

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL HELD IN  
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,  
HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2010,  
AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor S A Bull (Chairman)  
Councillors R I Taylor

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, W Ashley,  
R Beeching and R L Parker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Mark Kingsland	- Leisure Manager
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Christine Neyndorff	- Herts Sports Partnership, University of Hertfordshire
Robin Trevillion	- NHS Hertfordshire
Mathew Nicholson	- Contract Manager SLM

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Chairman, Councillor D Hone had apologised sincerely for not being able to attend the meeting as she was attending the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on behalf of

the Council. Councillor S A Bull agreed to act as Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor S A Bull be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

## 2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor D Hone, K Darby and R Gilbert.

## 3 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health Engagement Panel meeting held on 11 February 2010 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman updated Members on a recent notification that the Chief Executive of Herts PCT, Anne walker was moving on in September to be the Chief Executive of the NHS in Surrey.

It was noted that agenda item 7 (Hertfordshire County Council – Health Scrutiny Committee) had been withdrawn as no feedback could be provided.

## 5 HERTFORDSHIRE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN - FOCUS ON EAST HERTS

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The Executive Member for Housing and Health submitted a report updating Members on the new Hertfordshire County Sports Partnership's Physical Activity Plan.

Paul Thomas stated that the 2009 "be active, be healthy" document recognised the importance and benefit of regular participation in physical activity as part of a healthier lifestyle. It was noted that only 22% of the population were active enough to derive health benefits; 78% were not active regularly enough to benefit their health and over 50% of the

population were entirely inactive. The Hertfordshire County Sports partnership had produced a Physical Activity Plan which aimed, working in partnership, to increase physical activity and to create more active communities.

Paul Thomas stated that the guest speakers: Christine Neyndorff and Robin Trevillion would give a presentation on the Draft Hertfordshire Physical Activity Framework (agenda item 6) and how the Council could become involved.

Members received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received as be used as a basis for gaining a wider understanding of the physical activity plan and how it would contribute to a healthier, more active community.

## 6 HERTFORDSHIRE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY - PRESENTATION BY GUEST SPEAKER: CHRISTINE NEYNDORFF

Guest Speaker, Christine Neyndorff, gave a presentation on the draft Hertfordshire Physical Activity Framework. She stated that the Herts Sports Partnership worked closely with all Councils within Hertfordshire, the PCTs, and the County Council in working together to co-ordinate and promote healthier lifestyles and to promote a supporting infrastructure which encouraged everyone to get involved, stay involved and to reach their full potential in their chosen sport or physical activity. The presentation addressed the focus of physical activity, the results from the Active People survey and the Physical Activity Framework.

Ms. Neyndorff referred to the view of Hippocrates (400 BC) who stated that if parts of the body were not used, they became diseased. In a report from the Chief Medical Officer (2009) it was emphasised that inactivity was a major health threat. The report stressed the benefits of regular participation to health, longevity, well being and protection from serious illness and stated that regular participation surpassed the effectiveness of any drug or other medical treatment. It was noted that inactivity affected more people than smoking, alcohol misuse and obesity combined. The

cost of inactivity to the NHS in Hertfordshire (in relation to 6 major diseases) was more than £12million each year excluding the cost of obesity. The effects of physical activity on reducing the risk of common diseases was outlined e.g. 37% of coronary heart disease were attributable to physical inactivity.

It was noted that by the early 2020's half of all adults in Hertfordshire would be over 50. The negative effects on the body in terms of strength, endurance, bone density and flexibility were outlined. Exercise was highlighted as contributing positively to improve strength and balance and that encouragement should be given to make exercise an enjoyable daily part of life for older people.

Ms Neyndorff stated that the Active People Survey had been a key tool in decision making and in helping Herts Sports Partnership to be more effective. Statistical evidence was provided showing death rates by girth and fitness in men. It was noted that in the last six months participation in exercise had increased in Hertfordshire to 21.7%. The results for Hertfordshire concluded that overall participation levels had remained static. There was a high level of inactivity across the county particularly within increasing age and disability; of high female levels of inactivity and of differences in participation by socio economic classification.

Ms Neyndorff said that the Hertfordshire Physical Activity Framework was not a strategy, it was an aspiration to make Hertfordshire an "inactivity free zone". Its aims included:

- Informing choice and promoting activity
- Creating an active environment
- Supporting those most at risk
- Strengthening delivery.

The Active Together project commissioned by Adult Social Care was referred to as promoting physical activity and volunteering opportunities with a focus on older people (50+). Activities were mostly carried out in village halls. The new Buntingford table tennis team was one such example of the Active Together initiative.

