

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING PANEL
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE HEALTH
ENGAGEMENT PANEL) HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 11 DECEMBER
2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor N Symonds (Chairman).
Councillors R Beeching, S Bull, K Crofton
and P Moore.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Wren MBE	- Healthwatch
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11 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E
Buckmaster.

12 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held
on 16 October 2012 be approved as a correct

record and signed by the Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Sarah Wren MBE, the Chairman of Healthwatch, the organisation taking over from the LINK in April 2013. The Chairman referred to Ms Wren's previous experience and achievements.

The Chairman clarified that Councillor Haysey was still awaiting a date from the Princess Alexandra Hospital regarding a "coffee morning date".

14 DISCUSSION WITH THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF HEALTHWATCH

The Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Panel submitted a report which set out the statutory background to Healthwatch and outlined the similarities and the differences between the new arrangements and those for LINK. The Chairman advised that a discussion paper, with a number of questions regarding Healthwatch Hertfordshire had already been forwarded to Ms Wren, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" of the report now submitted.

Ms Wren provided an update on the current situation in terms of the physical development of Healthwatch and its background. She explained that the company would be limited by guarantee and that the structure of the company and its links with the County Council in terms of funding, were still being developed. Ms Wren explained that it was essential to the success of Healthwatch that the company be properly funded. It would be a conduit for information and would make sure that the people on the Healthwatch Board heard a "voice" from everyone, including respected partners. The role of both the District and County Council in this process was important. Ms Wren stated that at the present time, its statutory responsibilities were still unfolding, but crucially, Ms Wren would have a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

In response to a query from the Chairman concerning former members of the LINK moving over to Healthwatch, Ms Wren explained how the appointments would be made based on skills and knowledge. She emphasised the need that Members would need to bring their skills to the fore on developing a clear strategic direction for Healthwatch.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services referred to Hertfordshire Leaders' Group and the role they could play as a partner and reference group in future. The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Services stated that there were some District Councillors who had a health remit within their portfolios and they had begun to form a network group of their own. She hoped that any feedback they might have could be fed back to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB).

Councillor R Beeching expressed concern about feeding back into the process and of the "suspicions" about HWB at the County Council, how this was being constructed and the role of scrutiny at the County Council. Ms Wren assured Members that it was her role to ensure that there was a two-way feedback of information and of the importance of transparency in the process. Ms Wren explained that it was important to collate all views and of the need for Healthwatch to have power and influence.

In response to a query about powers, she stated that Healthwatch would not have power to "enter and view" across a county border, but it was hoped that the establishment of positive working relationships would foster access to any relevant establishments by negotiation.

In terms of the contribution Healthwatch would make to the HWB, Ms Wren stressed the importance of trust in fostering a good working relationship. The Scrutiny Officer referred to the possibility of a conflict of interest in

relation to Healthwatch investigating an issue in future where it might have been party to a relevant commissioning decision through its place on the HWB. Ms Wren felt that there would not be a conflict with scrutiny or “enter and view” and explained why.

Councillor S Bull referred to the issue of transportation to hospitals in Hertfordshire and the concerns he had regarding some patients being given access to transportation and the conflicting roles of GPs in offering these arrangements. Ms Wren explained that she was aware of this issue. Councillor L Haysey said that the Council had arranged for a meeting to consider the issue of hospital transport at the beginning of January 2013.

Ms Wren explained the roles between Healthwatch and the County Council. She explained that she was keen that Healthwatch acted as a social enterprise in its own right, had security of funding and proper data collection systems in place.

In response to a query from Councillor S Bull, Ms Wren explained the rationale behind not having substitute arrangements on the Healthwatch Board.

In response to a query from the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services, Ms Wren explained that Healthwatch would draw up service level contracts and key performance indicators. She explained how Board Members would be elected and the processes involved.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked Ms Wren for providing a breakdown of the role and aspirations of Healthwatch. She stated that she looked forward to working with Healthwatch and urged the organisation not to forget Town and Parish Councils and the important role they offered in providing a local perspective.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

15 REVIEW OF EAST HERTS PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY
2012/13 AND INTERIM ACTION PLAN REVIEW

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report updating Members on the implementation of the 2012/13 East Herts Public Health Strategy Action Plan.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer reminded Members that the 2012/13 Action Plan contained 51 projects for implementation before the end of March 2013. It was noted that 13 projects had been completed with a further 33 on track for completion by March 2013, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" of the report now submitted. The Environmental Health Promotion Officer provided a presentation showing what projects had been undertaken and the progress to date.

In response to a query concerning consultation with Environmental Health Officers and planning issues (i.e. contaminated land), Officers explained that they received weekly planning lists but would investigate to see whether the process could be formalised to include the wider public health implications of any application.

The report concluded with a discussion on potential projects for inclusion in the 2013/14 public health action plan. These ideas would be brought to the Panel at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress in implementing the East Herts Public Health Strategy Action Plan 2012/13 be noted; and

(B) Officers be asked to review the planning consultation process, from a public health viewpoint of any new applications for planning consent, in order that comments from a public health viewpoint can be fed back formally into the planning consultation process.

16 HCC HEALTH SCRUTINY - FEEDBACK FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman advised that she had recently visited Shrodells Hospital and had been very impressed with the mental health work undertaken there and the support given to patients. She summarised the work and praised the work of the Crisis Intervention Team. The Chairman hoped that a similar model might be introduced in East Herts.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support asked if Officers could raise this issue as a local concern. Councillor K Crofton felt that this was a good opportunity for Healthwatch to review if NHS funding could be found.

RESOLVED – that Officers co-ordinate with Healthwatch and explore the possibility of a looking for an increase in mental health provision in the District..

17 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Health and Wellbeing Panel's future work programme for 2012/13, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" of the report now submitted.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support suggested that Members might wish to consider a report on hospital transportation given Members' earlier concerns. This was supported. The Scrutiny Officer suggested that the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board be invited as a guest speaker to the Health and Wellbeing Panel meeting in October 2013. This was supported.

Members approved the Work Programme as now amended.

RESOLVED – that the Work Programme as now amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Chairman

Date