

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES**

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee      **Date:** Tuesday, 28 February 2017

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping      **Time:** 7.30 - 9.33 pm

**Members Present:** Councillors M Sartin (Chairman) L Girling (Vice-Chairman) N Avey, N Bedford, R Brookes, D Dorrell, S Kane, A Mitchell, S Murray, A Patel, G Shiell, D Stallan, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley

**Other Councillors:** Councillors R Baldwin, W Breare-Hall, R Gadsby, A Grigg, H Kane, J Lea, A Lion, G Mohindra, R Morgan, J Philip, S Stavrou, D Sunger, G Waller, C Whitbread and J M Whitehouse

**Apologies:** Councillors Y Knight, S Neville, B Rolfe and B Surtees

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer)

**By Invitation:** S Famili (Epping Forest College)

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### **44. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

### **45. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was reported that Councillor H Whitbread was substituting for Councillor B Rolfe and that Councillor J H Whitehouse was substituting for Councillor B Surtees.

### **46. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 19 December 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(a) Councillor D Dorrell declared a non-pecuniary, non-prejudicial interest in the following item of the agenda by virtue of his son attending Epping Forest College.

- Item 6 – Scrutiny of external organisations - Epping Forest College.

- (b) Councillor G Mohindra declared a non-pecuniary, non-prejudicial interest in the following item of the agenda by virtue of being the Chairman of the Board of Governors for Epping Forest College.
- Item 6 – Scrutiny of external organisations - Epping Forest College.

#### **48. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - EPPING FOREST COLLEGE**

The Chairman introduced the recently appointed principal of Epping Forest College, Saboohi Famili, who had been invited to address the committee on the recent Ofsted report (January 2017) on its 'inadequate' judgement of the quality of its local further education facilities and services.

Ms Famili started by saying she was happy to be sharing the plans of the college to move forward from their current situation. She had been appointed to this post in September 2016, and within five weeks they had an Ofsted visit, resulting in an 'inadequate' marking. The reasons for this were mainly because of lack of scrutiny of the situation and the lack of scrutiny from the governors to ensure that the problems were addressed. At this time we had also self assessed as inadequate and Ofsted had merely confirmed this assessment. She was pleased that one of the strengths identified by Ofsted was that the new leadership had accurately identified the problems that they faced.

As a result of this judgements they would now have more regular visits from Ofsted setting out the Ofsted support in the year to come and then will carry out another major inspection in 12 to 15 months; so they were looking to next April to have full inspection to prove that the college had moved away from being an inadequate organisation.

The inspectors came back on 26 January and their unofficial comments were that they were very impressed at the speed and progress that had been made and that the college was addressing the issues. She was pleased with the support she had received from both the District Council and Essex County Council safeguarding officers during this time and she was confident that the issues reported were addressed.

Part of the improvements was down to change in management and governance. She was delighted that Councillor Mohindra was now the Chairman of the Board of Governors and in the short period he had been in the chair he had invested a large amount of time in understanding the context of the problems of the college and the improvements needed.

The college was also involved in the government's area reviews of the larger colleges and we were recommending that we remained as a stand alone organisation while we still had these problems.

Presently our actions plans, as noted by Ofsted, have clear milestones and achievement of impacts. They are living documents that are regularly updated. We also engage with our learners and have monthly forums where we share problems and tap into the talents of the young people because it was their college and we need their help to take the college forward.

The culture of the college has radically changed it no longer has the mood of despair and disappointment; and with the help of my colleagues we are turning the college around. There was still a long way to go as it cannot be changed overnight but there was a confidence that we can turn it around and engage with staff and learners. We

have a key project going on called 'Today, Tomorrow, Together' to engage with our stakeholders as we were aware that we have also let some of our key stakeholders down, including businesses, who had to look else where for their training needs.

One of the key purposes of the college was to listen and strategically plan the future of the organisation. This 'hiccup' was something that we will be able to address within 12 months; there were already signs of improvement at the college which will get reported on by Ofsted on a regular basis. We have at least three more reports before we have our full Ofsted next year and one of the key things was that we look forward to the next 10 to 15 years instead of being completely inundated with the task in hand. We are looking to where we need to be to support the local economic development of the area and the workforce of the future and also be a college where you would be proud to send your children to.