Ms Neyndorff acknowledged that the success in getting people active depended on partnership working, local action plans and how local strategies could be developed to increase levels of physical activity.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked Ms Neyndorff for her presentation and welcomed Mathew Nicholson from SLM and Mark Kingsland.

Councillor R I Taylor referred to the £13million available within Preventative Services to improve the health of older people and to improve their well being. Ms Neyndorff explained that much of these funds had been allocated to contractors many years ago. Some commitments could be concluding year and would be therefore be open for competitive bids.

Councillor R I Taylor stated that free swimming to certain age groups was to be withdrawn which ran counter to everything Ms Neyndorff had presented. She stated that she was disappointed to hear that. She added that some health departments had cut their preventative funding streams and that the Government felt that it should be up to the local PCTs to develop funding this type of initiative.

The Director of Customer and Community services stated that in relation to free swimming, the Council agreed to free swimming if it could get funding from Central Government. This matter had not yet been discussed with the leisure provider SLM yet.

Councillor R Beeching noted that it was the aim to make exercise enjoyable. He said that he was Chairman of the Governors of Leventhorpe School which had commissioned a sports centre which would soon be open to the community offering dance studios, gym places. He asked whether there was anything specific that the Herts Sports partnership would like to be offered to the community. Ms Neyndorff said that HSP had not looked at the community use agreement for Leventhorpe School. She stressed that the aim was to make sure that the community became active and the HSP would be happy to advise on how this could be achieved.

The Chairman asked Mathew Nicholson of SLM if he could give the Council SLM's overall aims and objectives as a Leisure provider and what development opportunities might there be for the future? SLM endorsed what Ms Neyndorff had presented and of the aim towards 30 minutes exercise each day and ultimately moderate exercise five times a week. He stressed that it was about getting the message out into the community and that although they would obviously encourage use of the East Herts Leisure facilities, the 5 x 30 target could include other forms of activity external to gym setting. He acknowledged the improvements in physical activity over the last six months in Hertfordshire and hoped that was as a result of improvements to leisure facilities by SLM and the capital investment by the Council.

The Chairman asked the Leisure Manager what new healthy lifestyle opportunities might be developed over the next 8/9 years with SLM? The Leisure Manager referred to the programmes which were being developed, group exercise programmes, walking groups, referral schemes from Doctors, swimming programmes, (including free swimming), joint use of facilities at Presdales and Teen (11-15 year olds) gym membership classes and the introduction of interactive dance mats.

The Executive Member for Housing and Health stated that attendance at Grange Paddocks and across the other leisure facilities had increased "massively". He sought further information regarding where these increases had occurred and how the information was gathered. There were a number of methods of collating information and this was monitored constantly. He referred to the use of GovMetric data and the recording of all results on the Council's own Covalent performance system. Reports were also presented to Members annually to Community Scrutiny Committee. Additionally, relevant questions on residents' surveys were referred to and the use of Ipsos/MORI polls. Mathew Nicholson agreed that usage of the facilities had increased significantly, e.g. a group exercise class was now attracting 2000 users every week. The Director of Customer and Community Services said that an annual report was presented

to Members on how the contract was going along. He undertook to discuss the matter further with the Leisure Manager and Mathew Nicholson and provide information via the Member's Information Bulletin when appropriate.

The Executive Member for Housing and Health suggested that there may be some merit in arranging a "second opening" to get the message out to the community.

Councillor R I Taylor queried whether there were any improvements planned to the swimming facilities. He said that he had mentioned this at a recent Joint Scrutiny and was advised in a written response that the improvements to the swimming facilities comprised improvements to the viewing gallery and storage cupboard. He referred to the residents' survey in Bishop's Stortford survey whereby residents had requested improvements to the swimming facilities and asked if there were any plans to substantially improve facilities at Grange Paddocks and Hartham. He believed that people were put off using the pools, changing facilities were communal and swimmers had gained little from the revamp of the facilities.

The Director of Customer and Community Services stated that there was nothing in the capital programme to undertake significant work to the pools.

The Chairman asked whether there was anything else the Council could do to improve things. Ms Neyndorff said that Herts Sports Partnership was a county wide voluntary organisation trying to get funding to implement local activity. She added that the Partnership was trying to make activity self sustaining and get local authorities to take them on. Much joint working was feasible and there was spare capacity at a number of venues including village halls within parishes. She appreciated that it was difficult to get villages to open their doors and that some Parish Council's were perhaps inward looking in that they supported traditional organisations such as the brownies and scouts but were reluctant to offer wider usage but that they might benefit from encouragement in supporting a wider range of organisations.

