

**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Members representing North Devon Council:

Councillor Biederman (Chairman – In the Chair)

Councillors Brown, Clark, Gurney, Lane, Lucas, Luggar, Moores, Tucker and White.

Members representing Torridge District Council:

(NOTE: Members from the Overview and Scrutiny (External) Committee from Torridge District Council were invited to attend the meeting).

Councillors Brenton, Johns, Whittaker, Pennington.

Non-Elected Member Dr McLellan.

Officers:

Corporate and Community Support Manager (JP) Community Development Officer (HH), Member Services Co-ordinator (KS) and Corporate and Community Administrator (KD).

Also present:

Ms E. Hayes                      Manager of the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB).

Mr S. Pitcher                      Chair of the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB).

Ms C. Dawe                      The Managing Director, Northern Locality, 'Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group'.

Dr S. Miller                      Vice Chair of the Northern Locality 'Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group'.

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chesters.

**2 MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee noted that Councillor Johns (Torrige District Council Member) declared a personal interest in item 6 as his wife attended a Devon County Council run daycare centre.

**4 ORDER OF AGENDA**

The Chairman welcomed the members of Torrige District Council and invited guests to the meeting.

He advised that there would be a few changes to the officer support for the Committee in the coming months with the retirement of the Corporate and Community Support Manager and the forthcoming maternity leave of the Member Services Co-ordinator. Therefore, the Community Development Officer and the Corporate and Community Administrator would be shadowing those roles and would be present at all future meetings.

RESOLVED, that item seven be considered prior to item six on the agenda to allow for the arrival of an external guest.

**5 NORTH DEVON AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

The Manager of the North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB) outlined the 20 year vision for the AONB stating that its purpose was to support the Local Authorities in fulfilling their statutory duties with regard to the designated North Devon AONB (Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, Sections 85 and 89).

She advised that the AONB had a duty to prepare and co-ordinate the delivery of the five year Statutory Management Plan. The Partnership also worked closely with the join planning service by providing support through design guides as well as commenting on individual planning applications where appropriate. They were also responsible for the management of the Sustainable Development Fund, which was a community grants fund.

She further advised that the year 2013/14 had seen an income of £173k against an investment of £30k and from 2005-2013 a return of £3,143,214

against an investment of £462,000. The AONB had brought in £1.4m in external grants over the last three years, whilst delivering the 2009-2014 Management Plan and developing of the new 2014-2019 Management Plan. During the consideration of the presentation, Members of the Committee raised and debated issues relating to the following:

- In response to a question regarding the sewage treatment works at Ashford and the quality of the water at Instow; the AONB Manager advised that the effluent quality from the sewage treatment works was monitored by the Environment Agency and she was unable to confirm if the plant was complying with the discharge consent.
- Responding to a further question regarding the water quality at Instow, she advised that the estuary was not part of the AONB and that there were issues with the level of dog fouling and the reluctance of some owners to pick up after their dogs. However, agricultural run-off was a larger contributor to poor water quality.
- The re-introduction of oyster and mussel beds at Porlock and the possibility of introducing these in other areas. The AONB Manager advised that she was a member of the Fisheries Local Advisory Group (FLAG) and that other areas would be under consideration if there was consistent improvement in water quality. The AONB Chair advised that he was also the Chair of the FLAG and that a grant had been given to a company to develop oyster beds in the Instow area. However, the funding for this would expire this year, unless there was additional grant funding.
- The Head of Environmental Health and Housing Services advised that both Councils regularly took samples of the mussels in the estuaries and that there was currently a dip in the water quality, with agricultural run off being one of the contributing factors contributing to the vulnerability of the mussel beds.
- The AONB Manager advised that the Taw River Improvement Project (TRIP) was currently researching the cause of the problems with the water quality and the higher levels of bacteria which had been found in the estuaries. She further advised that because the North Devon area had a lot of steep valleys the surface water run off from the land was a lot faster than in other areas.
- In response to a question, the AONB Manager advised that owing to limited resources within the team they were not able to provide consultee responses to all planning applications. However, if Members had a concerns regarding a particular application they were welcome to contact the team and they would do their best to look into the details and provide a response.
- The cumulative effect of wind farms in the North Devon area and the drive to support the Economic Development Team to generate energy from tidal sources.
- The discharge into the estuary at Instow from South West Water and the concerns of the local Parish Council regarding control mechanisms which were in place to monitor the levels.
- In response to a question, the AONB Manager advised that there was a fundamental objection to any proposals for a Taw or Torridge barrage

owing to the untold damage to the estuaries and the habitats of the local wildlife, stating that, in addition, it was not an economically viable project.

- Replying to a question on erosion of Horsey Island, the AONB Manager advised that she had recently visited the site in Braunton with the Drainage Board and Flood Group to assess the banks and concluded that the flood risk was fluvial not coastal. In addition, the barrier was privately owned.
- Questioned whether there was a North Devon representative on the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. It was clear that South Devon was well represented.
- Raised concerns regarding the poor level of service in flood hit rural areas, versus the resources available with the Thames Barrier in London when such an incident occurred.

The AONB Chair expressed his gratitude for the support of both Councils for the AONB.

The Committee thanked both the Chair and the Manager of the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB) for their attendance at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that a joint meeting with the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (External) from Torridge District Council be held with the Environment Agency, the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB) and South West Water to discuss the discharge into the estuary at Instow beach together with the concerns of the local Parish Council regarding the control and monitoring mechanisms which were in place;
- (b) that the AONB Manager's presentation be circulated to the Members;
- (c) that the contact details for Regional Flood and Coastal Committee be emailed to the Clerk to the Committee for circulation to the Members;
- (d) that the contact details for the Environment Agency Catchment Manager, be emailed to the Members of the Committee.

