

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 12
DECEMBER 2017, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Allen (Chairman)
Councillors M Casey, G Cutting, B Deering,
H Drake, P Kenealy, M Stevenson and
N Symonds

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, G McAndrew and
T Page

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Fiona Corcoran	- Scrutiny Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Taryna Surtees-Moss	- Communications and Digital Media Manager

288 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Abbott, I Devonshire and M Freeman. It was noted that Councillor P Kenealy was substituting for Councillor I Devonshire.

289 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

290 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman commented that the Climate Change report had been deferred again. He accepted that it was taking longer than anticipated to get the information together and that a further Task and Finish Group would be held on Thursday 14 December 2017. It was hoped that an update summary would be available prior to Christmas.

291 UPDATE FROM EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACE - COUNCILLOR G MCANDREW

The Executive Member for Environment and Public Space provided Members with an overview of his portfolio.

The presentation addressed:

- Licensing activities including the vision for the taxi licensing function;
- Environmental Health and its role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of residents;
- the Council's role in spreading best practice in terms of promoting its vision for air quality;
- partnership working with the Police and others to promote community safety;
- the management of parks, open spaces and play areas and the important role they have for residents,

- wildlife and in preserving local heritage;
- proposals to improve Castle Park in Bishop's Stortford backed by National Lottery funding; and
- waste recycling and the "duty of care" for the safe disposal of waste and especially in relation to fly tipping.

An update was provided regarding the joint waste and recycling contract with North Herts.

The Executive Member and the Head of Housing and Health responded to a number of questions raised by Councillor Mrs D Hollebon who commented on the inappropriateness of merging disabled toilets with baby changing facilities, the difficulties wheelchair users had in getting in and out of facilities, and checks on premises when these changed ownership in relation to the "Scores on Doors". She queried whether the new officer on air quality would be presenting reports to Members and praised the success of Op Stomp. Reassurances were sought and provided in response to concerns about lost and abandoned dogs especially in the run up to Christmas.

Councillor G Cutting expressed concerns regarding the Bishop's Stortford Music Festival in November and its management arrangements. He stated that he made repeated complaints to a hotmail email address. Eventually, the organisers had agreed to refund the cost of his tickets to a charity of his choice. The Head of Housing and Health took on board the Member's concerns and agreed to look into this.

The Executive Member explained why the arrangements around the Pilot Project for Litter had been discontinued.

The Head of Housing and Health summarised the help given to premises' owners who fell short of hygiene requirements in order to increase their "score on the door".

In response to a query, the Executive Member provided a summary of why eight taxi drivers had had their licences revoked.

Councillor B Deering referred to the need to share information about applications for extensions to premises licences to the wider public. The Head of Housing and Health explained that the Council worked within statutory guidelines. He stated that he was in the process of reviewing the Statement of Licensing Policy. Currently his service emailed all ward members when a request had been made to vary a premises licence. Councillor B Deering asked that this information also be sent to Town Clerks as well. This was supported.

The Committee Chairman suggested that provision be made on the Council's website where complaints could be lodged in relation to an event licence. The Head of Housing and Health agreed to look into this.

Members thanked the Executive Member for his presentation.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

292 COMMUNICATIONS – UPDATE

The Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy submitted a report which provided an update on the Council's approach to communications. The

Communications and Digital Media Manager provided a summary of the report.

In response to a query by Councillor P Kenealy about whether objectives were being met, the Communications and Digital Media Manager agreed that six month or quarterly reviews could be provided. This was supported.

Councillor H Drake complimented the new "Link" format and felt that this should be provided digitally. She felt that "Twitter" could be used more in relation to refuse and recycling issues. Councillor Drake questioned the value of Instagram in view of the low statistics supporting its usage.

Councillor Mrs D Hollebon acknowledged the use of technology in the dissemination of information and saving money but stated that the District had an older population, many of whom did not have a computer. She felt that the "Link" should remain as a magazine and sent out twice a year. The Committee Chairman asked whether Officers could comment on the demographics of the community. The Communications and Digital Media Manager explained that the Council had a "mosaic" of data which it could draw on.

Councillor N Symonds agreed that as the District had an ageing population there was a need to keep a paper copy of the Link. Councillor Drake stated that her point was not to isolate people but that this was more about getting information out and to the press quicker.

Councillor G Cutting suggested that market research be undertaken to see in what form residents would like to receive information. This was supported.

Councillor B Deering stated that people found it difficult to navigate licensing applications on the website and asked Officers to review this.

Members noted the Council's approach to communications.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Council's approach to communications be noted;

(B) regular reviews be provided to Members in terms of whether the objectives as detailed for 2017/18 had been met; and

(C) Officers undertake market research to establish in what form residents preferred to receive information.

293 NIGHT TIME ECONOMY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES:
IMPACT OF ALCOHOL USE ON POLICING

The Head of Housing and Health submitted a report updating Members on the impact of alcohol use on policing with East Hertfordshire town centres. The report sought Members' views on the work to amend the Council's statutory Statement of Licensing Policy and a proposal to present Members of Licensing Committee with a presentation by Hertfordshire County Council's Public Health team of the impact of alcohol consumption on health services. The Head of Housing and Health provided a summary of the report.

Councillor H Drake referred to the fact that the night time economy (NTE) was an essential part of the economy. She referred to the positive use of Scannet and that the Taxi

Marshalling scheme should continue to be supported as this provided users with confidence that they were going to get home safely. The Member was pleased to see that under the licensing rules, most food establishments closed well before bars and that the only option then was to get a taxi home. Councillor J Goodeve commented that the NTE was important but that it could be a nuisance to residents.

Councillor N Symonds was concerned that the importance and role of Street Pastors had not been mentioned in the report.

Councillor B Deering questioned the role of licensing, premises changing use and planning and whether the use of Section 106 monies could be used to support the Taxi Marshalling scheme. The Head of Housing and Health explained the restrictions and uses of Section 106 monies and how these resources could be used.

The Head of Housing and Health summarised the advantages of using Scannet. Councillor M Casey queried the bid to the Police Crime Commission to support subsidising the use of Scannet.

Councillor G Cutting praised the uses and benefits of Scannet. He explained that the machines could be rented for about £40 a month.

The Committee Chairman sought assurances that the data protection protocols were robust. Councillor Cutting urged the Chairman to attend a presentation on the system adding that it was an amazing piece of kit.

In response to a query from the Committee Chairman, the Head of Housing and Health explained the benefits of the

“Purple Flag” accreditation status.

The Committee supported the report as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received;

(B) the views of the Police on the impact of alcohol on their activities be noted and that any views on how the Council and Police can work together to mitigate the impact be forwarded to the Head of Housing and Health;

(C) initial views on the upcoming review of the Council’s Statement of Licensing Policy regarding applications from licensed premises be provided to the Head of Housing and Health for consideration; and

(D) the Head of Housing and Health be requested to report to the Licensing Committee on the impact of alcohol on health services following the presentation by Hertfordshire County Council’s Public Health team.

294 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report detailing the Committee’s future work programme. The Scrutiny Officer provided an update of the report adding that it was anticipated a report updating Members on Planning Enforcement was planned for inclusion at the meeting on 20 February 2018 and that a further report on the Night Time Economy and its impact on the health Service needed to be programmed for the meeting on 17 April 2018. This was supported.

Members approved the draft Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED - that the draft Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as now detailed, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chairman
Date