

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2015, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor N Symonds (Chairman)
Councillors A Alder, H Drake, M McMullen
and P Moore

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors E Buckmaster

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Christine Gillham	- Public Health Project Co-Ordinator
Claire Pullen	- Engagement and Partnerships Officer (Grants)
Paul Thomas-Jones	- Environmental Health Manager
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co-Ordinator
Sheila Winterburn	- Environmental Health Manager - Residential

441 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors D Abbott, Mrs D Hollebon, J Kaye and R Standley.

An apology for absence was also submitted from the Leader of the Council.

442 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 October 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

443 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone present.

The Chairman asked Councillor P Moore to provide feedback on her recent trip to Liverpool and the Mental Health Conference. Councillor P Moore provided a summary of the two days spent there which, she said, helped her define her role as Mental Health Champion and what was expected of her. She referred to the Festival for Mental Health which had been held in Liverpool over several days during October annually and hoped that the Council could arrange something similar potentially suggesting the week ending 8 / 9 October 2016 at The Rhodes in Bishop's Stortford with invitations to schools and other contacts. She hoped that good promotion of such an event could help to make it an enjoyable weekend. Councillor P Moore explained what she had been doing personally to promote awareness of mental health locally.

444 EAST HERTS DRAFT FUEL POVERTY STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing submitted a report seeking Members' support for a new Fuel Poverty Strategy and what actions the Council could take at reducing fuel poverty within the District.

The Chairman welcomed the Environmental Strategy and Development Manager who provided a summary of the report. He referred to the general attributes of a fuel poor household stating that many of the households were in the private rented sector and those living in older, energy inefficient homes. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager commented that the District's average level of fuel poverty

was similar to that of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. He referred to the new draft Fuel Poverty Strategy attached to the report, which was based on guiding principles outlined in the national Fuel Poverty Strategy, including Government data, and aimed at reducing fuel poverty within East Herts.

Councillor A Alder referred to the number of complaints she received about damp in Housing Association properties. She also stated that some people were afraid to complain because of the fear of eviction. The Environmental Health Manager – Residential said that the Council received a number of complaints about damp which was very often because of fuel poverty, with the worst problems occurring in the private rented sector. She referred to new legislation which would protect tenants from retaliatory eviction when the Council took action after landlords had failed to address a problem.

The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager referred to new legislation regarding the need for private rented properties to be “E” rated or above in terms of energy efficiency from 2018 to address the problems within the private rented sector.

Councillor M McMullen referred to the high number of energy inefficient properties in rural areas of the District. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager explained that in the north of the District, many homes were not on the gas network and so had to rely on oil and electricity which meant that these homes were more expensive to heat.

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing stated that it was about making use of everything the Council could to address the problem. He thanked the Officer for a thorough report.

The Environmental Health Manager – Residential said that there was always more the Council could do and that it had a good record of giving help through means tested grants and in giving advice. She explained that a lot of national schemes were closing and hoped that more referrals might come to the Council via the “Herts Help” referral process.

Councillor H Drake referred to Bishop's Stortford Central Ward and lower average levels of the fuel poverty within it. She stated that Central Ward had one of the highest levels of social housing and queried how, if a resident owned a larger rural home, could the shortfall in grant be met. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager explained that social housing had traditionally been built to a higher energy efficiency standard than private homes. He referred to the fact that cavity walls could be insulated for approximately £400-£600 but for older properties with solid walls this necessitated a change to the façade of the building and could cost in excess of £6000. Changing the exterior of a building might also cause problems from a planning and building control viewpoint. He explained how the Government's (now ceased) "Green Deal" had worked in terms of financial assistance.

The Committee Chairman stated that some new affordable housing was built with solar panels. She asked whether it was possible to make Housing Associations install solar panels on all new builds. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager stated that he was currently looking at mapping the installation of solar panels in the District. He said that Housing Associations had been able to access to money to do this. He emphasised that the key to reducing fuel poverty was to insulate first.

The Chairman asked that the recommendation be amended to include a reference that information on oil buying clubs as detailed in Challenge 6 action (d) of the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy be disseminated to Parish Councils and local Members. This was supported.

The Committee supported the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy, as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for East Herts as now submitted, be supported;

(B) information on oil buying clubs as detailed in Challenge 6 action (d) of the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy be disseminated to all Parish Councils and

local Members; and

(C) further reports on specific measures within the draft strategy be submitted as they develop.

445 UPDATE ON THE INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH INTO THE COUNCIL'S CORE SERVICES

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing submitted a report updating Members on the integration of public health across the Council's services one year on from October 2014.

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing explained that a Task and Finish Group had been established with Members selected to represent the Group on the basis of one from each town and one from each rural area.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer provided a summary of the background to the report and the need to integrate public health into core services, as detailed within the report. It was noted that the Head of Community Safety and Health Services would be providing an update on the draft licensing policy and health to the meeting in February 2016.

The Chairman welcomed Christine Gillham, the new Public Health Project Co-Ordinator to the meeting. She explained that her role was to see how the Council could develop a more strategic approach to public health in terms of what the Council did best, reviewing best practice and with working with partners and agencies to find the best way to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. She stated that she was the Mental Health Champion and hoped to raise awareness on mental health issues.

The Committee noted that the progress made on integrating the public health agenda into core services would be reported on a two-yearly basis with the next report to be submitted in October 2017.

The Committee supported the progress made in the integrating public health agenda into core services of

Community Safety and Health Services, Planning and Development, Environmental, Leisure Services and Housing Services.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress made in the integrating public health agenda into core services of Community Safety and Health Services, Planning and Development, Environmental, Leisure Services and Housing Services be supported; and

(B) the next public health update report be presented to Members in October 2017.

