillor Mrs French (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Broker, Mrs Bucknor, Hodgson, Stebbing, Sutton and Swan.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Miss Hoy

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Val Thomas - NHS, Councillors Butcher, Cornwell, Garratt, Humphrey, King, Melton, Oliver and Seaton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jane Bailey, Jo Blackmore, Richard Cassidy, Anna Goodall, Dan Horn, Phil Hughes, Geoff Kent and Carol Pilson

OSC32/13 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2014 were agreed and signed.

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

OSC33/13 FENLAND HEALTH AND WELL BEING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Members considered the Fenland Health and Well Being Partnership Update presented by Val Thomas.

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

1. Councillor Swan stated that there have been stories in the media with regards to TB in a Chatteris factory and asked what measures are in place to address this issue, and is there any data to show that this is on the increase in Fenland. Val Thomas stated that the TB cases reported in the Chatteris Factory are the only that we are currently aware of in Fenland, we are not aware of any others or of an outbreak in the area. She added that local GP's are very aware of the situation, but at this stage there is no recommendation to screen;
2. Councillor Swan asked at what level will cases have to get to before we have to think about something like screening. Val Thomas stated that Public Health England will continue to monitor the situation and when they feel that it is necessary they will take the next steps;
3. Councillor Swan asked if there is need to be worried. Val Thomas confirmed that there is no need to worry, the situation is being very closely monitored;
4. Councillor Chambers asked why members were not aware of the outbreak. Val Thomas stated that the reported cases are receiving treatment and the situation is being closely monitored, there is no threat to the local community;
5. Councillor Swan asked if it has been kept under the radar so as not to scare local people. Val Thomas confirmed that if the cases were increasing, then further steps would have been taken, but this has not been necessary;
6. Councillor Mrs French asked that with regards to the Cumulative Impact Zone (CIZ) to prevent the hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption, how much is this costing FDC. Val Thomas confirmed that there is no cost to FDC, there are a number of partners working together to achieve the outcomes for this project;

7. Councillor Broker stated that there seems to be mention of Wisbech in almost every paragraph, and asked if the statistics are coming from the people who have always lived in that area or from the people moving there from abroad. Val Thomas stated that the data we look at does not directly identify this split, and focuses on a population group from that area only;
8. Councillor Sutton stated that with regards to the super strength campaign there have been issues at Licensing Hearings and restrictions have been put in place but they are not always effective and asked where this Council is going wrong. Val Thomas stated that it takes a lot of energy and effort to put these agreements in place, but there is a question to ask about if this is the right policy for the area. Councillor Cornwell stated that this issue crosses over various partnerships and suggested that we should put these questions to the other partnership groups. Dan Horn confirmed that super strength scheme is being looked at through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), who are reviewing the best way to take this forward. The CSP will be invited to a future meeting and will be able to provide members with a full update at that time;
9. Councillor Cornwell stated that results provided from Accident and Emergency departments did not indicate a particular problem with any part of the population, there is no firm evidence to say that one group more than any other is causing these issues.

Councillor Chambers thanked Val Thomas for attending the meeting and answering questions put to her by the panel.

OSC34/13 PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE LOCALISM CORPORATE OBJECTIVES 2013-14

Members considered the Progress on Delivering the Localism Corporate Objectives 2013 - 14 Report presented by Councillors Cornwell and Garratt.

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

1. Councillor Mrs French referring to the report stated that it is disappointing that she has read an article in the newspaper with regards to benefit fraud; she added that as elected members that information should be shared with them. Geoff Kent confirmed that this is a valid point and agreed to ensure that information is shared more regularly in future;
2. Councillor Mrs French stated that the campaign working with Housing Associations which has provided surgeries for potential claimants in Wisbech with regards to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) is a great idea, and there is no problem with them holding a surgery in Wisbech, but asked when are they going to visit Chatteris, March and Whittlesey. Geoff Kent confirmed that the surgery was held in Wisbech as this is the area where most applications for housing benefits are submitted. The surgery advises anyone who is in receipt of benefits. Councillor Mrs French suggested that it would be a good idea to publicise this in the local press. Geoff Kent agreed that this will advertised as a matter of urgency;
3. Councillor Sutton asked if this means that there have been no applications from any of the other market towns. Geoff Kent stated that applications have come in from across the district, the venue was chosen in Wisbech as this is the area where most applications had come in from;
4. Councillor Broker stated that the report refers to the fact that the Council successfully bid for funding to tackle rogue landlords in Fenland and £178,000 was awarded. He asked what amounts are being spent and where and if we are spending this funding efficiently. Dan Horn confirmed that the funding has been spent efficiently and that the funding award has to have been spent by 15 April and we are on target for that deadline. He agreed update more detailed figures to full council ;

