

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Thursday, 5 June 2008

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 8.51 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman) M Colling, A Green, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs, Mrs P Richardson, B Rolfe, Mrs L Wagland and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other Councillors: Councillors M Cohen, Miss R Cohen, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs M McEwen, S Murray, Mrs C Pond, Ms S Stavrou, C Whitbread and J M Whitehouse

Apologies: Councillors Mrs A Haigh and G Mohindra

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), S Tautz (Performance Improvement Manager), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), P Tredgett (Information Assistant) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

By Invitation: C O'Connell (West Essex Primary Care Trust)

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor Mrs J Whitehouse was substituting for Councillor Mrs A Haigh, and that Councillor Ms J Hedges was substituting for Councillor G Mohindra.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were reported pursuant to the Councils Code of Conduct.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2008 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. LOCAL PCT HEALTH PROPOSALS

The Committee received a presentation from Catherine O'Connell, the Epping Forest Locality Director of the West Essex Primary Care Trust. She was there to talk about their proposals to, i) develop a GP led health centre for West Essex and, ii) to improve health services in Chipping Ongar.

i) The Panel noted that a recent National Access and Responsiveness Survey highlighted problems with access to GPs. New Government money (£250m) was made available to provide for 100 new GP practices in areas with fewer doctors, poorest health outcome and lowest patient satisfaction. The funds were also to establish 152 GP led health centres, one in each PCT area, on top of existing services. The PCT plans to extend their existing primary care health provision by extending the standard GP services already provided at Traps Hill Surgery and Forest Medical Centre in Loughton. The new service would run from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week, including all bank holidays, and would provide a wider range of services than currently offered, such as blood tests, x-rays and ultrasound.

The new surgeries would offer booked and walk-in appointments both to patients registered at the practice and to those who are not registered but needed to access primary care for any reason. Increasing the numbers of GPs in Loughton would bring it in line with the rest of West Essex. Access to a GP would improve by giving local people and the large commuter population the ability to see a GP outside normal working hours.

The PCT would select the new provider by a competitive tender process – this would mean that the services could be run by local GPs or GP practices, NHS organisations or commercial providers. The outcome would be decided by a panel that would include patients, senior doctors and the PCT. The existing doctors, nurses and staff currently employed at these surgeries will remain on their current terms and conditions.

The new provider would be judged on their ability to provide high quality services that are accessible, responsive and meet all the core requirements such as an access plan, clinical governance plan, workforce development plan, information management and technology plan and a patient participation plan. The emphasis will be on quality of service.

The PCT wished to consult the local population on this proposal, they would like to know if they had missed something; is the location right; any other factors that they have not taken into account? They have provided a feedback form to be filled in and returned and are also holding public meetings. The consultation period end on 9 July 2008.

Ms O'Connell emphasised that this was not to be a Polyclinic

ii) The Panel was then apprised of the PCT plans to improve health services in Chipping Ongar. The Ongar War Memorial Hospital, although greatly loved was cramped, had privacy problems, did not comply with new infection standards, did not have enough space to provide all potential services and the building itself needed major renovation. The two other surgeries in the area (Bansons Lane and The High Street) were also well used but also have building/structural issues.

However, the new St. Margaret's Hospital has an empty ward on its top floor. The PCT proposed that they move the War Memorial Hospital there and to use the old site for a new GP Health Centre to provide a wide range of new services for the area. These new services could include:

- Phlebotomy;
- Ultrasound – especially for abdominal pain and gynaecological problems;
- ECG and echocardiography;

- Patient group facilities – education e.g. diabetes, smoking cessation, dietetics etc;
- Minor surgery;
- Local family planning clinic;
- Physiotherapy;
- Counselling services;
- Staff education and training facilities.

Along with the proposed patient testing, its known that Ongar has no psychological services and these could also be provided for the area.

Again, this scheme is out to consultation at present and lasts from 6 May to 6 August 2008. Comments can be sent in via a feedback form or on their website: www.westessexpct.nhs.uk. They are also arranging public meetings.

The Chairman thanked Ms O'Connell for her informative presentation and then took any questions for her from the meeting.

Q. There is a long waiting time for physio-treatment in Loughton and I had heard that a recent blood test had to be done again.

A. Physiotherapy has a long waiting list, but this will come down. I can't comment on the individual case of the blood test, but can say it does not happen often.

Q. The replacement for the Ongar War Memorial Hospital is a good idea in principle, but can you assure me that the old building will become a medical centre and not anything else.

A. That is guaranteed, we own the site, it will be a health centre.

Q. As there are fewer GPs in Loughton, how many more will come once these new centres are built and how will it be handled over the two centres.

A. Loughton is not under doctored compared to other areas. As for the two sites, both will not be open 8 to 8, 7 days a week – that will mostly be provided by the Forest Medical Centre. Traps Hill would be mostly pre-booked appointments. Patients would have the option to be seen at either centre.

