

SOCIAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Social Affairs Select Committee held on 30 October 2012 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Mrs. Cook (Chairman)
Ms. Lowe (Vice-Chairman)

Ball, Butler, Bosley, Brookbank, Eyre, Mrs. George, Horwood, Mrs. Purves,
Raikes, Searles, Miss. Thornton and Towell

Apologies for absence: Ms. Chetram, Firth, Maskell and Neal

Mrs. Bayley, Mrs. Parkin and Pett were also present

10. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Social Affairs Select Committee held on 21 June 2012, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to a spelling correction to 'Kenward' not Kenwood within the minutes.

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest made.

With the agreement of the Committee the Chairman took agenda item 7 first.

12. 2013-14 Budget & Review of Service Plans

The Committee considered a report which set out proposals for updates to the 2013/14 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and four year savings plan. The report presented some service changes that had been identified by managers and that needed to be considered before finalising the budget for 2013/14. At this stage the Committee was not being asked to find savings, but if needed a report may be brought back to the Committee in January 2013 asking Members to consider areas where savings could be made.

Members considered Appendix D to the report and agreed with Officer comments. It was noted that there was an error on page 25 of the report, and that the figure should read £50k not £50.

Action 1: That any future proposals concerning the maintenance of White Oak Leisure Centre, be reported, as soon as known.

In response to a question concerning the Police contribution to running the CCTV Control Room, the Head of Community Development advised that this had always been a one off contribution when the Police had funding available. The Director of Community Development and Deputy Chief Executive reported that an

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assumption of £16k had been made as part of the annual discussions with the Police on this matter, but in reality funding had not been received for a few years.

The Chairman commented that a possible future saving might be to have the CCTV Control Room unmanned during the day.

Action 2: That Members consider between now and the next meeting, any areas within the Committee's remit where savings could potentially be made.

Resolved: That the comments above be noted and referred to the Cabinet meeting on 6 December 2012.

13. Request from the Performance and Governance Committee

Member's considered a referral from the Performance and Governance Committee meeting held on 18 September 2012, requesting the Committee to consider whether there was a better alternative performance indicator other than the number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households (LPI CD 007). The Head of Community Development advised that a possible alternative would be measuring the targets achieved against the Community Safety Action Plan.

Resolved: That the Performance and Governance Committee be advised that a preferred indicator may be measuring the targets achieved on the Community Safety Action Plan which the Council and partners had more influence over.

14. Actions from Previous Meeting

The actions taken since the previous meeting were noted.

15. Future Business, the Work Plan 2012/13

The Committee agreed to go ahead with running a thread on the Mumsnet website to see if women using the services agreed with the results of the Chairman and Vice Chairman's visits to Pembury and Darenth Valley maternity wards, with a view to inviting representatives of Mumsnet to the next meeting to discuss Midwifery Services and putting the findings to the Kent County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed some advertising in the local newspapers could be carried out and that the local National Childbirth Trust representatives should be contacted.

It was also noted that the Head of Community Development would report on the draft stage of the Community Plan in January with the final report in March 2013. That the Sevenoaks Town Council's House in the Basement were to do a presentation at the March 2013 meeting, and that the STAG be asked whether they could supply the venue for that meeting free of charge.

16. Safer and Stronger Communities

The Head of Community Development spoke on the Community Plan priority of building safer and stronger communities, advising that the Community Safety Partnership was key in realising this objective.

The Chairman welcomed Police Inspector David Coleman and Stuart Albon, Risk Reduction Manager West Group, Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

Inspector Coleman gave a presentation setting out the Kent Police response to the financial challenge faced over the next four years. In response to questions he advised that the Police were always seeking and encouraging new volunteers. At the moment there was a working party looking into rebranding and invigorating recruitment for special constables. He reassured the local Member for New Ash Green that whilst there was not the budget to have more Police walking the beat to make residents feel less vulnerable, New Ash Green had recently had enhanced patrols between 8 pm. and 6 a.m. in light of recent activity there and there had been an arrest. Whilst it was desirable to have more Officers on the beat the budget just wasn't there. He further advised that the crime figures in New Ash Green were down from the same period last year.

