

BOROUGH SERVICES POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 15 June 2015 at the Concorde Room, Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Barbara Hurst (Chair)
Cllr A.R. Newell (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr T.D. Bridgeman
Cllr D.E. Clifford
Cllr A.M. Ferrier
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr D.M. Welch

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Cr. Barbara Hurst be appointed Chairman for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Cr. A.R. Newell be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd March. 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. APPOINTMENTS FOR 2015/16

(1) Mid Cycle Meeting –

RESOLVED: That the Chairman (Cr. Barbara Hurst), the Vice-Chairman (Cr. A.R. Newell) and Crs. M.J. Roberts be appointed to attend the mid-cycle meetings for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

(2) Elections Group –

RESOLVED: That membership of the Elections Group for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, as appointed by the Licensing and General Purposes Committee, being the Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support (Cr. A. Jackman), the Chairman of the Licensing and General Purposes Committee (Cr. A.M. Ferrier) and Crs. D.M.T. Bell, K. Dibble, Barbara Hurst, B. Jones and S.J. Masterson be endorsed.

(3) **Community Involvement Task and Finish Group –**

RESOLVED: That the Chairman (Cr. Barbara Hurst) and Crs. D.E. Clifford, A.H. Crawford, C.P. Grattan and J.J. Preece be appointed to the Community Involvement Task and Finish Group for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

5. RUSHMOOR VOLUNTARY SERVICES

The Panel welcomed Mr. Greg Alexander, Chief Executive Officer of Rushmoor Voluntary Services, who attended the meeting to give an update on the activities and working arrangements of Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS).

It was advised that RVS was a charity that provided help and support to other charities and voluntary organisations, championed volunteering and ran the Rushmoor Volunteer Centre. RVS had 410 member organisations, an increase of 21% in the previous five years. It was felt that the growing membership was very positive and endorsed the key role of RVS in the Borough. RVS was currently funded through grants from Rushmoor Borough Council and Hampshire County Council; which enabled it to manage projects funded separately from grants and contracts that delivered community benefits.

Mr. Alexander reported on the work and projects of RVS, these included:

- Group Support, Training and Development – Group support through the provision of information and support to groups, that related to new projects, identification of funding streams and the creation of partnership opportunities. Training had been provided to 361 individuals from 94 organisations through the delivery of courses such as first aid, food hygiene, lone working and adult safeguarding. RVS also had a Development Officer who provided support to members and worked in the community with partners on a range of things, in particular key neighbourhood projects, community cohesion and links between groups and partner organisations.
- Volunteer Centre – The priority of the centre had been to place members of the public into volunteering and, through work with RVS members, to develop future volunteering opportunities. The outreach service based at Aldershot Library and Techstart had continued to identify new volunteers in the Aldershot area. Annually RVS hosted a recognition event at the Council Offices to celebrate different aspects of volunteering, in 2014 young volunteers had been recognised and for 2015 it would be the hard work of Board members and Trustees of local organisations.
- Blooming Marvellous – this project provided a valuable service to people with or recovering from mental illness. The group worked on a community garden based at the Aldershot allotments and carried out a range of gardening services for elderly and disabled residents. The Panel noted

that funding for this project had been secured for a further three years through Broadhurst Welcome Home Ltd.

- Broadhurst Community Access Project – this initiative supported local people and provided essential support of life skills and other relevant issues. Funding had also been secured for this project for a further three years through Broadhurst Welcome Home Ltd.
- RVS Home Help – This service provided home cleaning and shopping services to elderly and frail people in the Borough. Clients were referred through health care professionals and adult services and users were charged for the service. The current client base was 358 individuals. Partial funding for users on benefits had in the past been provided by Hampshire County Council's "Supporting People" initiative but this had stopped in March 2015. As a consequence, communication had been taking place with those affected to try and ensure that they could continue to receive the service.
- Transport – RVS were responsible for the provision of Rushmoor Dial-a-Ride and Fleet Link. The service, which operated under contract with Hampshire County Council, provided transport for residents unable to use or without access to public transport. It was noted that trips to places of interest were arranged as an extra service for users. The Community Transport Scheme also allowed member voluntary organisations and groups to hire minibuses at low cost. The scheme had been supported by volunteer drivers who were all fully Minibus Driver Awareness (MiDAS) trained. Over 1170 trips were made under the scheme per year.

Mr. Alexander gave an overview of the RVS Annual Review for 2014/15. Highlights of the report included:

- £357,785 in external funding received by RVS members for projects
- 410 member organisations
- 228 volunteers placed by the Volunteer Centre
- 279 individuals trained on accredited courses
- 82 volunteer MiDAS trained minibus drivers
- 69 clients of the Blooming Marvellous group of which there were 36 volunteers positively engaged in the project
- Six days per week of transportation provided by Dial-a-Ride, Fleet Link and Hart Shopper

It was also noted that during the autumn/winter of 2014/15 RVS had worked in partnership with Hampshire County Council (HCC), Basingstoke Voluntary Action and Hart Voluntary Action to develop a cluster of "Councils for Voluntary Service" (CVS') in North Hampshire. The plan would be to work together on initiatives, to strengthen partnership working and address priorities, as set out by HCC to tackle issues related to older people, children and families. It was hoped that these developments would improve efficiencies and create a more targeted approach to the work carried out by RVS.