446 EAST HERTS HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY:
SUBMISSION OF IDEAS FOR WORK-PLAN 2016/17

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing submitted a report seeking ideas for the development of a work plan for 2016/17.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer explained that following the submission of ideas, the draft Health and Wellbeing plan would be presented to the February 2016 meeting for approval. By way of example, the Environmental Health Promotion Officer explained that last year, Councillor Mrs D Hollebon had asked that a project be supported for those living with lung conditions. He explained the project process and the Council's role in managing and furthering the project. The Environmental Health Promotion Officer referred Members to the report for further examples of projects or areas of health and wellbeing previously focussed upon. He asked Members to submit any ideas to him or to the Public Health Project Co-ordinator on the pro-forma set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Councillor H Drake referred to the need to ensure healthy eating and recipe ideas were widely promoted and that these could be disseminated via the website. The Public Health Project Co-ordinator explained that Officers were already working closely on this and were looking at using social media space to publicise healthy eating information.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer explained that various healthy eating projects and approaches had been consistently carried out by the Council over the years, but that the promotion of recipes on the website, suggested previously had not yet been further developed.

Councillor A Alder suggested that supermarkets be engaged to promote healthy eating. She referred to stroke victims and the link between eating healthy and exercise to minimise the risk. Councillor A Alder referred to the positive role of mentoring, possibly with single parent families who might not be able to manage their affairs. She explained that a lot could be learnt from the elderly to the young and from the young to the elderly and how this could impact positively on their behaviours.

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing agreed that using technology and the use of “Apps” was the way forward and supported the suggestion to use the internet to promote healthy eating.

The Committee supported the submission of ideas as discussed.

RESOLVED – that project ideas as referred to above, be submitted on the prescribed form as set out in the report and forwarded to the Environmental Health Promotion Officer or the Public Health Project Co-ordinator.

447 EAST HERTS HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY: VIEWING OF PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing submitted a report supporting the viewing of a recently produced public health film, part of a three-phase training approach for Members and Officers involved with the work of Health and Wellbeing. The report also sought the wider dissemination of the training film with Members and external partners and the adoption of appropriate public health training and development aimed at mainstreaming the public health role within the Council and its partners.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer summarised the report and provided extracts from the training film.

Councillor A Alder referred to “Mudlarks” which she said was a fantastic organisation and suggested that its ethos could be replicated in other areas. The Chairman supported this.

The Chairman encouraged Members to visit the link in last week’s MIB on “Making Every Contact Count”. The Environmental Health Promotion Officer gave a summary of this online training opportunity developed by the NHS to ensure that health messages and information on living a healthy lifestyle were passed on when an opportunity arose.

The Committee agreed to the wider dissemination of the film through the Members’ Development Group, external partners and public health promotion channels be supported. They also agreed to the future adoption of appropriate public health training and development approaches.

RESOLVED – that (A) the wider dissemination of the film through Members’ Development Group, external partners and public health promotion channels be supported; and

(B) the future adoption of appropriate public health training and development approaches be supported.

448 HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee submitted a report on the Committee’s future work programme for 2015/16 and 2016/17. The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members about the topics referred to at their meeting on 13 October 2015 and sought Members’ advice regarding priority for reporting back.

Councillor A Alder suggested that Members have a review of the implications of town and rural isolation to its meeting in December 2016. This was supported.

Councillor P Moore supported the inclusion of a report on mental health and asked that this be included on the future work programme, but without a date for the time being.

Councillor P Moore asked that, in relation to a report on Disabled Facilities Grants and dementia, Officers invite along a person to the meeting who had lived with the experience. The Chairman suggested that Officers should invite someone from one of the mental health charities. The Scrutiny Officer suggested that this could be programmed for 16 February 2016. This was supported.

The Environmental Health and promotion Officer referred to CAMHS (Child Adolescent Mental Health Services) and the fact that HCC had funds which were available for improving wider mental health services. He suggested that a representative from the Team responsible for implementing these changes be invited to present the proposed plans at a future Committee meeting.

The Chairman asked whether the report on Planning and Place (including housing for older people) could include information on the use of solar panels as discussed earlier under Fuel Poverty.

The Committee approved the report, as now amended.

RESOLVED – that the work programme, as now amended, be agreed.

449 MINUTES: OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING
PARTNERSHIP OFFICERS' GROUP

The Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Officers' Group held on 14 October 2015 were submitted for information.

The Committee noted the Minutes.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes be noted.

450 MINUTES: OF AGEING WELL WORKING GROUP -
DEMENTIA INITIATIVE

The Minutes of the Ageing Well Steering Group held on 3 November 2015 were submitted for information.

The Minutes referred to the launch of the Forever Active Sport England grant funded project on 5 November 2015. The Scrutiny Officer reported that almost 200 people had attended the meeting and that the feedback was very positive. She explained that going forward, new activities would be established in village halls and other community venues and that Officers would be working with stakeholders within the community to build in sustainability from the beginning..

The Chairman said she had participated in “walking football” as well as many other activities and had enjoyed the day.

The Committee noted the Minutes.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes be noted.

451 MINUTES: HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Hertfordshire County Council’s Health Scrutiny of 12 November 2015 were submitted for information.

In response to a query from Councillor A Alder, the Chairman explained that a community navigator was someone who signposted people to their nearest service. In response to a further query regarding the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the Chairman referred to a report published by the Care Quality Commission.

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing referred to the possibility of a further motion to Council urging the Government to take note of difficulties Trusts were facing.

The Committee noted the Minutes.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Chairman
Date