

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Wednesday, 27th March, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr K. Dibble (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin  
Cllr D.E. Clifford  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr S.J. Masterson

Apologies for absence were submitted in behalf of Cllrs Jules Crossley and Sophie Porter.

## **30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on 8th February, 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

## **31. PUBLIC HEALTH - HEALTH PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23**

The Committee welcomed Hampshire County Council's Director for Public Health, Simon Bryant and Associate Director for Public Health, Johanna Jefferies, who attended the meeting virtually to provide a presentation on Public Health.

The Committee noted that upper tier local authorities had a statutory duty to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities by reducing the need for people to access health and social care. These duties were delivered by working closely with partners and were funded through a ring fenced grant. Part of the duty included commissioning mandated services including sexual and reproductive health, drug and alcohol treatment, school nursing, health visiting, the National Childhood Measurement Programme and NHS health checks.

The vision of the Hampshire Public Health Strategy was to improve the health of everyone living in Hampshire and to create a healthier Hampshire. This was achieved by increasing the number of years residents could expect to live in good health and by reducing the unfair gap in healthy life years between the most and least healthy. The Strategy was in place to create conditions that enabled residents to maintain healthy behaviours that help to prevent illness with a focus on reducing conditions that contributed most to poor health (smoking, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, poor mental health etc.). The activities within the Strategy were achieved through working with a wide range of partners, such as the local NHS, district and borough councils, local businesses and the voluntary and community sector. To

make an impact, and reduce the gaps in health, local government were uniquely placed to act on the building blocks of health, these included, money and resources, surroundings, work, education and skills, housing, family, friends and community, food and transport. The Strategy links with other key population level strategies including the Economic Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and the Local Transport Plan and aligned its objectives with the Children and Young People's Plan, the Adult Health and Care Strategy, the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and contributed to the delivery of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight and Frimley Integrated Care System Strategic Vision.

It was advised that the Strategy had three main themes:

- Healthy Places, Settings and Communities – rooted in the work with communities undertaken primarily by local authorities with Hampshire County Council acting as the anchor institution.
- Healthy People – to provide health protection, respond to Public Health emergencies, provide health intelligence and deliver programmes that help to reduce the impacts of violence within the criminal justice system.
- Healthy Lives – enabling residents to live longer by encouraging physical activity and activities on stopping smoking and substance abuse

It was advised that a high level Action Plan had been drawn up to set key actions and identify contributors and a liaison officer had been appointed to work directly with Rushmoor. The Committee also noted current work areas in Rushmoor which included, a focus on smoking services, a whole system approach to healthy weights and health walks, Balance, Glide and Ride and Energise Me activities.

Following a discussion, it was advised that the Public Health team were heavily engaged with the Frimley Health Partnership and Mr Bryant chaired a number of the groups active within the partnership. It was noted that health needs within communities were identified and services/interventions targeted accordingly. For example, it was advised that in Rushmoor, over the last 20 years, work had been undertaken to drive down the rate of HIV infection (1.92 per 1,000 population), which were higher than in other areas of the county (Hampshire (as a whole) 1.18 per 1,000 population).

In response to how Elected Members could raise issues affecting their communities, it was advised that first contact should be made with the Community and Partnerships Team.

Other issues discussed were:

- Emerging threats – there was an element of uncertainty in this area and the Public Health team had to take all preventions to tackle threats that could emerge, through targeted vaccinations and monitoring the national picture
- Antimicrobial Resistance – due to increased usage of antibiotics, their effectiveness has decreased over time, resulting in health practitioners not being able to protect the population. This was identified as a huge issue and national leadership was required address the matter

- Links with Planning/Environmental Health – It was advised that the Public Health team responded to planning applications despite not being a statutory consultee and worked closely with both the planning and environmental health teams.

**ACTION:**

| <b>What</b>  | <b>By Whom</b>                             | <b>When</b> |
|--|--|-------------|
| The potential to hold a workshop session to explain the dashboard data available via the public health website and to provide information on data available at a district level. | Simon Bryant,<br>Director of Public Health | 2024/25     |

The Chairman thanked Mr Bryant and Ms Jefferies for their presentation and contribution to the meeting.

**32. CABINET CHAMPIONS**

The Committee welcomed Cabinet Champion for Equalities and Diversity, Cllr Jib Belbase, and Cabinet Champion for Armed Forces, Cllr Nem Thapa, who were in attendance to give their annual reports for the 2023/24 Municipal Year. The Cabinet Member for Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships, Cllr Sue Carter was also in attendance to support the item.

**(1) Cabinet Champion for Equalities and Diversity**

Cllr Belbase reported that he had invested significant time establishing and strengthening links with community leaders from a number of underrepresented and hard to reach groups. These included leaders from Asian communities including, Afghan and Keralan, and European communities including, Bulgarian and Ukrainian. On 13 March, 2024, a Cultural Awareness Event was held which give community leaders access to key partners to raise awareness about UK culture and offered advice about accessing benefits, help reporting crime, fire safety at home, mental health and cost of living support, and volunteering.

It was also noted that arrangements had been made to host Gender Identity training for both officers and Elected Members in summer 2024 and Neurodiversity training had been undertaken with officers with further session planned for Elected Members. Cllr Belbase encouraged all Members to attend the sessions.

Cllr Belbase advised that all activities undertaken had been in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan and recommended that the Council continued to review the Action Plan taking into consideration revised working arrangements around the independence of the Rushmoor Accessibility Access Group (RAAG). Cllr Belbase also acknowledged the contribution and continued work of former Champion, Cllr Makunura, in relation to the RAAG.

The Committee discussed the report and raised a number of issues:

- Ease of engagement – it was noted that most were hesitant in the first instance, but once connections had been made most were happy to engage
- Asylum Seekers – – it was advised that a dedicated officer was now in post to support the Council’s broader resettlement work
- Briefings with the Cabinet – It was noted that frequent briefing were held with the Leader/Cabinet and it was suggested that Members could contact the Champions should an issue arise in their ward that could benefit from Champion input

The Chairman thanked Cllr Belbase for his report.

## **(2) Armed Forces Champion**

Cllr Thapa reported on his achievements and activities during 2024, these included addressing cost of living pressures for veterans, continued attendance and development of connections with veterans’ hubs in both Aldershot and Farnborough and work to update the Council’s webpages with links, organisations and information to aid signposting. Work has also been underway to achieve the Gold Employee Recognition Award and since attending a workshop in January the Council had taken a number of steps to close the gap by meeting some of the criteria required. It was advised that there was still some work to be completed to achieve gold around understanding current staff connections to the armed forces, internal promotion and understanding of forces friendly policies, support for cadets and advocacy for the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant to the Council’s networks. It was hoped that an evidence based submission would be made in 2024/25.

The Committee discussed the report and the difficulty in engaging veterans from different nationalities and the need for a single venue in the Borough to bring veterans together. It was suggested that consideration could be given to a space in Union Yard, Aldershot or The Meads, Farnborough.

In response to achieving the Gold Award, it was noted that a policy on Reservists was due to be presented to the Cabinet at its next meeting for approval.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Thapa for his report.

## **33. WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the Work Plan.

Consideration was given to the draft annual report and a number of suggestions made, these included an update on the work of the Farnborough Airport Task and Finish Group and involvement of the Cabinet Members at meetings.

In addition, a couple of suggestions were made for future meetings, these included:

- Union Yard, Aldershot - lettings
- SERCO

The Committee extended thanks to the Chairman, Cllr Mike Smith, for his leadership during the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

The meeting closed at 9.11 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)

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