In summary, Mr. Alexander advised that RVS was providing infrastructure support to voluntary and community groups in the Borough. It helped to build capacity to allow groups to help more residents when statutory services were implementing continued budgetary cuts. RVS was aware of the pressures on local authority funding and grants and had a three year plan that covered its financial and operational areas to allow it to continue working to make a difference in Rushmoor.

In response to a query regarding cuts in grants from the County Council, it was advised that RVS was aware that there would be a 3% reduction in the grant from HCC in 2015 and a further 3% in 2016. These reductions would be followed by a strategic review in 2018.

The Panel discussed supporting young people’s organisations and the five organisations in the Borough that would be most affected by proposed cuts by Hampshire County Council. It was advised that RVS was working with the charities/organisations to bring them together to avoid duplication and to identify joint priorities when applying for grants in the future. It was suggested that “Crowdfunding” could be considered going forward; this was a new initiative which involved funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people, typically via the internet. It was also noted that other cluster groups of interest could be identified for similar initiatives.

In response to a question on the home help service and volunteers’ ability to identify clients that could be suffering from mental health issues, it was advised that volunteers didn’t have any formal training in this area and the centre relied on common sense. However, all clients were asked to sign a declaration stating that they gave their permission, for any concerns identified by the volunteer to be passed on to their next of kin or a medical professional.

ACTION	BY WHOM	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update on funding streams for Rushmoor Voluntary Services be given at a future meeting. 	Panel Administrator/Chief Executive Officer Rushmoor Voluntary Services	June 2016

The Chairman thanked Mr. Alexander for his presentation.

6. **FOOD SAFETY**

The Panel welcomed Mr. Colin Alborough, Environmental Health Manager, and Mr. Oliver Robinson, Principal Food Safety Officer, who attended the meeting to give the Panel an update on the Council’s Food Safety Policy including emerging issues and demand.

The Panel were made aware of a number of new issues and initiatives, including new legislation around food allergies and intolerances, food labels would highlight in “bold”, food types that could cause allergic reactions and intolerances, such as nuts, wheat, milk etc. The Government had also produced “eatwell – your guide to healthy eating”, the guide included eight top tips covering all aspects of eating a healthy balanced diet. It was advised that there had also been a new two stage cleaning process introduced to help combat germs such as e-coli.

Mr. Alborough advised of the purposes of the Food and Health and Safety Team, which were linked to the Council’s purpose and themes and were developed through systems thinking principles. The purposes were:

- To ensure that food and drink on sale for human consumption, which had been produced, stored, handled or consumed in the Borough was without risk to the health and safety of the consumer.
- To enable good business.

The Panel noted that the service worked to the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement and the Food Law Code of Practice, each of which described the role of an enforcing authority and provided risk based proactive and reactive intervention and business support.

Mr. Alborough reported on the demand on the service, especially:

- Inspecting and rating businesses – during 2014/15, 372 existing businesses were formally inspected and rated. Businesses were scored on a 0-5 Food Hygiene Rating, those with the lower score received support and intervention from the authority to bring their rating higher. It was noted that five businesses in the Borough rated one or below at the end of 2014/15.
- Supporting new business – during 2014/15, 135 new business were supported prior to opening and inspected and rated after opening.
- Responding to statutory notifications and having a reactive role with service requests – the service received around 550 service requests per year. These requests included complaints about food and food premises, food alerts/recalls and notifications of infectious disease.
- The role of Primary Authority to the British Army – wherever the British Army consumed food it did so in accordance with guidance agreed with Rushmoor Environmental Health Services. A Primary Authority (PA) was a partnership between businesses and a single local authority for environmental health with the following characteristics:
 - The PA provided robust and reliable advice which had to be respected by all local regulators.
 - A national inspection plan could be produced to improve the effectiveness of inspections to avoid repeat checks

- The PA enabled better information sharing
- The PA had the authority to co-ordinate enforcement to ensure a consistent and proportionate response to issues
- Businesses had the right to decide on the level of support it received from its local PA
- A PA could recover costs

Moving forward, it was advised that the Food Safety Team would continue to support their customers by further embedding systems thinking principles into their work, by responding appropriately to emerging issues, by increasing regulatory review and by keeping relevant to the changing times. It was also noted that the teams would endeavour to recover more costs and increase income where possible.

In response to a query, Mr. Robinson advised that every primary food business in the Borough would be subject to a Food Hygiene Rating. Inspections took place on a rolling basis of 1-3 years depending on the risk level of the individual business; most businesses were well into their second or third inspection visit. It was noted that, if a business changed hands, an inspection would be carried out after a suitable period of time to ensure standards had been maintained; new business were contacted prior to opening with the offer of advice and support.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Alborough and Mr. Robinson for their presentation.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel noted the current work programme.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

CLLR BARBARA HURST (CHAIR)