The overall leadership of the college has changed, we have only one member of staff from the previous leadership team, this was due to colleagues realising that the way forward was to be different to what they have done in the past and we have had retirements and other natural departures within the organisation.

The chairman thanked Ms Famili for her presentation and asked Councillor Mohindra if he wished to add any thing.

Councillor Mohindra thanked Ms Famili and said that they were very lucky to have her as their principal. You will be aware that they were going through a significant transition and part of his and Ms Famili's role was to create stability. They were heading in the right direction and had put the major bits in place now and have to make them work.

The Chairman asked about recruitment and if it had been difficult due to the difficulties that the college had experienced. Ms Famili said that it had been mixed. They have been able to recruit the senior team with no problems, some being internal progressions and some external. They had just finished some recruitment last week. They were looking to get the right people in the right jobs doing the right things. They were not appointing just for the sake of appointing, they wanted to ensure that they got the right individuals to compliment the college.

Councillor Helen Kane noted that the Ofsted report showed the overall effectiveness was inadequate, leadership (too many changes), also the quality of teaching and assessment. There were serious safeguarding issues to mention just a few. The recently appointed principal understands these significant weaknesses; how confident was she and the governing body that she would turn this around. What was the time limit and who would be monitoring the action plans? Ms Famili replied that she was confident that they would turn things around. This was not a position that she took lightly, the position of the college was made clear to her at the interview. There was now a four tiered monitoring plan in place to monitor the improvements. Their Actions Plans had clear outcomes and milestones which were monitored on a monthly basis through the junior leadership team of the college who report their thoughts and findings upward, finally ending up at the board of governors. That's the level of scrutiny that this document would go through. Once every three months (roughly), Ofsted will come in and carry out a short inspection of seven agreed key themes. There will be no hiding place, Ofsted were keen to ensure the quality of every level of learning achievement. Scrutiny would also continue with the FE Commission looking at the leadership, management and governance on a three monthly basis.

Councillor H Kane responded by saying that the governing body had to challenge and scrutinise. Councillor Mohindra assured the meeting that the governing body would be robust in their scrutiny.

Councillor Murray explained that he was a teacher at Roding Valley High School and the majority of their students who did not do 'A' levels would go on to college. This was probably the worst Ofsted report that he had ever read over many years. He would like more details on how this had come about, it seems like it was part of an ingrained culture, where there was an ingrained weakness in the teaching culture. No one gets everything right all the time, as teaching was an impossible job to do in terms of getting everything right. He was pleased with the point made of their ability to identify the problems and to act upon it. Was their improvement plan a private document and could we see it?

Ms Famili said that there was no way they could separate the teaching culture of the organisation from the leadership of the organisation. The culture of the organisation prior to her arrival was one of blame and fear and as a result there were practices of hiding the truth. Their new culture was one that no longer hides anything. Over the last year the college has had six management information system managers and as a result the leadership of the organisation has not had a good idea of what was good quality. We now have a good teaching culture but have not addressed all the problems listed in the report. We now have an open door policy and have introduced coaches from within the college creating an environment that was proud to share and not afraid to ask for help. That was now the culture of the organisation. We have an open door policy so much so that I do not have an office in the college I sit in the foyer and my office has been turned into a meeting room. I am always available. As for having a quality improvement plan and action plan as hidden documents - absolutely not. You can go on our website and find them. They are updated regularly. The quality improvement Action plan is available on request. It is updated every month. Not published on the website as it is a live working document.

Councillor Murray said that he found that a very reassuring answer in lots of ways and the chairman applauded her for her accessibility as she could not think of any other education establishment that had that.

