

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2008 AT
7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor K Darby (Chairman).
Councillors S A Bull, Mrs D M Hone, M Wood and
Mrs B Wrangles

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor M G Carver
(* in attendance for Minute No. 9)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Tracy Strange	- Head of Health and Housing
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager Commercial

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Margaret Folan	- East North Herts and West Herts PCT
David Neilan	- Hertfordshire County Council - (Acting) Transport Project Manager

7 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman drew attention to the Hertfordshire Partnership Trust consultation document which had been circulated recently. She reminded Members that comments needed to be submitted by 10 December 2008. Councillor Mrs D Hone commented that as a Governor, comments had already been submitted emphasising the need to improve quality of service.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs D Hone declared a personal interest in Minute 9 (East and North Hertfordshire PCT: Meet and Question the Acting Transport Project Manager) by virtue of the fact that she was a Governor of the PCT.

Councillor S A Bull declared a personal interest in Minute 9 (East and North Hertfordshire PCT: Meet and Question the Acting Transport Project Manager) and in any transport issue, by virtue of the fact he was a voluntary driver.

9 EAST AND NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE PCT: MEET AND QUESTION (ACTING) TRANSPORT PROJECT MANAGER: PRESENTATION

Margaret Folan of East and North and West Herts PCT gave a presentation on a Hertfordshire Integrated Transport Partnership. She explained what the key transport and access priorities were and what progress had been made in terms of strategic co-ordination. This included the creation of a Hertfordshire Integrated Transport Board and the establishment of a Travel Link Call Centre. The aim of the Centre was to co-ordinate coverage across the whole of Hertfordshire.

David Neilan, (Acting) Transport Project Manager for Hertfordshire County Council commented on what progress had been made to develop and invest in equitable and sustainable access. A number of organisations had invested in the initiative, including:

- Community Car Schemes supported by the PCTS
- The British Red Cross
- Hertsmere CVS
- Dacorum CVS
- Royston and District Community Transport
- Stevenage CVS
- Watford CVS
- Welwyn Hatfield CVS

The difficulties in accessing health care and hospitals across Hertfordshire were discussed at length. By way of example, the Broxbourne Health Shuttle was explained in terms of its development and how this responded to local need.

The Panel made a number of observations in relation to:

- The lack of publicity about the QEII shuttle service;
- Ensuring that GP Surgeries were made aware of the transport service;
- Lack of liaison between hospitals and transport providers in relation to changed appointments;
- The inappropriateness of some questions by the Travel Team when evaluating an individuals' request for transport;
- Uncoordinated travel journeys between Hertford to Mount Vernon;

- The difficulty of going east or west using a bus service;
- The difficulty journey in getting from the QEII to Stevenage hospitals;
- The lack of publicity in raising awareness of the Call Centre. It was suggested that this should be advertised in the Link magazine;
- Whether there was funding available from the PCTs to roll this out in East Hertfordshire. Issues and challenges of the rural nature of the district and the need to provide an integrated transport service to the community; and
- How the Travel Link Call Centre linked with Dial a Ride and Bishop's Stortford Town Council Trust.

David Neilan provided responses to the questions raised and agreed to submit further responses, in writing, where necessary and co-ordinate with the Scrutiny Officer. He commented that in relation to community transport, some matching funding was provided. He explained what funding had been provided in relation to the Broxbourne Health Shuttle Service. Mr Neilan commented that Hertfordshire County Council endeavoured to bring services together locally to try and change the way health care was being delivered.

The Chairman sought and was provided with clarification regarding parking charges imposed by some hospitals. The obligations on the part of hospitals were discussed including the use of its financial resources and the need to pay interest on capital.

In response to a question by Councillor M G Carver, David Neilan confirmed that the eligibility criteria was now transparent as evidenced by the few complaints received.

In relation to rural areas, Councillor Carver commented on the need to take a broad look to see where there was synergy and to ensure better management and planning of vehicular movements. He commented that there was a need to plan a form of integrated service working with a number of agencies.

In terms of next steps, Mr Neilan agreed that all providers needed to co-ordinate. The Director of Customer and Community Services suggested that he contact the Community Services Manager, Valdis Belinis to see how best to move the initiative forward.

The Chairman thanked Mr Neilan and Ms Folan for attending and presentation.

RESOLVED ITEMS

10 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2008 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11 FEEDBACK FROM CHAIRMAN – HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21 OCTOBER 2008

The Chairman provided Members with feedback following the last meeting of Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee on 21 October 2008. She commented that a major item of discussion was about the consultation exercise on Mount Vernon and options put forward. The Health Scrutiny Committee supported the option of staying at Mount Vernon. All supporting papers were available on the County Council's website. The next Health Scrutiny meeting would be held on 17 December 2008.

The Chairman commented that work was being undertaken in relation to Mental Health via the Mental Health Group, of which she was the Vice Chair. In response to a query from

ACTION

Councillor M Wood, the Chairman updated the Panel on the discussions on “super surgeries” which had been discussed at Health Scrutiny Committee. She confirmed that full details of the meeting and minutes were available online through the Herts Direct website.

RESOLVED – that the Chairman’s comments be noted.

12 PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
2008/09: PROGRESS REPORT AND REVIEW OF
PROPOSALS FOR 2009/2010

Paul Thomas presented the Council’s first draft of the Health Strategy and provided a progress report on the first six months of the Strategy’s promotion. He commented that the work within the Action Plan fell within one of the six core themes:

- Smoking: to reduce the number of people smoking;
- Physical activity: greater participation
- Healthy Eating
- Obesity: to reduce obesity
- Other Health Factors: wider issues which contribute to public health;
- Powers of influence: to influence health partners and organisations

Members were reminded that the focus of the strategy was about the prevention of ill health and the protection of health within the context of the six main themes. Areas of deprivation from a national and local perspective were reviewed and health profiles explained. What approaches and initiatives could be taken to address those issues were discussed.

ACTION

Simon Barfoot sought Members' views in relation to issues of concern. These included:

- Binge drinking – alcohol consumption;
- Promoting healthy eating in schools;
- Encouraging children to exercise (it was noted that there had been an increasing number of children being taken to school by car);
- That more people should be referred from GP's to Stop Smoking Initiatives.

Members were provided with updates on recent healthy initiatives including the "Walk in the Park", the "Meal Appeal", "Crucial Crew", the "European Week of Health and Safety" and the "County Hall Road Show".

Members were asked for views in relation to future plans and prospective projects for inclusion in the Health Strategy. These included:

- Extending the "Meal Appeal" to the new Homeless unit in Hertford;
- Youth issues in Stanstead Abbots;
- The translation of the Health Strategy into other languages such as Portuguese with particular reference on "Stop Smoking" initiatives.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked the Officers for their hard work in moving the initiative forward.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

ACTION

13 WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

The Chief Executive submitted a report inviting the Committee to review its work programme. The Chairman commented that in arranging meetings of the Panel, every effort had been made to dovetail the meetings with Hertfordshire County Council’s Health Scrutiny. It was noted that Members experienced difficulties attending Panel meetings which were held on a Monday evening because of other commitments and that every effort would be made in the future, to avoid meetings that day.

Members requested that a number of items be considered for 2009/10, i.e. out of hours Doctors’ services, and a review of the current Panel Membership with specific regard to having a substitute facility.

The Panel approved the work programme, as attached to the report now submitted.

RESOLVED - that the work programme, as attached, for 2008/09 be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Chairman
Date