

Monday, 4 December 2017
at 6.00 pm



EBC Scrutiny Committee

Present:-

Members: Councillor di Cara (Chairman) Councillor Holt (Deputy-Chairman)
Councillors Belsey, Miah, Murray, Rodohan, Smart and Wallis

8 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2017.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2017 were submitted and approved, and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

9 Apologies for absence.

There were none.

10 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct.

There were none.

11 Urgent items of business.

The Committee noted that the Financial Performance section of item 8 Corporate Performance Q2 2017/18 had been published on 1 December 2017.

12 Right to address the meeting/order of business.

There were none.

13 Maternity Research Survey.

The Committee considered the findings of the Maternity Services Survey which had been recently conducted by the Council under the ownership of the Monitoring Officer, in partnership with Councillor Robert Smart, and under the supervision of the Office for National Statistics.

Councillor Smart reported that the survey had identified the following key findings:

- Most mothers believed the services to be excellent or good but 17% consider the post-natal services to be poor or very poor
- 78% of mothers would wish to give birth at a location with doctors on site
- 93% of mothers served by the Eastbourne, Hailsham, and Seaford CCG would choose to give birth at Eastbourne DGH if a full obstetric service were available
- Of the 312 mothers who had a pre-natal appointment with a consultant in Eastbourne, 85% did not give birth at Eastbourne DGH
- Of those mothers who started labour at Eastbourne DGH, 27% were transferred during labour, principally to Hastings

- Mothers served by Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG accounted for the vast majority of transfers during labour and after birth, with significantly fewer transfers of mothers from other CCGs

Honorary Freeman Liz Walke addressed the Committee in her capacity as the Council's Hospitals Champion. She considered that, given the risks associated with childbirth exacerbated by in-labour transfers, and the increased frequency of these risks resulting from the previous decision to reduce services at the Eastbourne District General Hospital, the fact that the service providers had not undertaken such research was surprising.

Members' discussion included:

- Disappointment that no representatives of the East Sussex CCG's or East Sussex Healthcare Trust had been able to attend the meeting to discuss the report findings.
- Particular concern at the disparity across the county in respect of mothers being transferred during labour, noting that the occurrence of this for Eastbourne mothers being transferred during pregnancy from the Eastbourne District General Hospital to Hastings Conquest was greater than the total of all other transfers in East Sussex.
- Recognition that this report would be considered at the next meeting of HOSC on which this Council is represented.
- Despite being noted as not being a detailed part of the report, strong concern was expressed at the number of stillbirths in Eastbourne (around twice the national average) with an absence of information as to the causes.
- An appreciation of the excellent response rate to the survey and gratitude to all mothers who took the time and effort to participate. Members also extended their gratitude to Councillor Smart for the comprehensive nature of the report, and to Council Officer, Devan Briggs, who had been responsible for inputting the vast amount of data received and constructing the final report document.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Scrutiny Committee noted and endorsed the key findings of the Maternity Research Survey.
- (2) That a further invitation be extended to the East Sussex CCG's and the East Sussex Healthcare Trust to attend the next Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- (3) That HOSC be requested to recommend that an independent review should now be undertaken on the suitability and safety of current maternity services provision across the county, in particular at the inequalities arising from the locations and overall level of provision of obstetric led maternity services in relation to population distribution.
- (4) That the Secretary of State for Health be lobbied via Eastbourne's MP to launch an inquiry into the issue of stillbirths in this area, in order to identify the reasons for the high number and any potential preventative measures once the reasons are better understood.

Reason:

The Executive Decision of the Leader on 3 April 2017 to conduct the Maternity Survey provided for the Scrutiny Committee to receive and comment on the outcomes of the survey.

Notes:

1. Councillor Smart declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in respect of this subject matter. However, he had previously applied for and been awarded a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer to enable him to participate in constructing, presenting and commenting on the report.
2. Councillor Belsey, confirmed by advice from the Monitoring Officer, abstained from the vote on the resolutions on the basis that, as Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) who would next be considering this report, he did not wish to fetter his position at this stage.

14 Corporate Performance Quarter 2 2017/2018.

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive regarding Quarter 2 2017/18 performance against the Corporate Plan priority actions, performance indicators and targets.

The Head of Finance provided a review with regard to the variances between profile budgets and actuals, and a forecast of total borrowing to April 2020 was provided to members.