Q. In principle I support the idea, but you have a lot of services that "should" be provided. I would be happier if you can say they "would be provided".

A. This is why we are having the consultation – we have provided a 'pick list' – asking which would be the most wanted services for the area.

Q. You were in favour of the Lorry Park site, are these new sites cheaper?

A. Money was not the issue – we could not make it work on the Lorry Park site and could not make it work for the District Valuer. Also there is now a pot of money at the Department of Health that we could tap into for this building.

Q. Am I right in thinking the building (War Memorial Hospital) will be totally demolished?

A. Yes.

Q. Will there be local hospital facilities for Ongar?

A. There is more than adequate room at St Margaret's. Not all the patients who use the Ongar facilities are local Ongar people, less than 50% of patients are from the Ongar area. We will not be reducing the total number of beds available.

- Q.** I would like to see epilepsy services available as one of the new services proposed. I would also say it would be wise to budget for success – will there be long queues for the services offered, this should be properly managed. Also would the new provider draw their services from existing GP's and thus take away from present services.
- A.** This will not draw doctors away from local services. There will be new partnerships that will go to the new locations. Staff will transfer from the old hospital to the new hospital. The new centres will not be 'walk in centres', they will be used for routine GP services and will book appointments. The use of these centres would be monitored closely as this has not been done before in the country.
- Q.** The centres are open 8 to 8, but what 'outside hours' availability will be in place?
- A.** People may have to go to the other centres. What is equally important is continuity of care.
- Q.** Is the building at Station Road capable of extension?
- A.** The downstairs is not as big as the upstairs, and much of the services would be provided upstairs.
- Q.** What assurances are there that extra consultants would come.
- A.** We are in discussion with them and they are keen to use the new centre. We will look at how they can use these centres more efficiently.
- Q.** Can we have an assurance the blood taking/testing service will be extended, as there are always long queues.
- A.** We will almost certainly increase it, considering the difficulty there is to keep up with demand.

Councillor Murray remarked that he thought the committee should comment on the proposed GP centres. He would like them to say that:

- i) we welcome the proposals, as its new government money it will not take away from present services;
- ii) we welcome the flexibility that this will bring – currently it is not easy to make an appointment, a 8 to 8, 7 days a week service would be welcome. Also people can stay with their own GP. They can still use these services;
- iii) this is the right location for the drop in centres, it has good transport links and car parking is available;
- iv) Mental Health and Paediatric services would be welcome.

The Deputy Chief Executive summed up the feelings of the meeting by saying that they welcomed both the proposals and also the new money associated with them. The locations chosen were good and they welcomed the flexibility it would bring. The District Council would like to see an increase in Mental Health services, Paediatric services, Epilepsy and blood taking/testing services. This would be put down in a formal response to the PCT.

The Chairman once again thanked Catherine O'Connell for her presentations and for answering the questions of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Ms O'Connell be thanked for her presentation and answering the Committee questions.

- (2) That the Deputy Chief Executive write to the PCT expressing the Committee's agreement with their proposals and detailing what services we would like to be included with the proposed new surgeries.

6. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING PANELS

The Committee were asked to make appointments to Standing Panels in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny rules. The Committee were reminded that the Council had agreed pro rata applied to Standing Panels and that membership should be kept to a minimum to allow each Group to have representation. It was noted that on this basis it had been calculated that Panels would consist of 11 Members, plus any independent member that wished to be a member of a Panel.

It was reported that nominations to Chairman and Vice Chairman to Standing Panels were excluded from the pro rata calculation rules required for such positions contained in the Council's constitution.

The Committee had before them a report detailing a list of nominations received and a tabled paper detailing late nominations and changes to the schedules.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to Standing Panels annexed to these minutes be adopted.

7. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP OF TASK AND FINISH PANELS

The Committee were asked to consider appointments to Task and Finish Panels.

It was noted that any Member could be appointed to Task and Finish Panels. However Cabinet Members would not be able to serve on panels which bore directly on their Portfolio. In addition no panel could comprise of members of a single political group and restrictions on numbers did not apply.

Members were also asked to appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman to each Panel.

The meeting had before them a tabled schedule detailing late nominations.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to Task and Finish Panels annexed to these minutes be adopted.

8. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Committee noted the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and for the Standing and Task and Finish Panels. These panels were to meet before the next O&S meeting to update and agree their terms of reference and work programmes.

Councillor Mrs Whitehouse asked that Lonica Vanclay proposed presentation to the next meeting of the Committee be publicised as widely as possible.

9. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2008/09

The Committee considered the Best Value Performance Plan 2008/09. As this was still incomplete (some figures were still being gathered) the Committee considered the report as a draft, work in progress statement. They noted that the report is produced in two version each year, a full version and a summary version that is distributed all the households in the district. They also noted that this would be the last time that they were required to produce this report in its current form, although it be continued to be published in some form in the future.