**6 CARE CLOSER TO HOME**

The Committee welcomed the Managing Director and Vice Chair of the Northern Locality of the Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to the meeting.

The CCG's Managing Director Northern Locality explained that the focus for the strategy was on services that took place in people's homes and other community settings such as clinics and community hospitals. The CCG had been working to develop a community services strategy and to achieve sustainable delivery arrangements for community services, focussing on how services would be configured or arranged and organised.

She further advised that there would be extensive clinically led engagement, which would see consultation with GP practices and local people regarding the proposals.

She then took the Committee through each stage of the process highlighting the shift in settings of inpatient care from hospital to home with strengthened clinician-led home based care models and a redesign of community hospital services with communities to include a model of health and wellbeing hubs together with clinically enhanced centres.

She advised that the initial co-production and engagement phase had been completed, with the locality public engagement reports published on the web site for comment. The full report together with the draft strategic framework and delivery proposals were published at the end of April 2014 for an eight week period of further engagement. The updated strategy and delivery proposals would then be submitted to the governing body on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014 to review and agree the next steps.

During the consideration of the presentation, Members of the Committee raised and debated issues relating to the following:

- The impact on users of the day care centres who enjoyed the interaction with other users of the facilities as opposed to the confinement of their homes for 24 hours a day.
- The integration with Devon County Council (DCC) and how the proposals of the CCG would fit with DCC's plans to close nearly all day care centres.
- The capacity of the remaining day care centres following the closure of others within the Northern Devon area and whether a strategy would be put in place to accommodate the displaced people.
- The impact of fatigue upon the carers if the care was predominantly provided within the home.
- The wellbeing and self management of the carers and those requiring care and how this would be communicated.
- In response to a question, the CCG's Vice Chair of the Northern Locality advised that through his work as a GP there had always been a problem between healthcare and social care and that the proposed changes from Devon County Council would present a whole new set of problems regarding funding support to carers.
- Agreed that the proposals from the CCG were in complete contrast to those of Devon County Council.
- The CCG's Managing Director Northern Locality advised that they had a good agreement with the care bodies involved and a working relationship

with Devon County Council. As part of this partnership working there were already some examples of good practice, such as the provision of district nurse training for staff in some of the care homes in Ilfracombe, and they were hopeful that this could be rolled out across Devon in the future.

- Concerns were raised regarding the complex care team and the introduction of any changes, which could fail due to the proposed closures by Devon County Council.
- Discussed concerns regarding the consultation with the voluntary sector and significant concerns that the right people were not being consulted with.
- Raised concerns regarding any potential impact upon cottage hospitals when people were discharged from acute hospitals and the potential for problems within the community.
- Whilst recognising the concerns raised by the Committee regarding cottage hospitals, the CCG's Managing Director Northern Locality advised that the CCG had to follow the correct process and acknowledged that they needed to work more closely with the voluntary sector. She further advised that both North Devon and Torridge Voluntary Services were represented on the steering group and they were currently considering which services were required in the hubs.
- Discussed the increasing population in the North Devon area and the requirement for beds in community hospitals. The CCG's Managing Director Northern Locality advised that there would still be some community beds available in certain areas but did not specify any locations or numbers.
- The CCG's Managing Director Northern Locality agreed that better communication with the public was required to ensure better support to both carers and patients.
- The CCG's Vice Chair Northern Locality advised that it was a complex system to understand and that as a GP he would want to do what was best for the patient but as the Commission he would strive for what was best for the community and that the decision had to be balanced.
- The Committee agreed that they would like to see further evidence of the work that the CCG were undertaking with Devon County Council.

RESOLVED, that the presentation be circulated to the Members of the Committee.

The Committee thanked the Managing Director and Vice Chair of Northern Locality Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group for their attendance at the meeting.

## **7 ESTABLISHMENT OF A CRIME AND DISORDER SUB-COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED, that a Crime and Disorder Sub-Committee consisting of all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be appointed for 2014/15.

The Committee noted that in accordance with Appendix 10 (a) of the

Constitution, that the Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be the Chairman of the Crime and Disorder Sub-Committee.

## **8 HOUSING STRATEGY TASK TEAM**

The Committee considered the notes of the Housing Strategy Task Team, which was held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014 (circulated previously).

The Head of Environmental Health and Housing Services explained that there were various challenges to overcome in the development of the Housing Strategy. He advised that there was a need to identify priorities and target resources to people in acute need and work together with partner organisations.

He further advised that he would be meeting with the Chairman of the Task Team to discuss the approach and to set a programme of meetings over the next few months. He encouraged the Members of the Task Team to look at the Needs Assessment, which was commissioned by Mr Higgins, as the contents of this document were integral to the development of the Housing Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the presentations be resent to the Members of the Task Team; and
- (b) that the final Housing Strategy be considered by the Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and that the work programme be amended accordingly.

## **9 WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the work programme (circulated previously).

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the work programme be noted;
- (b) that the proposed joint meeting with the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (External) from Torridge District Council be held with the Environment Agency, the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB) and South West Water to discuss the discharge into the estuary at Instow Beach together with the concerns of the local Parish Council regarding control mechanisms which were in place to monitor the levels be added to the work programme and that a joint Chairman's meeting be arranged to consider this;

- (c) that the report to the Executive on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014, which was produced by Devon County Council regarding the Extreme Weather Resilience be circulated to the Committee and the creation of a Task Team be considered at a future meeting;
- (d) that an item be added to the work programme to assess the impact of the proposed cuts by Devon County Council; and
- (e) that any questions for the Police and Crime Commissioner to respond to at the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014 be submitted to the Clerk to the Committee.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.46 p.m.

**NOTE:** These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.