

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, PEGS LANE, HERTFORD
ON THURSDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2008
7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs B Wrangles (in the Chair).
Councillors S A Bull, Mrs D Hone, M Wood.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Mrs D L E Hollebon, R L Parker.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager - Commercial
Tracy Strange	- Head of Health and Housing

1 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of
Councillor K Darby.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Hone declared a personal interest by virtue of
the fact that she was a Governor of Hertfordshire
Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor S A Bull declared a personal interest by virtue of
the fact that he was a voluntary driver for Addenbrookes
Hospital in Cambridge.

RESOLVED ITEMSACTION3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was moved and seconded that Councillor K Darby be nominated as Chairman for the Civic Year. In the absence of the Chairman, it was moved and seconded that Councillor Mrs B Wrangles be appointed Chairman for this meeting.

Councillor R L Parker commented on the importance of the Chairman of the Health Engagement Panel also being East Herts representative on Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee. He suggested it should be the same person.

RESOLVED – that (A) Councillor K Darby be appointed as Chairman for the Civic Year; and

(B) Councillor Mrs B Wrangles be appointed Chairman for this meeting.

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE – HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL

The Head of Democratic and Legal Services submitted a report providing Members with the Terms of Reference for the Panel.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

5 CO-OPTION OF NON MEMBERS AS EXPERT WITNESSES

The Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services submitted a report outlining a process for the co-option of non-members onto the Health Engagement Panel.

Co-optees were acknowledged as a valuable source of broadening the knowledge base of panels. The co-optee would have no voting rights or any special privileges but

ACTION

would be entitled to travelling and subsistence allowances on the same basis as Councillors. Methods of appointing co-optees were set out in the report, now submitted.

The Executive Member for Housing and Health commented on the links with the County Council and Health Scrutiny. He commented that there were people in the District who were interested in becoming involved in health issues.

Councillor S A Bull commented on his previous role as Chairman of the Royston, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford Primary Care Trust (PCT) Scrutiny Committee. He hoped that the new Health Engagement Panel was going to make a real difference in scrutinising health issues in the District.

Councillor M Wood commented on the recent consultation exercise in relation to the status of the Princess Alexandra Hospital and their Foundation Trust Status. Members welcomed the idea of a presentation by the Hospital on this issue.

Members considered the positive benefits of accessing specialist information and supported the principle of co-option but not the process or number of co-optees. Members felt that it might be premature to pursue this course of action at this point in time, preferring instead, to invite specialists to attend the Panel as and when it was thought necessary. Members commented that it was important to differentiate between expert witnesses and co-optees.

RESOLVED – that (A) the principle of co-option be supported but that the number of co-optees and the process of appointment be determined as the Health Engagement Panel establishes itself; and

(B) Officers be requested to liaise with the Princess Alexandra Hospital to organise a presentation to the Health Engagement Panel on a date to be determined in March 2008.

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6 EAST HERTS COUNCIL PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Housing and Health submitted a report which set out the important role to be played by East Herts Council in protecting public health, including the prevention of ill health and targeting resources to those in need.

It was noted that the Public Health Strategy aimed to provide a five year framework of action for the “primary” prevention of ill health, the protection of health and the promotion of positive health and wellbeing. The Strategy would also help focus the Council’s work and facilitate joint working initiatives. It was noted that the NHS focused on “secondary” interventions; ie detecting disease / providing a cure.

The need to educate the population and to manage the expectations outside of the Council was highlighted. Specific areas to be targeted were set out in the report now submitted.

Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon commented on smoking and the need to highlight these dangers to children of primary school age. Councillor S A Bull commented that some members of the nursing profession set bad examples by smoking outside of hospitals. Councillor Mrs B Wrangles also raised concerns that younger, primary-aged children were often not receiving cookery classes in school.

It was noted that there was only so much the Council could do to drive health issues home. Councillor R L Parker reiterated that, as a District, East Herts had limited responsibilities, powers and influence but more could be achieved with partnership working.

ACTION

Members welcomed the Public Health Strategy and its supporting Action Plan and recommended its adoption to the Executive.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be informed that the Health Engagement Panel supports the adoption of the Public Health Strategy and supporting Action Plan as now submitted.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Chairman
Date