The Committee thought that the report was well presented, but although it talked of aims and targets it still should say what was achieved last year.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorsed the Best Value Performance Plan for 2008/09.

10. TO AGREE THE LAST MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING STANDING PANEL

The Committee were asked to agree the last set of minutes for the now disbanded Environment and Planning Standing Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Environment and Planning Standing Panel for 23 April 2008 be agreed.

11. O&S CHANGE TO 2008/09 CALENDAR

The Committee noted the changes made to the calendar of meetings now that the Environment and Planning Standing Panel had been disbanded and replaced with the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Panel, which would keep the dates of the Environment and Planning Standing Panel. The new Planning Services Standing Panel was given the following new dates:

19 June 2008;
09 September 2008;
18 November 2008;
06 January 2009;
12 February 2009; and
13 April 2009.

12. CABINET REVIEW

1. Councillor Angold-Stephens informed the Committee that under item 10 of the Cabinet agenda, 'Loughton High Road Town Centre Enhancement Final Account' – that only the works under phases 1 and 2 had been completed.

2. Councillors Mrs Whitehouse, Jon Whitehouse and Stephen Murray expressed concerns that all of item 20, the 'Waste Management Budget Overspend 2007/08' was to be considered in private session. They considered that not all the report should be private. Councillor C Whitbread explained that it was subject to ongoing negotiations and was therefore sensitive at this time.

3. Councillor Angold-Stephens commented that the creation of a Conservation Officer Post, under Cabinet agenda item 15, should be supported.

13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The future meeting dates of the Committee were noted:

10 July 2008;
28 August 2008;
29 September 2008;
06 November 2008;
11 December 2208;
29 January 2009;
05 March 2009; and
16 April 2009.

CHAIRMAN

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Overview and Scrutiny Panels Agreed Nominations 2008/09

Standing Panels

Constitution and Member Services Panel

Members -

Conservative Group (7): J Demetriou, Mrs M McEwen, Mrs J Hedges, J Philip, B Rolfe, D Stallan, Mrs M Sartin

Liberal Democrats Group (2): Mrs J Whitehouse, Mrs P Brooks

LRA Group (1): J Markham

BNP Group (1): -

Independent : R Morgan

Chairman – Mrs M McEwen

Vice-Chairman – R Morgan

Finance and Performance Management

Members –

Conservative Group (7): M Colling, J Collier, J Hart, G Mohindra, J Philip, B Pryor, A Watts

Liberal Democrats Group (2): D Jacobs, Jon Whitehouse

LRA Group (1): K Angold-Stephens

BNP Group (1): -

Chairman – D Jacobs

Vice-Chairman – G Mohindra

Housing

Members -

Conservative Group (7): D Bateman, K Chana, J Collier, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs J Lea, Mrs L Wagland, J Wyatt

Liberal Democrats Group (2): Mrs J Whitehouse, D Dodeja

LRA Group (1): Mrs R Brookes

BNP Group (1): Mrs Richardson

Independent : S Murray

Chairman – S Murray

Vice-Chairman – Mrs R Gadsby

Safer, Cleaner, Greener

Members –

Conservative Group (7): K Chana, M Colling, R Cohen, Mrs J Hedges, J Philip, G Pritchard, Mrs L Wagland

Liberal Democrats Group (2): R Frankel, D Jacobs

LRA Group (1): R Barrett

BNP Group (1): Mrs P Richardson

Chairman - M Colling

Vice-Chairman – G Pritchard

Planning Services

Members -

Conservative Group(7): T Boyce, K Chana, M Colling, J Hart, B Pryor, H Ulkun, Mrs L Wagland

Liberal Democrats Group (2): R Frankel, P Spencer

LRA Group (1): Mrs C Pond

BNP Group (1): -

Independent: Mrs A Cooper

Chairman – Mrs L Wagland

Vice Chairman – K Chana

TASK AND FINISH PANELS Agreed Nominations 2008/09

Leisure

Members

Conservative Group: T Boyce, Ms R Cohen, Mrs R Gadsby, G Pritchard, B Rolfe, H Ulkun, Ms J Hedges

Liberal Democrats Group: D Dodeja, Jon Whitehouse

LRA Group: D Wixley

BNP Group: -

Independent: S Murray

Chairman: Mrs R Gadsby

Vice Chairman: D Wixley

Customer Transformation

Members -

Conservative Group: D Bateman, T Boyce, J Demitrou, Mrs Hedges, Mrs J Lea, J Philip, B Rolfe

Liberal Democrats Group : Jon Whitehouse

LRA Group: Mrs R Brookes

BNP Group: -

Independent : R Morgan

Chairman: B Rolfe

Vice Chairman: Jon Whitehouse

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