The Executive Member for Health and Housing acknowledged that the figures showed that there was a major problem in Hertfordshire in terms of inactivity. It was noted that the area was wealthy and that people did not walk anywhere. He said that it was important to introduce people to exercise early in life and appreciated that injuries sustained as young person might stop a person exercising later in life. He acknowledged the good progress on the Health Action Plan and the excellent Lunchbox Detectives Recipe book produced by DTP within the Council from recipes designed by Mandeville School. He hoped that officers could find ways of getting people active and working further with schools from a fitness viewpoint.

Councillor W Ashley referred to the wonderful sports facilities in East Hertfordshire. He referred to the fact that village halls provided bowls, dancing etc and that it was possible to cycle almost one end of East Herts to the other without using roads.

Ms Neyndorff said that Hertfordshire was a lovely area but that a lot of things encouraged people to be sedentary. She said that there was a need to encourage activity and get neighbours to be active and identify opportunities. She said that people in the area were entrepreneurial and that some ideas might just need to be pushed along by the Council.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked Ms Neyndorff for giving the presentation and to Mr Trevillion for attending.

## 7 REVIEW OF THE 2009/10 PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Executive Member for Housing and Health submitted a report on the Council's efforts in implementing the 2009/10 action plan which is associated with the Council's Public Health Strategy. It was noted that the strategy had helped to steer and co-ordinate the Council's services and facilitate joint working and enabled the Council to deliver initiatives and projects which contributed to areas being of greater importance to East Herts residents. The Action Plan ran for a 12 month period and was reviewed after six months. The Action Plan for 2009/10 contained 38 projects within key topic areas.



Simon Barfoot stated that internally within the Council, and a range of external partners comprising both individuals and teams had undertaken 33 of the 38 planning projects and five additional projects equating to an 88% completion rate. Three projects could not be undertaken due to staff shortages and budgetary constraints.

The guiding principles of the East Herts Public Health Strategy for 2008-2010 and how these could be developed were explained. Simon Barfoot provided feedback on three of the projects detailing why they had been targeted, the numbers targeted and the next steps for each these projects. These included:-

- Making Science Real (demonstration of science principles in Environmental health)
- Lunchbox Detectives (healthy eating); and
- Sport Leisure Management (increasing activity participation).

A 2009/10 project matrix of projects and how these linked with other initiatives was detailed in the presentation.

The Executive Member for Health and Housing praised officers on the work achieved so far. He referred to the levels of smoking and especially amongst young girls. He queried whether shock tactics could work. Simon Barfoot explained that historically shock tactics had worked but these lapsed as it needed to be backed up by factual evidence. Robin Trevillion stated that shock tactics worked with adults providing there was tailored information and follow up support on how to stop. He added that younger age groups were least likely to stop because of health warnings but that role models did work.

Councillor R I Taylor referred to the number of people hanging around outside premises and ashtrays left outside of buildings. He felt that this created a bad impression to passers by. He referred to the numbers of doctors and nurses

who smoked and felt that this set a bad example to the public.

In response to a suggestion by the Executive Member for Health and Housing, Simon Barfoot said that using mobile phones and seat belts were areas which could be reviewed.

The Chairman asked whether the Lunch Box Detectives could be put forward for an award. Simon Barfoot agreed to explore the suggestion. Councillor R Beeching hoped that there would be feedback from parents. Simon Barfoot confirmed that this data would be captured.

Councillor D Andrews referred to diets and that people should be encouraged to survive on less and to cut down on salt.

Members received and noted the progress made in implementing the Public Health Strategy's Action Plan for 2009/10

RESOLVED – that the progress made on implementing the Public Health Strategy's Action Plan for 2009/10 be noted.

## 8 WORK PROGRAMME

The Health Engagement Panel received a report on planning the Panel's work programme for 2010/11.

The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that there would be a visit of East and North Herts NHS trust to the next full Council meeting later this month to give a brief presentation. The same speakers would then attend the October meeting of this Panel to talk in more detail about local plans and developments. These details would be worked out over the coming months as the impact of the change of government policies and funding becomes clearer.

Councillor R I Taylor referred to the Urgent Care Centre and the presentation in October. He asked for an update on this issue. The Executive Member for Health and Housing asked that Members be given an update at Council on 29 June. The Scrutiny Officer stated that the Chief Executive had invited

East and North Herts NHS Trust but that she would pass on Members request to the Chief Executive.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the Councillor D Hone would be attending the Health Scrutiny Committee at the County Council on 23 June 2010. Councillor R Beeching confirmed that the issue of the Urgent Care Centres at St Albans and Bishop’s Stortford was on their meeting agenda.

The Chairman thanked guests, Members and Officers for attending and to Sue Barber for the healthy food.

Members reviewed and agreed the work programme as presented.

RESOLVED – that the work programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....

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