

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WEST ESSEX AREA FORUM HELD AT THE ADULT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ONGAR, ON 15 June 2010

Membership

*** Present**

Essex County Council

* E Webster (Chairman)	* J Knapman
* B Aspinell	G McEwen
S Barker	V Metcalfe
R Chambers	* G Mitchinson
L Dangerfield	Dr A Naylor
* M Garnett	* C Pond
R Gooding	* J Roberts
A Jackson	* S Walsh
* E Johnson	* J Whitehouse
D Kendall	

*Councillor Joe Pike Mid Area Forum Chairman was also in attendance

Brentwood Borough Council (2)

Louise McKinlay	- Leader
Joanna Killian	- Chief Executive

Epping Forest District Council (2)

Diana Collins	- Leader
Peter Haywood	- Chief Executive
* Chris Overend	

Harlow District Council (2)

Andrew Johnson	- Leader
Malcolm Morley	- Chief Executive
* Simon Carter	

Uttlesford District Council (2)

Jim Ketteridge	- Leader
John Mitchell	- Chief Executive

Local Councils (3)

Peter Baggott	- E.A.L.C (Brentwood)
Jason Salter	- E.A.L.C (Epping Forest)

Hospitals & Primary Care Trusts (4)

* Catherine O'Connell	- West Essex Primary Care Trust
Darren Leech	- Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, Harlow

Police (2)

Chief Superintendent Simon Williams	- West Division, Essex Police
Chief Superintendent Michelle Dunn	- Central Division, Essex Police

Fire (1)

Ray Skinner	- Essex Fire & Rescue Service
Mark Samuels	- Essex Fire & Rescue Service

Councils for Voluntary Service (4)

Jackie Sully	- Rainbow Services, Harlow
Jacqui Foile	- Voluntary Action Epping Forest

Eric Hicks
Mary Ford

- CVS Uttlesford
- Brentwood CVS

Also Present

(from the attendance book – and as there described)

J Carr, LINKs, E Walsh – Loughton TC, D Aldridge – Great Dunmow TC, J Harkus, Eric Hicks, Uttlesford CVS, Mrs R Smith and Alison Anderson, Policy Analyst (ECC)

Officers Attending in Support

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| * Samantha Ball | - Committee Assistant |
| * Vivien Door | - Committee Officer |
| * David Moses | - Head of Member Support and Governance |
| * Yvette Wetton | - Area Coordinator |

27. Welcome and Introduction of Members and Officers

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Forum and members of the public to the meeting. She also welcomed Alison Anderson, Policy Analyst, who was conducting a review of all four area forums, to see how these could best serve the people of Essex. A report would be forthcoming in due course. Cllr J Pike was also in attendance.

28. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Essex County Councillors S Barker, N Hume Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, D Kendal, V Metcalfe, C Riley, Deputy to Cabinet Member for Localism, and Dr A Naylor.

Apologies had also been received from J Mitchell - Uttlesford DC, D Linnell - Loughton Residents Association, Great & Little Hallingbury PC, Chief Inspector Simon Williams, Essex Police, J Foile – Voluntary Action Epping Forest, J Sully – Rainbow Services Harlow, Councillor Mrs D Collins – Epping Forest DC, Councillor Mrs Yvonne Maguire – Kelvedon Hatch PC and David Matthews, Parish Representative, Thaxted.

29. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

30. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the West Essex Area Forum held on 9 March 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments.

Minute 21, Review of Health Services in West Essex, c) NHS West Essex Strategy, with the following amendments to the second, third and forth bullet points:

- A lot of work had been done by necessity around ensuring that the urgent care agenda was dealt with. There was a NHS National Operating Framework set by the Department of Health and the PCT based decisions about what to commission from hospital providers on the back of that document and local intelligence from public health and other commissioning experts. The PCT set itself the target of keeping A&E activity within the 2008-09. Darren Leech from PAH advised that there were costs to the hospital associated with treating each patient, but beyond the contracted level the hospital would receive greatly reduced funding. One aspect of addressing this issue was for the PCT to reduce the number of people attending A&E by 5000 this year, compared to last. The PCT confirmed that there was major work being undertaken around these issues and close working with the Ambulance Service along with work with residential and nursing homes. A good understanding of patients' preference for a place of care was needed.
- The PCT recognised the need to work closely with partners and local organisations to improve health. The Director of Public Health had a role to ensure that this was happening. Addressing health inequalities meant doing things differently in areas with identified problems; different needs required a different approach.
- There were some aspects of the Strategy where the local NHS was doing well including the reduction of hospital acquired infections which was a major step forward and the end of life pathway was working well. However, other aspects such as the new dementia pathway needed some more work. Specialised commissioning was difficult to influence. Although the PCT had an understanding of the tough financial times it was still dedicated to the Strategy.

31. Matters Arising

Minute 24, Public Questions, the Forum agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group regarding Mr Crouchman's request for seasonal decorations.

Power Point presentations: The Forum agreed that any paper for presentations should be sent out with the Agenda.

32. Community Infrastructure Levy

The Committee received report (AFW/11/10) and a presentation from Keith Lawson, Head of Development Manager, on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Keith Lawson informed the Forum that the CIL which was implemented on 6 April 2010 by the previous Government. It was now a criminal offence not to pay this levy. Each Local Authority would need to set its own CIL rate, taking into consideration the economic viability of the development area rather than just an individual development site. There would be different zones within a charging area reflecting the price of the land. The charge was per square meter of gross internal floor area and was payable on commencement of the development. Section 106, within the Planning Law now had three tests of reasonableness to see if the planning application fits:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

- Directly related to the development;
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

If the tests were not correct then the planning application could be challenged in the high court.