5. Councillor Mrs French congratulated everyone involved with Operation Endeavour and asked why there have been no outcomes with regards to Gangmasters reported in this document. Dan Horn confirmed that this report highlights the role we were playing, but one case has gone through due process and others are currently going through. Councillor Mrs French stated that she has read information about this in the press already, but feels once again that as elected members they should have that information and should know what is going on;
6. Councillor Mrs French stated that the report refers to the fact that 139 complaints were made by tenants occupying privately rented accommodation, but tells us little more information, what happened, how many rogue landlords were involved etc. Dan Horn stated that these complaints related to serious defects that affect the health and safety of tenants and agreed to produce a summary. Richard Cassidy confirmed that officers can arrange for a more detailed update as part of the forthcoming meeting with the Safer Fenland Partnership;
7. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked for more information about the Tension Monitoring Group, how many times have they met, is there an action plan. Dan Horn confirmed that the Tension Monitoring Group was set up last April and meets quarterly to gather intelligence and to look at what is coming up. This group is linked to the Diverse Communities Forum;
8. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked why there is no report with regards to the Tension Monitoring Group. Dan Horn confirmed there is no formal report as they are an intelligence gathering group, with lots of communication by email. He added that if there is an issue, to ensure the information is timely details are circulated by email;
9. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked for clarification if this group is different to the SFP. Dan Horn confirmed that this group just deal with issues around tension;
10. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if this group are just reactive or if they have any proactive plans. Dan Horn stated that the group try to look at both, looking at intelligence right now as well as what might be coming up in the next few months;
11. Councillor Mrs French stated that the table of information in the report with regards to Community House tells members nothing; there is very little information within it. Councillor Swan stated that the information with regards to Community House contains no negative feedback and how we have developed from that feedback. He asked what was this feedback and how have we dealt with it. Dan Horn stated that he had tried to summarise the headline issues of the work carried out at Community House. Happy to investigate producing a further breakdown. He agreed and noted the request for what has been done in response to negative feedback;
12. Councillor Swan stated that he would have expected that information to have been included, it is important to look at the negative as well as the positive feedback;
13. Councillor Sutton agreed with Councillor Swan's comment, asking Dan Horn what was the negative feedback, how was that dealt with and what did we learn from that. Dan Horn agreed to investigate and feedback to members;
14. Councillor Mrs French stated that it would have been good to have been informed about the refurbishment of the New Horizons Bus and asked what the cost of this refurbishment was to FDC. Dan Horn confirmed that there was communication regarding the bus launch and that the refurbishment was paid for with successful Big Lottery Funding, which also pays for some of the ongoing costs for the bus moving forward;
15. Councillor Mrs French stated that members are repeatedly asking for breakdowns for information relating to individual towns, the information in the report with regards to Museums is across the 4 museums. There is also a lack of broken down information with regards to the Golden Age events, these events are great and well attended, but a breakdown of how many are attending each area would be helpful, and enable us to target the events not so well attended. Dan Horn agreed to investigate getting the information broken down for members;
16. Councillor Stebbing agreed and stated that each museum must be feeding their numbers into this data, so it should be very straight forward to break it down;