Members' discussion included:

- A request for there to be a distinction between Lewes District Council staff and Eastbourne Borough Council staff with regard to staff sickness data.
- A request for there to be a distinction between office-based staff and depot staff with regard to staff sickness data.
- That the Performance and Programmes Lead provide the Committee with further information about the Hotel of Excellence project, particularly with regard to funding.
- That the Monitoring Officer provide the Committee with further information with regard to the funding, description and governance of the Devonshire Park project before the next meeting of the Committee.

Officers responded that:

- All Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Council employees were now a single team collectively employed by Eastbourne Borough Council, and therefore absence reporting would reflect this.
- The Human Resources department were working on separating sickness statistics of office and depot staff.
- The Head of Business Planning and Performance referred members to the further detail on the Hotel of Excellence provided in the report appendix which provided further details about the initiative.
- The Monitoring Officer noted members' concerns regarding the Devonshire Park Project and agreed to liaise with the Devonshire Park Project Board and discuss at the next corporate management team meeting then respond to members in due course.

Resolved:

- (1) That members noted the achievements and progress against Corporate Plan priorities for 2017/18.

Reason:

To demonstrate the discharge of the Scrutiny Committee function to monitor all aspects of performance management activities as required by Part 3 section 2.2 (7) of the Constitution of the Council.

15 Annual Community Safety Partnership Report.

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning which:

- Enabled the Committee to scrutinise the current performance of the Lewes District Community Safety Partnership (LDCSP)
- Outlined future issues that may impact crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) performance
- Enabled the Committee to scrutinise the proposed Community Safety Plan for 2018/19
- Enabled the Committee to endorse the formal merger of the Eastbourne and Lewes District Community Safety Partnership, subject to consultation with partners and approval from the Police and Crime Commissioner

Members' discussion included:

- A request to distinguish between Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council with regard to crime statistics.
- A request for more information about how rough sleepers and street drinkers were distinguished.
- A request for more information with regard to what measures were in place to prevent anti-social behaviours and discourage crime hotspots.
- A concern with regard to the statistics indicating a decrease in crime, when the community felt as though there was an increase in crime.

Officers responded that:

- It was possible to separate Lewes District and Eastbourne Council crime statistics, and officers would look into this for future meetings.
- Officers who worked closely with members of the public had knowledge of individuals, their identities and their problems and were therefore able to distinguish those that were rough sleepers and street drinkers, and refer them to relevant bodies for support.
- The police were using every power to make sure that their visible presence on the streets could discourage crimes, especially in those areas that the community regarded as hotspots.
- Members were requested to note the important differentiation between the perception of crime and actual crime.

Resolved:

- (1) That members noted the achievements and activities of the Lewes District Community Safety Partnership during 2016/2017, as well as the future risks/opportunities to performance.
- (2) That members endorsed the Community Safety Action Plan for 2018/2019.
- (3) That members noted the completion of the Eastbourne and Lewes District Community Safety Partnership 'Soft Merger' and endorsed the full merger of the two Partnerships.

Reason:

To report annually on Crime and Disorder issues as required under Regulation 4 of the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

16 Final Report of the A27 Task Group.

The Committee considered the report of the Committee Officer which set out why the A27 Task Group should be dissolved.

Members noted that That Jon Wheeler, Team Manager Strategic Economic Infrastructure, East Sussex County Council, would be attending a meeting on Thursday 11 January 2018 at 4.30pm, and that all members were invited to attend should they wish to receive an update on the work of the A27 Reference Group.

Resolved:

- (1) That the A27 Task Group Review be dissolved.

Reason:

To discharge the prerequisite of Scrutiny Task Groups' in regard to all reports, findings and recommendations being made public, as required by Part 4 section E13 (23.7) of the Constitution of the Council.

17 Appointment of Sovereign Centre Task Group.

The Committee considered a report by the Committee Services Lead which requested that they appoint four councillors to the Sovereign Centre Task Group; and set the terms of reference for the group.

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillors Metcalfe, Belsey, Rodohan and Wallis be appointed members of the Sovereign Centre Task Group.
- (2) That the Committee agree to the following terms of references for the group:
 - a) To understand the planning policy considerations of the Sovereign Centre.
 - b) To consider all options for the site, including tourism, as presented through officers.

Reason:

To demonstrate the Scrutiny Committee's entitlement of in-year variations to the Work Programme, as indicated by Part 4 section E4 (7.4) of the Constitution of the Council.

18 Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/2018.

The Committee noted variations to the Scrutiny Work Programme for the forthcoming year.

Reason:

To demonstrate the Scrutiny Committee's entitlement of in-year variations to the Work Programme, as indicated by Part 4 section E4 (7.4) of the Constitution of the Council.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Councillor di Cara (Chairman)