Councillor Brookes asked that in view of the recent challenges was there the possibility of a merger with a more successful college? She was told that as part of an area review for the East of England; Essex being part of this noted that this was one of the aspects that were considered. Prior to her arrival the approach of the board of governors was that the college could stay as a stand alone entity. Now, further to the challenges we have faced and the Ofsted report and growing concerns about the finances of the organisation, we do have land and a good financial balance, but quality improvement was costly and planning was not as robust as it could have been, so there were some concerns as to our finance. As a result of this the Board has asked me to actively seek out other options. Currently none of the other Essex colleges that I have approached had expressed any interest in having a group structure, not a merger, but something that was of mutual benefit for infrastructure and sharing facilities with other colleges. She has also approached colleges to the north and east of London, none have said no as yet but we are not that attractive. Once we have turned ourselves around we can then have talks with them.

Councillor Brookes noted the large turnover of teachers and asked how they could keep the good teachers and how was she tackling the culture of lateness. Ms Famili commenting about lateness said it was about the inconsistencies they had; a student might get challenged at one class but not at another. As a result students got away

with turning up late. We now have attendance monitors who walk the corridors and check attendance. If a student was not attending, then they would be texted and their parents would be texted. We send out letters every half term to the household stating the attendance of the students and highlighting any problems and issues. We have reviewed our disciplinary policy so lateness was now a disciplinary matter. But more than this we try to ensure that the lessons were of the highest quality so the students would set a higher value on them and not want to miss them. We also have problems with some students who have substance abuse and are addressing their problems as well. As for keeping our teachers one of the key elements was giving the power back to our teachers using them as professionals and let them try new things and share their successes with us and other colleges. Having said that, it was also about pay. Unfortunately we were not in a position to complete with the London Colleges, which were close by (by tube) and paid much more. It is also about the care and value we put on our staff and she was pleased to say that she was surprised by the level of interest she had received for their vacancies. We can never stop people leaving but those who stay are the ones who have the right attitude and talent for our organisation.

Councillor Dorrell noted that until recently generally everyone who went to college wanted to be there, but recently they had increased the leaving age from 16 to 18 meaning that these students may not be as well motivated, and now a lot of the higher performers go to sixth form colleges. How has the college responded to this demographic change and how will it be taken forward. Ms Famili said that about 48% of students come from outside Essex and the majority of students came from North East London, getting away from the poor culture of student life of London but also bring with them levels of behaviour from there. They come here because they have heard that we were good. We need to make sure our admission process was robust and have to be consistent in enforcing of our rules. They also have people who patrol the college, keeping an eye out and sorting problems as they arise. Everyone has to play their part and address problems as they arise and not let them slide. Although this was one of the worst Ofsted reports, we thought it used quite inflammatory language and our discipline problems were not as bad as had been indicated. We have also asked our students not to tolerate this form of behaviour and have an awareness raising week where we tackle such topics as drug taking and other behavioural problems. Our culture is to raise expectations and be supportive, but at the same time not be afraid to take hard line when needed.

Councillor Wixley said that he had visited the college in December before the Ofsted report came out. He noted that the college was doing a survey of 2000 businesses within an hours travelling time of the college, and he wondered how this had gone and what were the implications of their response following the Ofsted report. Ms Family replied that the results had not been published as yet, but said she would share the outcome when it was available.

Councillor Holly Whitbread asked what percentage of students went on to University and what level of local retention was there for local businesses or other courses. She was told that 37% of students went on to university and over 80% gained employment. She did not have any figures on local retention.

Councillor Holly Whitbread then asked how the college built up relationships with local schools and if they could improve on that. Ms Famili said they had an admission and recruitment plan where they visit schools and invited them to come to the college and so are working closely together with them. Councillor Mohindra added that it was fair to say that the college had a representational problem and hoped that members would be assured enough to publicise attendance at the college and actively encourage their residents to seriously consider attending the college.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked if they could take on apprentices at the college. He was told that the apprentice methodology was changing and there will be new frameworks starting from May. They could continue with the apprentices that they already have but will not be able to recruit any more or grow our apprenticeships into a new areas; that is not until the next full Ofsted report comes out in 12 to 15 months time.