17. Councillor Cornwell stated that the issue with regards to the lack of dentists in the area was raised at last week's Health and Well Being Meeting and the answer was frustrating. Primary Care is commissioned from NHS England; the local NHS does not actually commission the primary care. We know that this is an issue and there is a public consultation taking place at the moment, we are hoping that these issues are identified within that consultation;
18. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to the Community Transport Services she was surprised that to use FACT you have to be a member and reach certain criteria. Councillor Butcher confirmed that FACT operates the Dial-a-ride services in Fenland and that to his knowledge you have to reach a certain criteria to use Dial-a-Ride. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that as a result of funding cuts the service only operates Monday to Friday now. Councillor Butcher confirmed that the FDC concessionary fares budget for 2013/2014 was capped at £50,000;
19. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked what the contribution is from other agencies. Councillor Butcher stated that this information would be public, and will ask if FACT can provide the documents concerned;
20. Councillor Mrs French stated that it is encouraging to see that leisure centre memberships have increased, but members have repeatedly asked for a breakdown for each town. She added that page 32 of the report refers to software providing customer data, and asked if this software can provide the data to tell us which centres the customers are using. She reminded officers that she has asked for this breakdown on many occasions. Richard Cassidy stated that in future officers would provide O&S with information relating to the number of paid visits to each of the leisure centres;
21. Councillor Swan stated that every time he goes to the leisure centre he has to swipe into the centre and asked if these numbers could be counted to give a breakdown of how many customers attend each of the centres. Richard Cassidy agreed to breakdown the attendances to provide data in future on how many are using each centre;
22. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to the rebranding of the leisure centres, when will the names be reinstated. Councillor Garratt stated that in Councillor Jolley's absence he will agree to investigate and get back to members;
23. Councillor Mrs French stated that the report refers to the numbers of young people on swimming lesson courses but once again there is no breakdown of these figures and asked how many young people are taking lessons at each leisure centre. Richard Cassidy agreed to investigate and feedback to members with a breakdown;
24. Councillor Mrs Bucknor suggested that this panel does not receive reports unless there are breakdowns included for this type of data. It is not possible for members to get a view of anything without this level of detail in the reports. Councillor Garratt agreed to share the panel's concerns with Councillor Jolley so that this can be rectified in the future;
25. Councillor Mrs French stated that this issue is across all reports at all meetings, information is not broken down across the district but detailed as one number for the whole area;
26. Councillor Chambers asked with regards to the Swimming lesson courses, are there any grants available or financial assistance of any kind offered for families on low incomes. Richard Cassidy stated that he was not aware of any assistance available;
27. Councillor Swan stated that congratulations should be offered as there has been a big increase of customers coming to the leisure centres, the rebranding and new equipment is 'a breath of fresh air' and is encouraging new members to join. He asked what the council plan to do to keep the equipment up to date, this type of equipment gets out of date very quickly. Richard Cassidy stated that Councillor Swan's comments about the rebranding and equipment are welcome as the project has brought an increase in visits to the centres. As a way of continuing to encourage new customers it is important to keep the equipment in good working order and up to date. The equipment is on a lease including a contract for timely repairs, if there is a new piece of equipment that we must have we will look to see how we can bring that in. He confirmed that the Council had considered keeping some of the old equipment, but decided against this plan, and the new investment does appear to be paying off in terms of customer interest. Councillor Swan agreed that this is all good news for the

leisure centres;

28. Councillor Mrs French stated that she is pleased to see that a March Community Sports Facility Strategy is being developed and asked for confirmation that Cambridgeshire County Council are involved in this project. Richard Cassidy confirmed that the project is part funded by Cambridgeshire County Council;
29. Councillor Mrs French asked for any further updates from the Youth District Council (YDC). Councillor Garratt confirmed that members of the YDC were consulted on council priorities and agreed to circulate the feedback with regards to that piece of work. He stated that the YDC members are very engaged and always give 100% to what they are focusing on in meetings. He confirmed that these details are always included in the YDC newsletter which is circulated to members and schools following the meetings;
30. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the free school meals issue was identified in August last year and asked how many of those parents took up the opportunity to obtain free school meals since then. Dan Horn stated that the reason that the original data was from August last year was because that is when we gave the data to CCC to commence engagement with them. It is quite a lot of work and quite a complicated process, and we are currently re-running that data to see what the impact has been. He added that a change in legislation means that some of the younger children can be removed from the analysis as they will be automatically entitled to free school meals. He confirmed that we will not know the full impact until the data has been returned. Councillor Garratt confirmed that once we have the data we will share it with members. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she hopes this information will be available very soon as it is of substantial benefit to fenland families. Councillor Cornwell stated that this is of benefit to families and to local schools too;
31. Councillor Butcher stated that as a School Governor he is aware that there has been a greater take up for free school meals during this time;
32. Councillor Stebbing stated that there have been many responses today to say that members and officers will go away and find out, and once again panel members have asked for a breakdown of figures into towns, we have been asking for this information for months and we are still asking.

(Councillor Sutton declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of the fact that he is a private landlord.)

OSC35/13 WISBECH 2020 VISION UPDATE

- Councillor Mrs French stated that discussions took place at the previous Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting with Roddons with regards to potential flooding at the Elliot Road Site. Councillor Melton confirmed that he has noted the comments and that Paul Medd has agreed to investigate this issue further. He stated that he has listened with intent to the comments made with regards to the issue of breaking down data or lack of information in reports and agreed that by the next Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting an action plan will be in place to address this;
- Councillor Mrs French for clarification with regards to confidential items. This committee wanted information about how confidential items were to be dealt with, and the response took 6 months. Councillor Melton stated that confidential items are rare, and there will be very few confidential items in the future, contractual matters will continue to be treated as exempt items. He added that there was a confidential item at the last Cabinet meeting which to his mind need not have been confidential and this is an issue that needs to be looked at in future;

Members considered the Wisbech 2020 Vision Update Report presented by Councillor Melton.