In response to a question as to how useful CCTV was, and whether he had a view as to how the service would be affected if unmanned during the day, he advised that whilst working in Maidstone he had found the manned CCTV Control Room invaluable. However he understood the necessity for cutbacks. The Director of Community and Planning Services and Deputy Chief Executive advised that the CCTV station was currently unmanned during the hours of 9a.m. and 1 p.m. which had been agreed at the last budget round. Inspector Coleman said that the District currently had a 30.1% crime detection rate but he was not able to give figures for convictions arising from that figure. He also clarified that the Probation Service ran Community Service and there was access to use them for community projects. The Head of Community Development confirmed that they were interested in 'one-off' projects and well as ongoing work such as graffiti removal.

The Chairman allowed a member of the Public to address the Committee. He commented that his residents association was participating in a community speedwatch initiative and urged everyone to take part. He pointed out that it was only operational in daylight hours which was therefore restrictive this time of the year. He asked whether the Police were doing anything about the speeding problem in his area and around Sevenoaks general during the night and early morning hours. Inspector Coleman explained that the tactics used were to engage, educate, engineer solutions and lastly enforce. Owners would be written to; the Highways Authority were urged to address problem areas with adequate road engineering/speed restrictions; Licensing Officers should liaise with taxis etc; and enforcement action was only taken when all else had failed. There was an Officer receiving speed gun training that weekend and he would ask him to contact the member of public concerning his area. However he highlighted this was not a sole Police issue and the Highways Authority should also be contacted.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Coleman for attending and the Committee showed their appreciation. Inspector Coleman informed the Committee that the

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relationship here with the Community Safety Unit was the best operation he had seen and was an excellent model.

The Chairman welcomed Stuart Albon, Risk Reduction Manager West Group, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, gave a presentation explaining Kent Fire and Rescue Service's four key focus areas: Reducing the number of killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions; Reducing casualties from fire; Preserving the Gateway to the Garden of Eden; and mitigating the risk to business. During the presentation he asked Members to consider places/events suitable for safety education days. He also requested that any Members who were able to help promote the school education service provided into grammar schools in the area would be very much appreciated.

In response to questions concerning an incident in the Seal and Weald area he responded that even if the Seal Fire Station had still been operating it would not have been that crew who would have attended the incident. The particular incident referred to had been fully investigated and the satellite navigation system duly updated. It was a county wide service and there was never a guarantee that an incident would be attended by the local crew. Therefore crews did not always have local knowledge and relied on the equipment supplied to them.

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the last meeting where the Chief Executive of Sencio had advised that the emergency services had stopped responding to automatic fire alarms between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. and that from 2013 it would also cease at night. Mr. Albon responded that it had been a staged withdrawal of response since 2005. They still attended where there was risk to life, or automatic alarms were confirmed. He advised that there were excellent fire safety guidelines for premises available on the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/>.

With reference to the planned New Ash Green Fire Station he advised that this was still with planning.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Albon for attending and the Committee showed their appreciation.

17. Community Plan Consultation - Verbal Update

The Head of Community Development advised that she would present a report on the draft Community Action Plan to the next meeting, with the final version presented to the meeting in March 2013. All Members had had the opportunity to put forward their priorities for the Plan, along with Parish and Town Councils, the Youth Advisory Group, local businesses and many other organisations. There were still a number of organisations outstanding that were due to be consulted shortly. Existing priorities within the current plan were being used as the structure for the current consultation.

She further reported that new arrangements were being put in place by the Kent County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Board, for a local Health and Wellbeing Board from April 2013. They were to be centred around Clinical Commissioning Group areas and not by districts. Sevenoaks District was covered by Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley and by West Kent Primary Care Trusts,

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which meant the District would have to keep abreast of knowledge from, and input to, two different Boards. She would make a further report to the Committee at the meeting in January 2013. Consultation regarding health outcomes was out at the moment with a closing date of 23 November 2012. A response had been drafted and she would circulate it to all Members for information.

Action 3: Consultation Draft response to be circulated by the Head of Community Development.

18. Feedback from Members' Visits

Members noted that a visit to the Sevenoaks Fire Station had been arranged to take place on Monday 5 November 2012 at 7.00pm. The Chairman urged as many Members to attend as possible.

19. Programme of Visitors to Future Meetings of the Committee (including a list of voluntary organisations)

Members noted the programme of visitors and agreed that they would like to visit Spring House and Swanley and Edenbridge Children's Centres before the next meeting in January 2013.

Action 4: The Head of Community Development to arrange visits to Spring House and the Children's Centres in Swanley and Edenbridge.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.31 pm

Chairman