

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Communities Overview and
Scrutiny Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth
on Wednesday 28 October 2009

- Present:** Councillors:
Helen Parr (Chairman)
Graham Troman (Vice Chairman)
Vivienne Ash
Christine Drew
Roger Giles
Marion Olive
Margaret Rogers
Mark Williamson
- Officers:** Peter Jeffs – Corporate Director
Debbie Meakin – Democratic Services Officer
John Tippin – Licensing Manager
- Also Present** Councillors:
Ray Bloxham
Iain Chubb
Vivien Duval-Steer
Jill Elson
Graham Godbeer
Steve Hall
Ann Liverton
Frances Newth
Pauline Stott
- Ralph Hayward, Devon NHS Partnership Trust
Ed Couttes, EDVSA
- Apologies:** Andrew Moulding
Philip Skinner

The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 9.00pm.

***15 Public question time**

Mr Alan Worthington requested to speak before the item on “New Horizons”, the consultation document by the Department of Health.

***16 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 September 2009 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

17 **New Horizons “Towards a shared vision for mental health”**

Mr Alan Worthington outlined his previous concerns, voiced to the former Scrutiny Committee, on dealing with bed shortages and not enough specialist care in the field of mental health. He had responded to the “New Horizons” consultation document sent out by the Department of Health with the view that the document was more about a vision than giving specific information about how services would operate, and how families and carers would be supported.

The Chairman thanked him for his comments.

Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director, outlined the key messages from the New Horizons consultation document, which included:

- Early intervention to build mental health well-being in children;
- Local agreement between child and adolescent mental health services on how to manage transition from adolescence to adulthood;
- Multi-sector approaches to maintain and promote mental well-being in adults; including early recognition and early intervention;
- Challenge ageist attitudes, tailored approaches and action against discrimination for older adults.

Ralph Hayward of the Devon NHS Partnership Trust was welcomed to the meeting and presented the principles of the Trust, and its response to the consultation.

The Trust priorities were explained to Members, covering:

- Services “good enough for my family” approach
- Stress on safety covering support to staff, patient safety initiative and secure services at Langdon Hospital in Dawlish;
- Reviewing older people’s services;
- Developing services for specific needs, for example now providing a specialist unit at Exeter for treatment of eating disorders;
- Introduction of single telephone number for GPs to access with guaranteed response;
- Stress on recovery, including supporting the “Time To Change” national campaign, a campaign to help end mental health discrimination (<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>) and a published book on recovery stories, “Beyond the Storms” which is available to view in the Members’ area.

Mr Hayward also explained what he understood to be the key themes in the “New Horizons” consultation. The Trust’s response called for priority on youth mental health services, older adults and health inequalities, along with a strong focus on recovery and tackling the stigma associated with mental health. He concluded that, although the document had a strong vision, the focus should be on preventative measures and that society had to recognise the role they had to play in mental health and well-being.

Councillor Vivien Duval-Steer, member champion for Equalities, asked about the availability of beds for the acutely ill now; and how many people in prison had mental health issues and the importance of helping those individuals. Mr Hayward outlined how many beds were designated across the County and that he had not been aware of any case transferred outside of Devon to receive a bed. He agreed on the issue of mental health in prisons, outlining that 78% of inmates had some form of mental health problem. The Trust had recently been contracted with Devon Health to provide care in prisons and therefore improvements could now be implemented.

17 **New Horizons “Towards a shared vision for mental health” (continued)**

Members debated a number of issues around providing mental health services, with comments by Mr Ed Coutts, including:

- Had the out of hours service improved? Mr Hayward gave examples of cases where responding to a known patient, with crisis centres set up at Exeter, Barnstable and Torquay. There were also better links with hospitals on acute cases and with the Devon Doctors Service. Secure rooms as an alternative to police cells were also available 24 hours a day.
- The Trust had to balance its budgets, the funding coming from the Primary Care Trust. Mr Hayward agreed that a greater proportion of funding was needed.
- How do the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) fit in with the mental health needs? The Trust are welcome to engage with the LSP and the Devon PCT are represented on the LSP.
- Members felt that more should be done to provide older carers with break opportunities (for example, respite care);
- Debate with Councils was helpful to understanding mental health and to highlight where improvement was needed. Local knowledge from Councillors and from the Council as a large employer was also helpful.
- Questions on the temporary closure of the Bungalow at Honiton could be addressed by Iain Tulley of the Trust, and issues of effective use of resources;
- Members had concern of frustration that “good neighbours” could not refer mental health problems to GPs and health centres.

Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director summed up the outcome from the debate by Members as:

What we want to see for mental Health in East Devon

- DPT to link better to non-NHS organisations on their role in issues affecting Mental Health
- Proactive work to prevent mental illness, not just a treatment approach
- Accessibility of mental health services in non-prejudicial venues, where people feel easy about attending without being stigmatised or judged
- Reducing the stigma and adverse public attitudes to mental health, it is an issue that affects nearly everyone
- Per capita resource increase in funding from PC and more government funding towards mental health services
- Honiton Bungalow closure to be examined in more depth and EDDC to review outcome
- 24hour service and local beds in East Devon for urgent mental health admissions (also a single phone number for all mental health contacts)
- Arrangements to allow ‘good neighbours’ to refer into health centres where they are concerned about the mental health of people they know
- Need to resolve current issues of provision before moving on to a vision of a ‘New Horizon’
- Mental Health support to be improved, made more consistent and longer term where required in supported housing accommodation
- Support of carers (including respite care) where supporting people with more severe mental health problems
- Take a ‘recovery approach’ rather than just treatment of symptoms
- Provide a smooth and effective transition and liaison between services as young people pass to adult mental health services
- In providing equality of service do not ‘level down’ local mental health services (see also ‘Honiton Bungalow’ above)
- Create a better ‘accountability framework’ for mental health working across organisations

17 **New Horizons “Towards a shared vision for mental health”**

- Support the mental health of the local prison population, and do more to divert inappropriate referrals to the prison service
- Better link understanding of mental health issues into education services

What we should do as EDDC

- Work with DPT on mental health issues
- progress Mindful Employer status (we are already signed up)
- Better link to DPT on supported accommodation issues
- Look at Cultural development links with good mental health

RECOMMENDED: that the list on what the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee want to see for Mental Health in East Devon, and what the Council should do, is sent to the Devon NHS Partnership Trust and the Devon Primary Care Trust; as well as being adopted by the Executive Board as a formal Council position.

*18 **Equalities Member Champion**

Councillor Vivien Duval-Steer updated Members on her work as the Member Champion for Equalities, linking her role to that of good customer service in providing access to services for everyone.

Her role to date had been in co-ordinating the work to reach the next level under the Equalities assessment. She outlined the work done by Anderson Jones, recently appointed Diversity Officer (shared post with Mid Devon District Council), and an action plan to deal with the gaps identified in services.

Members debated some aspects of reaching all of the customers of the Council, including those who may be reluctant to approach for help. The Neighbourhood Assessments had been one way of reaching such people with positive results.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the work of the Equalities team;
2. that the Member Champion for Equalities reports updates on the equalities action plan regularly to the Committee.

19 **Gambling Act 2005 – Tri-annual review of the Licensing Policy**

Members considered a report prepared by the Licensing Manager that provided an overview of the recent changes to the Licensing Policy. Some of the changes were driven by changes to guidance issued by the Gambling Commission.

Highlighted changes included:

- Better description of what constitutes an “interested party”, that party being able to make representations to a licensing application. Parish Councils could now be considered as interested parties;
- Better description of what constitutes a “premises” in terms of providing an arcade or adult gambling centre to close a loophole previously exploited;
- Improvements to child protection following the need for persons running an unlicensed premises to meet licence requirements for licensed premises.

19 **Gambling Act 2005 – Tri-annual review of the Licensing Policy (cont.)**

Councillor Graham Godbeer, Chairman of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee, gave his personal recommendation of the value of the Licensing Service in providing excellent advice and recognised amongst peers as leaders in good working practice.

Members debated some of the changes, and why they had come about, including:

- Clarification on the need for SIA door supervisors – guidance from the Gambling Commission had changed which reflected the long held view of the Licensing Service of having SIA registered staff where appropriate;
- Guidance to Town and Parish Councils was being produced on their role as an “interested party”. The covering letter would also include instructions on how to find out what applications had been submitted from the Council’s website both on alcohol licence applications and gambling licence applications;
- Issues over travelling fairs being unlicensed provided they do not stay in one location more than 27 days per year would be investigated in conjunction with Property Services.

RECOMMENDED: that the Licensing Policy be approved.

*20 **Forward Plan for Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Progress on consultation period on interim affordable housing proposal, feedback from Housing Summit and a report from the Member Champion for Young People were set for the next agenda for 20 January 2010.

Councillor Jill Elson, Portfolio Holder for Communities, requested that consideration be given to the agencies that received funding from the Council to feed into the budget process. Councillor Roger Giles reminded Members of the work of the former Scrutiny Committee in looking at the EDVSA.

RESOLVED: that a report outlining which agencies receive funding be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

Chairman Date.....