

Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Melton** on **Thursday 12 July 2018** at **6.30pm**

Members of the Committee present:

P Dunnett (Chairman), M Deacon (Vice Chairman), S Bird, C Block, S Burroughes, P Coleman, S Geater, C Hedgley, G Lynch, S Mower, P Rous

Other Councillors present:

S Gallant

Officers present:

K Abbott (Democratic Services Business Manager), R Best (Communities Manager), J Catterwell (Communities Officer), P Gore (Head of Environmental Services & Port Health), M Sims (Food and Safety Manager)

1. Election of a Chairman

It was proposed by Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Mower, and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Dunnett be elected as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19

2. Election of a Vice Chairman

It was proposed by Councillor Dunnett, seconded by Councillor Hedgley, and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Deacon be elected as Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19

3. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harding.

4. Declarations of Interest

With regard to item 8, Councillor Block declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest as a member of the Suffolk Superfast Broadband CIC.

With regard to item 8, Councillor Dunnett declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest as a member of the Suffolk Superfast Broadband CIC.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 May 2018 be confirmed as a correct record

6. Annual Report on Community Safety 2017/18

The Scrutiny Committee received report **SCR 04/18** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health. The Cabinet Member introduced the report which provided the annual update on community safety, including the Council's statutory obligation to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder through the Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership. The report provided information on particular funded projects and highlighted early intervention work with children and young people who might otherwise lack a positive family influence. In particular, the Cabinet Member wished to draw the Committee's attention to the information provided within the report on the Crucial Crew Plus project and County Lines issues.

The Chairman invited questions.

A member of the Committee referred to the statistics of anti-social behaviour provided within the report and, whilst noting the 38% reduction over the three year rolling average, asked what measures the Constabulary could utilise to control nuisance behaviour. The Cabinet Member said that Public Space Protection Orders could be used by the Council and activated relatively quickly; such Orders encompassed, for example, dog control orders and no-alcohol designation zones. The Cabinet Member explained that Public Space Protection Orders enabled the Council to authorise others to act on its behalf and included the ability to issue warning letters and Fixed Penalty Notices. The member also asked for further information on Community Protection Orders and the Cabinet Member replied that these could be applied to cover actions beyond anti-social behaviour and for longer periods of time.

Another member of the Committee asked for an update on domestic abuse issues. The Communities Officer, with reference to paragraph 2.2 of the report, advised that the international campaign "Say No More" and Coastal Action Against Abuse had officially joined and were the first forum from Suffolk to do so; a website had been established which provided a lot of information. It was confirmed that domestic abuse issues remained a high priority. The Cabinet Member added that Suffolk Public Sector Leader's Group had approved a total grant of £225,000 to create domestic abuse services, including a dedicated contact point for victims.

Another member of the Committee asked about the current provision of women's refuge places. The Communities Officer stated that three additional places had been funded and there were a total of 22 such places in the county. The Cabinet Member added that the three additional places were specifically allocated to those victims who were not otherwise eligible for a place in a general refuge or hostel.

There being no further questions or matters raised for debate, the Chairman moved to the recommendation which was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED:

That, having received the Annual Report on Community Safety for 2017/18, the Scrutiny Committee had both commented upon and noted its contents.