Councillor Lea noted that her grandson went to the college, and when there he had noted that either there were no bus services or there were problems with the buses from Waltham Abbey, resulting presumably, in low attendance. Was there a problem, and if so, should we take this up with county? Ms Famili said she would be happy if this could be done. Along with the Tube strikes, transport was an issue. She noted that some colleges allowed later start times to allow for the teenager body clocks. If there was a later start then they would more likely be on time. However, we also need to prepare young people for the world of work. Transport was definitely a key problem for punctuality.

Councillor Sartin thanked Ms Famili for her detailed and frank presentation and asked if she happy to attend again a future meeting to update the Committee on progress made. Ms Famili said that she was happy to do so and that her invitation still stood for any Councillors to come and visit the college.

#### **49. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN**

The Committee noted that two representatives of the call-in, the Portfolio Holder and the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny had held a review of the call-in on the Cabinet Decision (C-054-2016/17) Waste Management Policies; specifically policy 10 on the supply of waste and recycling services to land registered on the Local Land Property Gazetteer.

At this meeting the lead signatory of the Call-in expressed her concerns on part 10 on the waste and recycling services. The Portfolio Holder noted the concerns and agreed that a discrepancy had been highlighted by the call-in and that he would take this back, consult with appropriate officers and revise the policy and report back to the members of the call-in on what action he would take. The two call-in representatives were asked if they were content with this plan of action and they declared that they were.

#### **RESOLVED:**

It was agreed that this call-in had effectively been withdrawn and that the Portfolio Holder would review the policy and report back to the participants of the call-in and to a suitable meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on his findings.

#### **50. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2016/17 - PROGRESS**

The Director of Neighbourhoods introduced the report on the quarter 3 performance of the Key Objectives Key Action Plan 2016/17. The Corporate Plan was the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the five-year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. The priorities or Corporate Aims were supported by Key Objectives, which provided a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for these five years. The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual action plan, with each year building upon the progress against the achievement of the Key Objectives from previous years.

It was noted that there were 49 actions in total for which progress updates for Q3 were as follows:

• Achieved or On-Target:	26 (53%)
• Under Control:	13 (27%)
• Behind Schedule:	4 (8%)
• Pending:	6 (12%)
Total	49 (100%)

The meeting went through the action plan page by page.

*Aim (i), key objective (i)(a) - (2) progress for delivering savings* – Councillor Sartin noted that was on target – was this right as it was also down as not yet due. Councillor Chris Whitbread said that as this related to the budget, it was a job that had been done. Councillor Sartin noted that this was for quarter 3 not 4 but noted that it was bound to the budget.

*Aim (i), key objective (i)(b) - (2) commence Phase 2 of the Council Housebuilding programme* – Councillor Sartin noted that this was marked as ‘achieved’ but also as the ‘works continue’. The Director of Neighbourhoods said that this related to a point in the original programme that was marked as achieved.

*Aim (i), key objective (i)(c) – (3) Estates colleagues to include use of the in-house building control service in their standard negotiations* – Councillor Sartin asked why this had not been achieved. The Director of Neighbourhoods said this may be due to the fact we had received further legal advice which we were investigating; he would take this on advice and report on the position at quarter 4.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Committee reviewed the Q3 progress in relation to the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 and commented on any actions arising from the Key Action Plan for 2016/17, that required in-depth scrutiny or further report on current progress.

#### **51. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - CENTRAL LINE SERVICES**

On 19 December 2016 this Committee received a presentation from Officers from the London Underground (Transport for London) on aspects of the Central Line and other underground services. During this meeting they had promised to provide updates on various topics that had been brought up at the meeting. This report contained the latest information they had provided for us.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the recent updates received from TfL on various matters that they had undertaken to provide further information on.

#### **52. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL SERVICES LOCAL HIGHWAYS SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The meeting received an update on their previous request to Essex County Council Highways, to attend a meeting to respond to any concerns in respect of local Highway services and infrastructure.

The County Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor E Johnson had now advised the committee that it could raise relevant questions of members and officer of the County by using any the means listed below:

- a) If members wish to submit detailed questions, the County Council will ensure the provision of a comprehensive written response to such matters;
- b) A delegation from the Committee could attend County Hall on a Tuesday during February or March 2017 (from 12.00 midday to 1.00pm) to raise appropriate matters with the Cabinet Member;
- c) In the medium term, as a process of education and engagement with districts and parishes, Essex Highways are about to start the roll-out of a programme of engagement to discuss issues, where members have an opportunity to understand the service and ask questions (it is suggested that Epping Forest could be one of the earlier districts to receive a visit in the schedule).

