

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTH ESSEX AREA FORUM HELD AT 10.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2010 AT THE TOWNGATE THEATRE, BASILDON

Membership

County Councillors:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| * R C Howard (Chairman) | D Abrahall |
| J Dornan | D W Morris |
| * T Sargent | R A Pearson |
| S C Castle | Mrs I Pummell |
| Mrs T Chapman | Mrs J M Reeves |
| * W J C Dick | * C G Riley |
| Mrs E M Hart | * J M Schofield |
| A M Hedley | K Twitchen |
| * S Hillier | Mrs M J Webster |
| | * B Wood |

* present

Also Present

(in order of signing the attendance book – and as there described).

George Whatley – PAM, Alf Partridge – Castle Point Borough Council, John Buchanan – EALC, Matthew Stanton – Yellow Advertiser, Kim Barford – Great Burstead Village Council, Marie Dear – Great Burstead Village Council, Tony Ball – BDC, Ian Cousins – May Gurney, Chris Noakes – Essex Fire & Rescue, Cllr Terry Cutmore – Rochford District Council

Officers Attending in Support

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| David Moses | Head of Member Support & Governance |
| Sallyanne Thallon | Area Co-ordinator South Essex |
| Ian Myers | Committee Officer |
| Dan Gascoyne | Assistant Director for Partnership Delivery |
| Nick McCullagh | Area Highways Manager South |
| Samantha Ball | Committee Assistant |
| Natalie Szpigelman | Highways Liaison Officer |

12. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed Members, Officers and members of the public to the meeting and expressed his disappointment at the low turn out.

13. Apologies and Substitution Notices

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of apologies from Councillors Tracey Chapman, Tony Hedley, Roy Pearson, Kay Twitchen, Iris Pummell and Elizabeth Hart; Janice Rigby, Rochford Parish Council; Nancy Jaworski, Rayleigh Town Council; Paul Warren and Steve Hawkins.

Councillor Tony Ball left prior to the commencement of the meeting.

14. Declarations of Interest

Councillor John Schofield declared an interest in item 6 being the County Councillor representative to Basildon Hospital

15. Minutes

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman

16. Public Questions

The issue of attendance at the South Area Forum meetings was discussed. Members generally agreed that more needs to be done to secure greater attendance at meetings including:

- Greater Parish representation with more local issues on the agenda
- Careful consideration of venues with good access
- More advanced notification of dates
- The use of local media to promote dates and topics
- Avoiding clashes with other County meetings
- The selection of a 'hot topic' that could be advertised well in advance of the meeting.

David Moses informed Members of a current strategy to promote the work of the Area Forums which is linked to policy for handling petitions. The scheme is being drafted at present.

Members discussed Local Highways Panels and, in particular, the decision of Basildon District Council not to form a panel. The Chairman confirmed this had been raised at the South Essex Strategic Highways Panel. It was suggested that individuals and Councils write to Councillor Ball expressing their concern and requesting he re-consider.

George Whatley raised the issue of top tier coma sites being self regulating and the fact that such sites need to be sited safely. It was noted that the Health & Safety Executive has responsibility for monitoring the safety of these sites. Following discussion it was agreed that this would be raised at the County Councils Scrutiny Board.

17. Health Scrutiny

David Moses outlined the purpose of the item was to enable Members to consider:

- The request from the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake scrutiny reviews.
- Becoming involved in other health related issues which the Forum would like to be reviewed, either locally or by HOSC as part of a wider review.

Members were informed that following a recent HOSC workshop, four issues arose during consideration of the NHS South East Essex Strategy:

- The productivity drive
- Mental health issues and spend
- Health prevention
- Provision of community premises

HOSC concluded that this would best be reviewed by a joint group formed from the South Area Forum and Southend Unitary Authority and it was suggested this Forum take the lead in establishing the proposed task and finish group.

HOSC also considered access to GPs including problems with GP services in Rochford and Basildon, the lack of investment with new premises and the number of single GP surgeries. As similar issues exist in Brentwood it was suggested this be taken forward by a small group drawn from the South and West Area Forums and Thurrock.

Members discussed the proposal and raised a number of other issues including:

- Being mindful of the Trust and who they serve
- The inclusion of both Primary Care Trusts
- The provision of polyclinics

All Members of the Forum were fully supportive of the proposal.

Finally, it was agreed that a scoping document be prepared for discussion at the next meeting of this Forum.

18. Support for Carers

The Chairman introduced the report and reminded Members of the importance of this subject and of the dependency of many on Carers.

David Moses outlined to Members that reviews of the recommendations would take place during June of this year and that a progress report would be brought to a future meeting of the Forum.

19. Essex Transformation

Members received a presentation on the Essex transformation programme from Dan Gascoyne, Assistant Director for Partnership Delivery, Essex County Council.

Dan outlined to Members the main reasons for the transformation programme being:

- Commitment of the County Council to deliver the vision of delivering the best quality of life in Britain by 2012
- An increasing demand for services
- At a time of falling budgets
- A demand for increasing levels of customer service

The ambition of the County Council is to :

- Work in partnership with the voluntary, public and private sectors
- Achieve greater efficiency and value for money
- To increase the role of technology
- To understand the customer and their needs

Dan went on to explain:

- Total Essex spending
- Common pressures for public sector partners
- The ECC target to save £300m over 4 years.
- The fundamental re-appraisal of County Council business.
- The target operating model (TOM) showing how a future Essex County Council might look.
- How changes will be delivered
- Potential opportunities in Shared Services
- The details behind the partnership agreement between the County Council and IBM. Dan confirmed there is suitable protection against any overspend.

Terry Cutmore commented that whilst the transformation programme was based on the need to save money, the people in the organisation were equally important. He added that suitable processes need to be in place to enable the public to access services more efficiently

The Chairman thanked Dan for his factual presentation

20. Highways Update

Members received an update from Nick McCullagh on highways issues and, in particular, the impact of the severe winter weather on the roads.

He informed Members that the two prolonged spells of bad weather had led to an unprecedented number of potholes that required urgent repair.

He reported that the situation is being recovered by the contractor (May Gurney) and that an additional £ ¼ million had been allocated to support the urgent road restoration work.

In addition Members noted:

- A National Snow Summit had been hosted by Essex County Council.
- Local farmers are used to help clear heavy snow when appropriate.
- Salt bins are located in critical locations but theft is an issue.
- All major routes and bus routes are cleared as a priority.
- Close working with District Councils is essential

Members discussed the issues of local shop owners carrying out work to clear snow from outside their premises. It was noted that provided people are using their best endeavours then there should be no problems legally.

The Area Highways Team were congratulated on their work and the role of Essex County Council for actions taken during the severe weather was recognised.

21. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 7 June 2010 at 10.00 am, venue to be advised.

Future meeting dates were noted to be:

Wednesday 1 September 2010

Monday 15 November 2010

Friday 14 January 2011

Tuesday 15 March 2011

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 11.55am

Chairman