

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON THURSDAY 11
FEBRUARY 2010, AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor K Darby (Chairman)
Councillors S A Bull and D Hone

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor P R Ballam

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Assistant
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager

20 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor R Gilbert.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S A Bull declared a personal interest in the item referred to at minute 23, in that he often visited Addenbrookes Hospital in his capacity as a volunteer ambulance driver.

22 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health Engagement Panel meeting held on 15 December 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor K Darby updated the Panel in respect of a recent meeting of the NHS Stakeholders Forum. She commented that a key topic had been the deficit in NHS budgets. Meetings were taking place on a daily basis and the current deficit was £13 million. A recovery plan should ensure that the budget was in balance at the end of the financial year.

Councillor Darby advised that the Strategic Health Authority had decided to relocate some of the services provided at the Lister Hospital to the Stevenage Business Park. In-patients would still be treated at the Lister Hospital. Full consultation had been taking place and details were available online.

Councillor P R Ballam expressed concerns that transport links to Stevenage Business Park were insufficient for patients who were unable to drive. Councillor Darby commented that there were good bus links to Stevenage Business Park. Councillor S A Bull stressed that there were good community bus links in this area.

Councillor Darby referred to the NHS Choose Well Campaign. She stated that this campaign was aimed at guiding patients in terms of where they should go to access the appropriate level of care.

The Panel was advised that Margaret Folan had issued an assurance that Bishop's Stortford would have an Urgent Care Centre (UCC) and funding was available. There would be an increase in service provision and preparations were being made for an announcement in

mid March 2010. A full public meeting would be arranged following this announcement.

George A Robertson advised that the LSP Board had been recently advised that the delay had come about as the NHS had not received acceptable tenders for the provision of the service. He stressed that the NHS was taking the necessary steps to provide the service by whatever means necessary.

Councillor Darby emphasised that UCCs in Hertford and Cheshunt were being run as pilot schemes. She stressed that these services were not guaranteed to remain in place. The Panel was reminded of the importance of advising the public that these services were available.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

24 PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - 2010/2011

The Environmental Health Manager submitted a report to introduce the Public Health Strategy Action Plan for 2010/11. He stressed that the purpose of the report was to seek the Panel's support for the projects and priorities for the forthcoming financial year.

He commented that Simon Barfoot, the Environmental Health Promotion Officer, would be giving a presentation to introduce the East Herts Public Health Strategy Action Plan for 2010/11.

Following a request from Officers, the Panel approved an additional recommendation as follows: 'Any Changes and updates to the Action Plan be delegated to Officers in consultation with the Chairman of the Health Engagement Panel'.

Simon Barfoot, Environmental Health Promotion Officer, gave a presentation to introduce the East Herts Public Health Strategy Action Plan 2010/11. He referred to guidelines that had been issued by the Royal Society for Public Health.

He summarised the content of his presentation and provided a detailed breakdown of the consultation responses received by Officers. Out of the 170 e-mails that had been sent out, 11 responses had been received. Simon Barfoot summarised the specific comments made by some of the consultation respondents.

The Panel was advised how Officers had converted previous outcomes and the feedback received into revised projects for the coming year. Simon Barfoot advised that projects would have to be realistic, fit for purpose, achievable and affordable.

He promoted the NHS “No Smoking Day” and referred in detail to a significant number of health projects and initiatives. He emphasised how various projects and initiatives could link up as part of an overall strategy for public health.

Simon Barfoot reiterated that Officers had considered how feedback and suggestions had been formulated into projects. He reminded Members of the importance of setting up projects based on health evidence.

The Panel was reminded of the links with the previous year’s action plans. He commented that there could be continued development into next year’s action plan if a project was deemed appropriate. Simon Barfoot stated that new project inspiration would be sought from existing and new contacts.

He concluded that the 3rd Annual and 2010/11 East Herts Public Health Strategy Action Plan could continue to consolidate the good public health work already under way. He stressed that this would enable the lives of residents of East Herts to benefit from improved health and wellbeing.

Councillor K Darby thanked and complimented Simon Barfoot on an excellent presentation. She stated that the additional recommendation would enable Officers to be

more proactive in their work in support of the action plan.

Councillor S A Bull expressed concerns that young people were less healthy than in previous years. He referred to junk food being the snack of choice for most young people. Councillor Darby stressed the importance of a common sense or back to basics approach to promoting healthy eating. She stated that the lunchbox detective initiative was a particularly good idea.

Councillor P R Ballam commented that young people often chose to eat junk food as it was readily available. She also stated that young people often had the disposable income to spend on this kind of food.

Councillor D M Hone queried whether the University of Hertfordshire food safety research for older people covered salmonella or was a more general guidance on food safety.

Simon Barfoot reported that the guidance covered all stages of food preparation. He stressed that the course used scientific data to improve basic standards of food safety at home. Councillor Darby commented that she hoped most of the issues covered were common sense.

RESOLVED - that (A) the public health strategy action plan for 2010/11 be supported; and

(B) any changes and updates to the action plan be delegated to Officers in consultation with the Chairman of the Health Engagement Panel.

25 WORK PROGRAMME

The Health Engagement Panel reviewed its work programme. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Chairman and the Chief Executive of the East and North Herts NHS Trust would deliver a short presentation to Full Council on 29 June 2010. An invitation had also been extended to the same speakers to attend the 19 October 2010 meeting of the Health Engagement Panel.

The Panel was advised that a guest speaker could be invited to attend a future meeting to speak about the Herts Physical Activity Action Plan which was currently out for consultation. The Panel agreed that a guest speaker be invited to attend its next meeting on the 22 June 2010.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Panel’s meeting dates had only been formally agreed until the Summer of 2010. She reminded members that the work programme of meetings currently mirrored the meeting schedule for the Hertfordshire Health Scrutiny Committee meetings.

The Panel was advised that the April meeting of that forum would be the only occasion where there would not be a corresponding meeting of the Health Engagement Panel. The Panel agreed that this pattern of meetings should continue when the new meeting schedule for 2010/11 was being designed.

RESOLVED - that the work programme for 2010/11, as now amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman
Date