These options were presented to the committee and their views sought.

Councillor Murray noted the difference in the approach of the College that had a bad Ofsted report and the Highways service that were one of the poorest services and did not want to be scrutinised. We would like them here to be scrutinised. What were our County Councillors doing to improve our service?

The Democratic Services Manager noted that officers had made repeated efforts to get them to attend as had the Chairman of the Committee. He also noted that under option 'c', county was about to pilot this with two authorities in Essex during March and was then willing to offer us as the first choice after this.

Councillor Bedford asked if the Council could use the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act to elicit answers from County, but he was warned against using this as a tool by the Council's Fol officer, Mr Tautz.

Councillor Chris Whitbread said that he appreciated the problems with this. It was important to have a face to face meeting with highways and would recommend that we had a delegation (option 'b') and that he would be happy to attend.

Councillor Stallan agreed with Councillor Whitbread and also proposed that we ask our County Councillors to attend the meeting.

The Chairman asked members of the committee to indicate by show of hands if they were in favour of option 'b' arranging a delegation to go to County Hall. A majority of members were in favour of this. The Chairman noted that we would only be given an hour's slot.

Councillor Wixley was not sure about having a delegation and would like to know what happens to any complaints made about the highways.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse noted that the Highways Panel's budget had been cut back and so it had lost its influence.

The Director of Neighbours, Mr Macnab said members could do a combination of things. They could go ahead with detailed questions (option 'a') provided before hand to the County and also take up the offer of an early visit (option 'c').



The Chairman noted that there was a tight timetable for this. The Democratic Services Manager noted that the Committee had already identified general themes some time ago. He also warned that they should not bring up any detailed, local problems but more general points.

Councillor Gadsby, noted that county was trying to revamp members inquires and they were also having these problems.

The Chairman noted that the Committee were to have a delegation (option 'b') and asked for suggestion on who should attend. Mr Macnab said it should be open to members of Overview and Scrutiny and also to some Cabinet members.

The Chairman asked that members nominate themselves to Mr Tautz if they wished to take part. Officers would ask for questions via the Council Bulletin. We will also have to arrange a date with ECC; officers will negotiate a suitable date for attendance.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Committee would form a delegation to attend County Hall to put forward their concerns on Highway matters;
- 2) The delegation is to be made up of Committee and Cabinet members who will self nominate;
- 3) A suitable date will be negotiated by officers; and
- 4) An item in the Council Bulletin will ask for suitable questions from members.

**53. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL**

The Chairman noted that the meeting arranged with Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust had been cancelled at short notice as a result of 'operational pressures'. The Trust has now confirmed that their Chairman and Chief Executive would both now attend in the new municipal year and has provisionally arranged to come to the June 2017 meeting.

The County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) had undertook its own scrutiny of PAH's improvement plans at its meeting on 8 February 2017. Councillor Gadsby is an ECC appointee to this committee and was also representing the views of Epping Forest District Council.

Councillor Gadsby provided a short report, attached to these minutes, on the deliberations at the HOSC meeting.

Councillor Mohindra informed the committee that PAH had been given permission to do an outline business case for future use of the site. Central Government has not give them enough funds to move to a new site. At present PAH were looking to different methods to bridge the funding gap and may be coming to Local Authorities with this.

Councillor Patel noted that there was a 20% vacancy at PAH. The hospital needed a stable staff team, how were they going to address that 20% vacancy. Councillor Mohindra noted that they were looking to 'beef up' their research programmes and had about 200 research programmes going on within the hospital, which was good and added that the staff there now were safe.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse noted that the hospital was running at a 95 to 99% capacity. No service could be run at this capacity for any length of time. PAH also runs part of the St Margaret's in Epping, which was important on the financial side, the service provision side and maybe one of the options to take some pressure of PAH was to boost the community side at St. Margaret's. Did this come up in the discussions and if not we should take an interest in it. Councillor Mohindra said that the actually land was owned by NHS Property rather than the Trust. And, the reason for the high occupancy was that there was no beds available in social care or nursing homes.

