

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Hogarth (Chairman)

Cllr. Horwood (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Butler, Ms. Chetram, Mrs. Cook, Davison, Fittock

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Ball and Maskell

39. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Committee held on the 26 February 2014, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

40. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

41. Actions from Previous Meeting

The Health and Communities Manager advised Members that information on Local Dementia Support Services had been put on the District Council's website. There was now a Kent 24 hour helpline run by specialists which was available for those living in Kent with questions regarding Dementia. 60 front line SDC Officers had received training for Dementia awareness and it was hoped that training could be run for Members and Service Managers. It was being investigated whether the signage in the Council reception could be changed to help those suffering with Dementia. It was confirmed that there would be Officers attending the Dementia Friends event on the 21 May 2014.

The Health and Communities Manager advised that action 2 had been completed and Members of the Health Liaison Board had received their information packs from Carers First. If other Members required the packs more could be requested.

42. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Chairman and Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development reported that 'real Business', the Council's Business newsletter was circulated to 650 business in the District and also to Members at the end of each month. Businesses could sign up for the newsletter on the District Council's website and it was being investigated how to increase the number of businesses registered for the newsletter. Members suggested whether the subject title of the email should be changed.

It was suggested that a working group could look into ways to raise awareness of the newsletter, and that someone from a business should be invited as they would have the knowledge of what businesses were looking for. It was also suggested that Cllr. Miss.

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Stack could be able to provide some advice on marketing techniques. Cllr. Horwood and Cllr. Hogarth expressed their interest at sitting on a working group should there be sufficient interest.

Members were also advised that the Economic Development consultation was still underway and that a few key businesses and groups had not yet responded. The questions were available on the website. The Chairman expressed his thanks to officers for the way the face to face consultations were held.

43. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)

Members noted the referral from Cabinet, which requested the Committee to set up a working group to look at car parking technology. Members discussed what car parking technology could include and that advances in technology could cause problems for non computer users. They queried whether this was something the scrutiny working group had looked at. Members expressed their preference for the working group meetings to take place in the evening.

Resolved: That

- a) the working group examine car parking technology such as smart ticketing and;
- b) the membership include Cllrs Mrs. Bosley, Butler, Ms Chetram and Hogarth.

44. To note minutes of the Health Liaison Board

Cllr. Mrs Cook, Chairman of the Health Liaison Board, expressed her thanks for the number of health related meetings that Members attended as it provided information on the changing situations within health. She highlighted to Members that there were problems with the patient transport service and that an additional £1.6 million would be going into funding this.

The Health and Communities Manager confirmed that Minute 35, Action 5 had not been completed yet but would be before the next meeting of the Board. Cllr. Davison advised Members that it was a Patient Participation Chairs meeting that he had attended and that patient transport had gone to tender a year ago.

Resolved: That the minutes be noted.

CHANGE IN AGENDA ITEM ORDER

With the Committee's agreement the chairman brought forward consideration of agenda item 9.

45. Local Strategic Partnership Employment Sub-Group

The Health and Communities Manager advised Members that the LSP Employment Subgroup was a forum which brought education, training and employment services

together providers' together look at sharing working opportunities to improve opportunities for young people in the District.

The Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service (KIASS) were providing drop in sessions for young people for help with training opportunities and interviews. There would be drop in sessions in Sevenoaks at House in the Basement on Monday evenings at the STAG and another would be starting in Edenbridge. Other providers would attend to ensure young people had the support and advice.

K College currently provided practical training two mornings a week at Orchards Academy. They also hosted short courses in the Summer for those starting College in the Autumn to introduce them to the college and build their self esteem.

The Health and Communities Manager also informed Members that there was a cooking school in Crowborough who took on apprentices with a passion for food. They were involving young people from the District and, as the placements for young people had to be near to where they lived, local businesses would also be involved.

It was discussed how prepared young people were for employment and further training. Feedback which had been received by those in the LSP Employment Sub Group suggested many lacked interview skills, lost work placements due to their social media footprint, and were not dressed appropriately. Members also questioned whether schools still arranged work experience placements and what schools were doing to help their students. The Health and Communities Manager informed members that KIASS, one of the LSP Partners were doing a lot of work with the young people and the courses being led by K College also helped. Members were advised that Job Centre Plus was preparing drop in centres and that two local schools had Career Advisors sitting on the LSP Employment Sub Group. Knole Academy was working with the Employment Sub Group to hold a careers day in the autumn and Officers were working with the school to organise this event.

Resolved: That a future report be submitted on the progress of the LSP Employment Subgroup.

46. Funding Schemes Available For Businesses In The Sevenoaks District

The Chief Officer Communities and Business presented a report that advised Members of the funding, grants and loans available to businesses in the Sevenoaks District through the District Council or it's partners. She advised Members that business cards had been produced to promote Escalate and asked Members who could help promote the scheme to take a supply of the cards. There were 11 applications in the pipeline from businesses in the Sevenoaks District, the second highest number in the area of benefit.

Members were updated that since the report had been written two applications had been received for the Flood Support grants and 20 expressions of interest had been made for the Flood Repair and Renew grants. The Central Government guidelines had only just been published for the Repair and Renew grants and the local Guidelines would be presented to Cabinet for approval at its May meeting. Members would be informed when applications in their ward were made.

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The Business Area improvement Fund had £10,000 obtained from the Sevenoaks District Community Plan Delivery Fund. Information was available on the website and InShape the Council's magazine.

Members raised concerns that the website was the main place where information was available, and not everyone would think to look on the website. Information should be placed in other locations such as banks, train stations and post offices.

Action 1: Chief Officer Communities and Business to ensure information is available in other locations other than the District Council's website.

Concerns were raised at the additional pressure the grant applications could have on officer resources. In response the Chief Officer Communities and Business advised that Kent County Council (KCC) was the responsible body for Escalate and the District Council's role was to publicise the scheme. Members were informed that the Officer responsible for dealing with the grants had prior experience, and was well-versed in the Council's grant-making protocol. The repair and review grant scheme needed technical advice in addition and a corporate group had been set up to deal with these.

As a way of promoting the work of the Council when submitting an application for the grant scheme applicants were automatically included on the distribution list for 'real Business'.

Resolved: That the report was noted.

47. Volunteer Award Scheme (Discussion)

The Chief Officer Communities and Business advised Members that a Volunteer Award Scheme had been recommended as a way to celebrate the work that the voluntary sector undertook within the District. It was suggested that there could be different awards available in recognition of the work that had been done. Members were advised that there would be limited cost implications. Members questioned whether local businesses could be approached for sponsorship, and questioned the implications on Officer time resources. It was noted that other volunteer awards take place such as the Triangle awards, Police and KCC Social Services. The Chief Officer Communities and Business advised that the volunteer awards would be specific to the District but could also reaffirm what others had achieved through the other awards.

The Chief Officer Communities and Business advised that sponsorship could be investigated. The Communities and Business team had good experience for organising events and this would not take too much organising, particularly if the voluntary sector itself was involved in the organisation. Members agreed that this would be a good idea.

Resolved: That a further report be submitted to a future meeting.

48. Work Plan

Members agreed that the work plan for October and February be populated at the meeting in July and that the Parking working group feedback and Introduction to the Business Development Manager be added to the work plan for the July meeting.

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The Chairman thanked the Committee for their work over the past year.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.25 PM

CHAIRMAN