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

1. Councillor Hodgson stated that the key points of this report make no mention of a railway line, the A47 or derelict buildings. Councillor Melton stated that we have got some positive movement and we must not overlook that, there has been a huge commitment and this is all being taken very seriously, hopefully the new Committee system at CCC will keep up this momentum;
2. Councillor Stebbing stated that this information should be included in the report; these key points should have been mentioned. Councillor Melton confirmed that it is all included in the 2020 Vision Full Update in May;
3. Councillor Butcher referring to the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan stated that the document included delivery timescales and agreed to forward a copy to Councillor Stebbing;
4. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that comparing the report against the short term action report was a little like comparing like for like. It is very good news that something is being done about derelict buildings. It is also encouraging to see the increase in free school meals claims in Wisbech. Councillor Melton stated that he does not have the figures to hand but they will be included in the full update. He added that one of the things we need to work on in this area is that if they are entitled to free school meals they claim and receive them. Councillor Mrs Bucknor agreed stating that there are still children going to school hungry. Councillor Melton stated that he feels something is very wrong when in 2014 children are going to school in the morning with an empty stomach, and this is a problem that needs to be addressed. The question that has to be asked is why this is happening, is it bad parenting or unemployment and therefore low income, this is something that we cannot just continue to count the numbers, something has to be done. Councillor Mrs Bucknor confirmed that the group identified are in employment but on low income;
5. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked for clarification how we will improve cohesion in the town. Paul Medd confirmed that there is a lot of detail in the Action Plan and that officers are currently collating the information, this feedback will be coming to the Meeting in May, he explained further that FDC have led on some of the Actions but not all, so it is a matter of bringing all the information together;
6. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if we have been awarded any grants for arts and culture. Dan Horn confirmed that a funding bid has been submitted which we should have an update on in May;
7. Councillor Swan made reference to the document that Councillor Mrs Bucknor was referring to, suggesting that it would have been useful if this document was circulated to all members of the panel. Jo Hart circulated hard copies of the Wisbech 2020 Action Plan to the panel. Councillor Chambers stated that the panel are here to look at what has been presented to us in the report produced for today's meeting. Councillor Melton confirmed that there will be a full update at the summit on 2 May;
8. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she was using the Action Plan document as she felt that there was not enough information in the report today;
9. Councillor King stated that with regards to derelict buildings, all are being dealt with but not all in the same way, we are also looking at all enforcement options and early intervention options. We have a clear system of prioritisation starting with the buildings in the worst condition;
10. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked what the current situation with regards to Constantine House is. Councillor King stated that there was a deadline in January for the owner to appeal, he did not appeal, therefore we have agreed a detailed schedule of works to be completed by September 2014, any extension to this deadline will have to be agreed by FDC, and there will have to be an extremely good reason. A consultant has been appointed to monitor the schedule and we will be in regular contact with him and the owner, so if works are not on schedule we can take enforcement action against the milestones;

11. Paul Medd stated that the comments are valid and what has not helped is the timing of this update, he reassured members that everything will come together in the final Wisbech 2020 document;
12. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the purpose of this panel is to scrutinise. Councillor Melton stated that the agenda item today is a Wisbech 2020 Update; he reminded members that the key date with regards to the Wisbech 2020 is the 2 May. The update provided today is an update from FDC but members should be mindful that there are many other partners feeding into the final update;
13. Councillor Stebbing stated that the report refers to brown tourist signs which have been installed at key locations signposting the town from the A47, he asked where they have been situated as they are not on the A47 and this appears not to be correct at this time. He stated that he had previously been informed that there was still time for him to feed into the consultation, and submitted an item. Paul Medd stated that it has been noted and factored in and will be reflected on at the summit on 2 May;
14. Councillor Stebbing asked who would be invited to the summit on 2 May. Paul Medd confirmed that there is an extensive invitation list for that event; he suggested that the invitation list should be circulated as we do not want to have overlooked anybody.

(Councillor King declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of the fact that he the Chairman of the Bramley Line Heritage Railway Trust)

OSC36/13 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2014/15 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Following Discussions members agreed that:

- As the Cambridgeshire County Council Adults Wellbeing and Health (AWH) Scrutiny Committee have been disbanded and the new Health Scrutiny Substitute and member do not need to be selected from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, this would be removed from the work programme;
- An ARP Review would be scheduled into the September 2014 Meeting.

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2014/15 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel subject to the additions above.

4.30pm

Chairman