7. East Suffolk Food and Health and Safety Service Plan 2018/2019

The Scrutiny Committee received report **SCR 05/18** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health. The Cabinet Member introduced the report which provided the Service Plan for 2018/19 in the format prescribed by the Food Standards Agency in its Framework Agreement on Local Authority Law Enforcement and as required by the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with its National Local Authority Enforcement Code. The Service Plan was submitted for the Committee's review of the Council's performance in meeting set targets, any variance from the Plan and any areas for improvement in the service. In particular, the Cabinet Member highlighted within the report the new, more refined risk assessment approach to the inspection of new businesses being developed, the new enhanced registration arrangements for food businesses being developed by the Food Safety Agency, and the launch of a Take Out, Eat Well scheme to encourage and reward take-away businesses which provided healthier food choices. In addition, the Cabinet Member referred the Committee to section 6 of the report - Port Health - and meetings with various senior civil servants from DEFRA, the Food Standards Agency and the Department for Exiting the EU to promote the importance of imported food controls and to influence the continued delivery of effective border controls post-Brexit. The Cabinet Member also commended the continued performance levels of the Food and Safety Team during a period of significant change and challenges to working practices. He also referred to the food safety and health and safety key achievements in 2017/18, as detailed at 7.2 and 13.2, respectively, and the Port Health key achievements, as detailed at 19.2, all of which he described as worthy of particular note.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Head of Environmental Services & Port Health added that, as previously requested by the Committee, comparative national data had been provided within the report so that East Suffolk's performance could be benchmarked. He highlighted that East Suffolk was performing above the national average in all categories reported by the Food Standards Agency. The Head of Environmental Services & Port Health also referred to the Local Government Chronical Award for Innovation which the PHILIS system had won in March 2018.

The Chairman invited questions.

A member of the Committee, with reference to Table 8 (page 39) of the report, asked for additional information on the investigation of gastrointestinal cases. The Head of Environmental Services & Port Health said the Food and Safety Team was notified of suspected cases by individuals, GPs or if the event of an outbreak linked to a particular event. The member also asked how the success of the Eat Out, Eat Well scheme had been measured. The Head of Environmental Services & Port Health said this had been gauged by the number of businesses who had engaged with the scheme and received awards in recognition of their standards. He acknowledged that the engagement with the scheme had been more limited than had been hoped, but it was being increasingly promoted.

Another member of the Committee asked about EU requirements for qualifications, staff development and training. The Head of Environmental Services & Port Health said the EU's requirements had been transposed into UK legislation pre-Brexit so no significant changes were anticipated. He added that staff development and training to ensure the enforcement of legislative requirements continued.

A member of the Committee asked about Environmental Health's role in the monitoring of air quality. The Head of Environmental Protection & Port Health said the Environmental Protection Team monitored air quality levels across the district and advised that there were some existing air quality management locations. The member also asked about issues with emissions from ships. The Head of Environmental Services & Port Health referred to relevant legislation and to the Council's responsibility to test for sulphur content in ship emissions, as appropriate.

Another member of the Committee referred to the 'segmentation of food businesses.... that are of limited scale and complexity' as outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report (page 19) and asked for some additional explanation of what this entailed. The Food and Safety Manager said the Food Standards Agency was developing a new, more refined risk assessment system for the inspection of new businesses prior to its launch; some new businesses which supplied only low risk food e.g. pre-packed low risk foods and anticipated good standards would no longer receive an initial inspection and would only be inspected if further information, or a complaint, indicated one was necessary.

A further member of the Committee referred to issues with toxins found in contaminated sea creatures washed up on beaches along the east coast and questioned why no formal notices had been placed at such locations to warn visitors. The Head of Environmental Services & Port Health said the issue had been raised with emergency planning who had coordinated the overall response. He undertook to seek an update on the matter outside of the meeting.

Another member of the Committee asked about the examination of requirements for public and animal health control at UK borders post-Brexit. The Head of Environmental Services & Port Health said that there remained areas of uncertainty but scenario planning was underway to ensure all the possible implications and mitigation measures needed were identified. He referred to the position at Felixstowe which, subject to a pragmatic approach, would remain largely unaltered in terms of the checks it performed. He outlined the potential impact on other ports in the UK.

There being no further questions or matters raised for discussion, the Chairman on behalf of the Committee, commended the excellent service which continued to be provided.

The Chairman moved to the recommendations which were proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED

- a) That the Scrutiny Committee noted Food Safety and Health and Safety performance against the Service Plan for 2017/18; and

- b) That, having considered the Service Plan for 2018/19, the Scrutiny Committee had commented upon its contents prior to its further consideration by Cabinet on 4 September 2018 and Full Council on 27 September 2018.

8. Verbal update on the provision of affordable broadband

The Scrutiny Committee received a short verbal update by the Member Working Group.

9. Consideration of the Committee's Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee reviewed and agreed its Forward Work Programme.

The Meeting concluded at 8.05pm