The CIL collects the levy over an area and then could spend the funds in this area or in a different area. There was transparency in this scheme. A percentage of the levy passes to the local community or Parish. Each Local Authority needed to produce a Core Strategy.

During the discussions the following points were made:

- That the CIL and Section 106 work together. The Local Authority collects the CIL funds which it could use across its district, it could be a priority area of development or the same area in which the funds were collected;
- Section 106 was restricted to the same area as the original development whereas the CIL could be used further afield but within the Local Authority boundaries;
- A percentage of the levy was passed down to either the Parish or the community;
- Once the Section 106 agreement was made between the developer and the Local Authority it cannot be broken. It was also inspected to see if the three tests have been used correctly and that the public were consulted;
- Land values differ across Essex dictating the size of the CIL.

There was uncertainty now under the Coalition Government with regard to the CIL as it was thought that this government would not continue with the Levy but may continue with Section 106.

The Chairman thanked Keith Lawson for his presentation.

33. Establishment of the Harlow Hub Office

The Forum received a presentation from Martin Giess, Office Strategy Manager, Essex Property & Facilities regarding the Establishment of the Harlow Hub Office which provided office space for Social Workers, Specialist Teachers, Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologists and Highways Officers. The number of offices would reduce from 46 to 34. Some of the offices were no longer fit for business with staff dispersed across the office estates, for example, Brays Grove site was to be demolished and staff needed to be moved. Some of the office buildings were leased, which was expensive. Work took place with the Harlow District Council to try to amalgamate both Essex County Council staff and District staff. Unfortunately, it would have been costly to extend Latton Bush Centre and could not be completed within the timescale. Further talks would take place in the future.

The decision to move staff into Goodman House was supported by the Cabinet Member. This building was near the train station and had 120 car parking spaces for 500 staff; there was a public car park near by. Social Workers have been given lap tops and VPN access to enable them to work at home when appropriate. Library drop in centres could also be used as work stations. This gave more flexibility within the Hub as not all staff needed to work in the Hub

every day. Desk sharing had been enabled by using puppies and kennels, for staff to lock their files away each evening, and were wheeled to a desk when required, 42 less working spaces have been created. Not all offices have moved into the Hub as it was being completed in phases.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- That staff would be given discounts to nearby car parks;
- Members were very concerned about Social Worker's clients being unable to visit the building from further afield than Harlow due to cost and lack of public transport;
- Clients would receive more home visits from Social Workers, and could make contact by telephone, they would speak to a professional who would be able to help or ask the Client's Social Worker to contact them;
- Members were very concerned about the time it took Social Workers and Highways Officers to travel into the Hub would effect their working day;
- Members were concerned that no consultation had taken place before staff was moved into the Hub.

The Forum **Agreed** that Martin Giess will provide regular updates on the Hub.

The Chairman thanked Martin Giess for his presentation.

34. West Area Forum Budget 2010/11

The Forum considered report AEF/12/10 from Yvette Wetton, West Area Co-ordinator on the process for allocation of the Area Forum Budget 2010/11. There was £50,000 for bids in the area, match funding was desirable but not always necessary for this capital expenditure. The closing date for applications was 5 October 2010.

The Chairman reminded Members to inform their community about the funding and encourage them to apply.

35. Establishment of the joint Task and Finish Group with the South Area Forum to consider Access to GP Provision

The Forum received an update from David Moses, Head of Member Support and Governance. The first meeting would take place on 22 June to look at Access to GP Provision in Brentwood, Basildon and Rochford areas. The second meeting, in October to look at background information from South West and South East PCTs. Meetings would be set up to take evidence from witnesses with the report due in early 2011. The report would be presented to both the West and South Area Forums and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for endorsement.

36. Update on Life Raft Trust Funding

The Forum noted the report, AWF/13/10 from Joanne Richardson, Life Raft Trust Project Manager. The closing date for applications for the second round of funding was Monday 4 October 2010. Further information was available at the following website.

www.essex.gov.uk/liferafttrust

37. Items for Report

The Forum noted the content of the following reports:

- a) Information for Brentwood on 14-19 Education, AWF/14/10, from Avis Parker, 14-19 Area Adviser;
- b) Data on the settlement of invoices for voluntary/third sector organisations, AWF/15/10.

38. Future Programme of Work

The Forum received and noted the Forward Work Plan AFW/16/10.

It was suggested that the Highways department should be invited to a future meeting to look at issues, and in particular the following:

- The Highways department should provide comparative data for the West Area Forum area and the rest of Essex, looking in particular at performance and consultation for traffic schemes;
- The health and safety aspects of residents clearing their own pavements from snow.

Yvette Wetton would quickly organise a Task and Finish Group to look at Bunting.

The impact on the front line services should be investigated in light of the Harlow Hub.

New Government legislation and how it would affect the Area Forum should be a standing item on the Agenda.

39. Public Questions

There were no public questions

40. Dates of Future Meetings

The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 13 September 2010, 10 am at the Adult Community College, Ongar.

41. Urgent Business

There being no further business, the Chairman expressed her thanks to members of the Forum and others for their attendance. The meeting closed at 12.10 pm.

Chairman