

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 19 March 2015 at County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 18 May 2015.

Elected Members:

- * Mrs Denise Saliagopoulos (Chairman)
- * Mr Chris Norman (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Mike Bennison
- * Mrs Yvonna Lay
- * Mrs Jan Mason
- * Mr John Orrick
- * Mr Saj Hussain
- * Mrs Mary Lewis
- Mr Chris Pitt
- * Ms Barbara Thomson
- * Mr Alan Young
- Mr Robert Evans

Ex officio Members:

Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Vice Chairman of the County Council
Mr David Munro, Chairman of the County Council

Co-opted Members:

Substitute Members:

Mr Chris Pitt
Mr Robert Evans

In attendance

11/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Robert Evans and Chris Pitt.

Richard Wilson attended as a substitute for Chris Pitt.

Apologies were also received from Yvonne Rees.

12/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 14 JANUARY 2015 [Item 2]

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

13/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No Declarations of Interest were received.

14/14 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

15/14 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

There were no responses to report.

16/14 UPDATE FROM THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Russell Pearson, Chief Fire Officer

Helyn Clack, Cabinet Member for Community Services

Kay Hammond, Cabinet Associate for Fire and Police Services

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee that the Safe Drive Stay Alive programme was very successful, since its establishment, road traffic collisions (RTC) involving youths had dropped significantly. The Fire Service was also completing home fire safety visits, mostly for vulnerable people. There were currently over 150 volunteers working for the service and that number was growing, which supports workforce reforms. The Committee was informed that the service had noted that many of the assumptions in the DCDC Strategic Trends Programme were gradually coming true, for example the growth of terrorism and the impacts of climate change. It was noted that the SCC Corporate Strategy was influencing what Surrey Fire and Rescue Service was focusing on, the strategic objectives of the service were; workforce reform, income generation, Public Service Transformation Network membership and leadership.

2. The Committee was informed that the service was at this stage on target to achieve the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) targets and was constantly re-profiling to make this even more successful. The workforce reform would not require any forced redundancies, as when whole time fire fighters retire they would not be replaced and the number of on-call fire fighters would be increased where possible. The Chief Fire Officer stated that currently 87% of the Fire Services budget is spent on whole time fire fighters.
3. It was explained to the Committee that in the future the service would consider the proportions of private sector involvement, volunteers and on-call staff while reducing the number of whole time staff through natural wastage. Current income generation is sourced through South East Business Services (SEBS) Limited. The Committee were informed that an increase in income would improve the core offer of the service.
4. In terms of equipment, it was noted that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service owns the best equipment in the country. Fire engines were currently being replaced with better models and a higher aerial ladder height; all appliances hold a defibrillator and someone trained to use it would be staffed on the appliance at every incident. It was expressed that training should not be outsourced and a realistic training facility was proposed which would contain a mock section of M25, high-rise buildings and houses among other scenarios. It was vital that firefighters' training was kept up to date, especially as there would be fewer staff after the workforce reforms. The service was in the process of buying 27 4X4 Land Rover Defenders and it was expressed that equipment is sourced from Surrey suppliers when possible.
5. The Committee was informed that Salfords and Guildford Fire Stations would be opened in Summer 2015, Woking and Spelthorne Fire Stations would be opened in 2016 and Banstead Fire Station would be opened in 2018.
6. The Committee raised concern over the safety of the on-call set up of the Fire Service, they were informed that the service should continue to attempt to attract new recruits but that due to the nature of Surrey's working population and dormitory-like status with residents commuting into London, these attempts may not always be successful.
7. The Associate Cabinet Member informed the Committee that she was attending all Blue Light Collaboration meetings to establish cohesive collaboration work. The Chief Fire Officer expressed that all Surrey emergency services should work together to improve outcomes for residents.

Recommendations:

None.

Further information to be provided:

None.

17/14 MAGNA CARTA PROGRAMME UPDATE [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Susie Kemp, Assistant Chief Executive
Peter Milton, Head of Cultural Services
Helen Clack, Cabinet Member for Community Services
Hew Lock, Artist of the Magna Carta Art Commission
Michael Prior, Situations Trust

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The artist of the Magna Carta Art Commission expressed to the Committee his vision for the art work. Once completed this would be a global piece and translated across the world to reflect the international nature of the Magna Carta. The art commission would consist of 12 chairs representing a jury and would include representations of liberty, freedom around the world, struggles for human rights and the right to trial by a jury. The piece would be interactive and visitors would be able to touch and sit on it. It was added that the design takes into account the landscape of the location. This was thoroughly considered by the artist and the National Trust investigated the area of landscape including risks which the artist responded to.
2. The Committee was informed that alongside the work of the art commission and events programme a website was being developed and leaflets would be available on site of the art commission to provide information. On behalf of the partnership, Royal Holloway University London developed an app with information on Magna Carta and to help users explore the Runnymede area as a whole. The Committee expressed that as not everyone would have access to the internet, it was important to ensure the information was easily accessible in all formats.
3. There was a discussion around insuring the art commission and the Committee was informed that the piece would be owned by Surrey County Council with a loan agreement on National Trust land. The National Trust would be responsible for insuring the piece, cleaning it and establishing security. It was added that security would include a range of measures; the Committee suggested using the Runnymede CCTV control centre to monitor the site. The copyright agreement would permit non-commercial photographers to promote the artwork.
4. The Committee was informed that the National Trust has supported the Magna Carta celebrations by giving Surrey County Council £100,000, and the City of London has also provided £85,000 to the project. Thousands of guests had now been invited and a park and ride with staggered arrivals would be organised to mitigate crowd problems. The Committee was informed that an overspend on the event would probably occur and the service was in the process of working with the Police to establish who would be responsible for which security costs.

5. Officers informed the Committee that representations from different places were being involved in the programme of events to ensure a wide range of involvement at all levels.

Recommendations:

- To note the content of the report and request a further update at the next Communities Select Committee.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- The Committee agreed to look at the detailed budget of the Magna Carta celebrations as a part two item at the next Committee.

18/14 CUSTOMER PROMISE - OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVERING EXCELLENT SERVICE [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Mark Irons, Head of Customer Services

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Head of Customer Services introduced the report and informed the Committee that customers, members and staff felt the most important principles behind excellent customer service was treating people right way, making it easy, keeping people informed and getting it right.
2. The Committee fully supported the Customer Promise but raised concern over the grammatical accuracy of the term 'treating you right'. It was suggested that the term 'treating you in the right way' could be used instead.
3. It was stated to officers that not all Surrey residents have access to online information and documents should be made available through other formats such as libraries.

Recommendations:

- That the Select Committee recommend that Cabinet endorse the new Customer Promise and approach to improving resident experience, on the condition that the wording of 'treating you right' is amended.
- That the Select Committee track progress against the commitment to improve Resident Experience.

Action/further information to be provided:

None.

19/14 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 9]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee noted the Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme.
2. It was agreed that a Magna Carta debrief item would be included on the Forward Work Programme for a future Committee.

20/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 11.00am on Monday 18 May 2015.

Meeting ended at: 1.04 pm

Chairman