#### **54. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - REVIEW**

The Committee considered the Cabinet's Key Decision List for February 2017. They noted that it was still a legal requirement for local authorities to publish a notice in respect of Key decisions that it proposed to make at least 28 days before that decision was made. The Committee were invited to identify any particular issues which were of concern.

##### Environment Portfolio

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment reminded the Committee that Bobbingworth had been a nature reserve for some time and was well worth a visit. He noted that the current contract for machinery for this site had now come to an end.

#### **55. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING**

##### **(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered their work programme and noted the progress to date.

**Item 3 – Scrutiny of Highways services** - a way forward had now been identified at this meeting.

**Item 5 – Corporate priorities and key decisions** – will go to the first meeting of the new municipal year, in June.

##### **Select Committees**

##### Communities Select Committee

Councillor Patel asked why item 32, the review of the CCTV action plan had a question make next to it. The Democratic Services Manager said that he would find out.

*\*Subsequent to the meeting it was noted that the CCTV Strategy and Action Plan was reviewed in 2015/16 and the new Strategy runs up to 2022. This item has therefore now been deleted from the work programme.*

##### Governance Select Committee

Councillor Janet Whitehouse asked about item 11, the petitions scheme and what was happening about it. The Democratic Services Manager replied that now the Council had a new Customer Services Manager, they would be looking at the scheme and would report back to the Select Committee early next year.

**(b) Reserve Programme**

Noted that items 1, 2 and 3 will be worked into next years work programme.

**(c) New Work – PICK Form**

The Committee noted the PICK form proposed by Councillor A Patel and supported by Councillor S Kane. Councillor Patel introduced the form and gave the background and reasons for his proposal to scrutinise the Council's Transformation Programme. He suggested that a Task and Finish Panel be set up to review the current activity around the Transformation Programme.

Councillor S Kane noted that the Transformation Programme was a long term body of work not really suited to a short sharp review by a Task and Finish Panel. He suggested that his Resources Select Committee would be the ideal vehicle to scrutinise the programme on a long term basis.

Other Councillors thought that it may be suitable for a Task and Finish Panel to look at this but it was eventually agreed that it should go to the Resources Select Committee. Councillor S Kane the Chairman of the Select Committee said that he was happy to incorporate this piece of work into his work programme and thought to start with a one item special meeting to establish terms of reference and other parameters. It may then be useful to establish a sub-group to continue looking at this on a long term basis. Councillor Patel was happy for the work to go to the Resources Select Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work suggested by the PICK Form to review the Transformation Programme be given to the Resources Select Committee to scrutinise on a long term basis.

**56. GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Committee noted that the Government's Communities and Local Government Committee had launched an inquiry into overview and scrutiny in local government. The aim was to consider whether overview and scrutiny arrangements were working effectively and whether local communities were able to contribute to and monitor the work of local authorities.

The inquiry will examine existing overview and scrutiny arrangements and consider what changes may be needed to ensure local decision-makers are better held to account.

The Committee agreed that officers should respond to the inquiry being undertaken by the Communities and Local Government Committee. The closing date for the receipt of a written submission was 10 March 2017. It was agreed that the response should be agreed by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that the text should be put in the Members Bulletin for information.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a reply should be sent in response to the Government's Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry into overview and scrutiny in local government; and
- (2) That the response should be agreed by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the text published in the Council Bulletin.

**57. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

It was noted that there were no public questions or requests to address the committee.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Text of Councillor Gadsby's report on the Health and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 February 2017.**

### **Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow – regulatory concerns**

The HOS Committee considered a report regarding the issues raised on Princess Alexandra Hospital in the October 2016 Care Quality Commission's (CQC) report which gave an inadequate overall rating. The report also included the hospital's response to advance questions submitted by the HOSC on regulatory concerns.

The following were in attendance to participate in a question and answer session:

- Phil Morley, Chief Executive, Princess Alexandra Hospital;
- Nancy Fontaine, Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Nurse, PAH;

Phil Morley introduced the item and reported that he was standing down as Chief Executive in March 2017. He highlighted the planned next steps and some of the successes which had already been achieved, particularly in the areas of maternity services and enabling the workforce to have a 'voice' with the introduction of a Staff Council.

During the discussion the following was acknowledged, highlighted or questioned:

#### Partnership working/collaboration:

- Discussions were underway regarding the introduction of joint posts with other partners, for example, to help build End of Life training packages. Clinicians already worked at the local hospice, but ideally a full team approach could be introduced;
- The opportunity for an empty building to be used by other social care patients to help alleviate discharge/bed blocking issues;
- Services were being reviewed to see what could be outsourced to other community partners, such as chronic pain injections and alternative locations for blood tests;
- The Walk-in Centre had been closed as it had not functioned effectively and staff transferred to the hospital;
- The hospital was looking at the Walk-in service at Herts hospital to see whether it could extend the service's opening hours and rotate its nurses;
- An external audit had indicated that people were being conveyed to hospital when other care was available in the community and this had been fed back to the Ambulance Service;

#### Finance/Capacity/Governance:

- A new strategic plan was needed for a new hospital site in the next 10 years to replace the current building which was increasingly unfit for purpose. In the long term a new hospital would have to cope with the impact of a new Garden Town which would double its current catchment area;

- The lack of investment in IT had led to the shortfall in providing information to the CQC;
- A new Urgent Care Centre was needed to cope with increasing demand;
- The intention to be the first hospital to help to pay off student loans;
- The lack of national health education funding for training;
- There was a high reporting culture of around one thousand reports a month, but the majority of these were of no or low harm (97.7%);
- Risk management needed to be understood throughout the organisation. The hospital was working with a 'buddy' Trust at Milton Keynes to review and share learning on how this could be improved;
- The hospital had been given £300k of extra funding for the year;
- The lack of cubicles needed to assess patients and the low number of hospital beds per size of the local population;
- Members noted the issues relating to the use of old porta cabins for surgical operations and the danger of the site being closed if not fit for purpose;
- Concern that the work force still felt they weren't being listened to because of issues such as those relating to the state of the building could not be resolved;
- A Board Capacity Assessment had been undertaken and the team had been approved to lead the hospital for the future.

Quality of Service and patient safety:

- The length of time it took to fast track patients with End of Life preferences (approximately 10 days). Members noted that the absence of an End of Life team had affected performance in this area, as well as the lack of social care services available outside of hospital. There was a shortage of places available in Essex care homes as a result of places being used by London residents;
- There was a 20% vacancy for Registered nurses as the hospital was constantly competing against the attractions of London and Cambridge. Although there was a strong reliance on agency staff, there were many long serving staff members committed to quality improvement;
- International recruitment of nurses for emergency care had proved successful;
- They were exploring new ways to provide services such as using former trained paramedics as associate practitioners and working with Anglia Ruskin University at an earlier stage to help bring in locally based student nurses;
- The high levels of flexibility to enable senior staff development through secondments, rotations, shadowing, leadership programmes and involvement with the patient at home service;

- There were 7 current midwifery vacancies compared to 25 in 2016;
- Patients were still being treated in a safe and timely fashion regardless of the capacity issue;
- The strong Research and Development and Clinical Leadership programmes;
- The emphasis on getting the basics right and introduction of a new meaningful appraisal system;
- A new Resuscitation trainer had been appointed and equipment updated and streamlined. Their simulation training was highly regarded and the University of Leicester had now produced a formal package to sell to others;
- The challenge of reversing beds for in-patient gynaecology with such few numbers of patients coming in, but the patient experience in this area remained very good;
- In response to a question, the Chief Nurse confirmed there had been no outbreaks of superbugs during the past two years;
- How three wards had been streamlined in December which had led to improvements in patient repatriation to the right wards;
- The hospital was running at 95-99% bed occupancy rate.

The Committee agreed that it was satisfied with the response received to the advance questions and other evidence and on the assurance given regarding improvement actions being taken.

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