

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **RESIDENT EXPERIENCE BOARD** held at 11.00 am on 21 July 2015 at Mess Conference Room, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Friday 16 October 2015.

**Elected Members:**

- \* Mr Colin Kemp (Chairman)
- \* Rachael I. Lake (Vice-Chairman)
- \* Mr Mike Bennison
- \* Mr Robert Evans
- \* Miss Marisa Heath
- \* Mrs Yvonna Lay
- \* Mrs Mary Lewis
- \* Mrs Jan Mason
- \* Mr John Orrick
- \* Mr Chris Pitt
- \* Ms Barbara Thomson
- \* Mr Alan Young

**Ex officio Members:**

Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Chairman of the County Council  
Mr Nick Skellett CBE, Vice-Chairman of the County Council

**1/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Alan Young and Yvonna Lay.

Richard Wilson acted as a substitute for Alan Young.

**2/15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 18 MAY 2015 [Item 2]**

It was noted that there were errors on the attendance list in the minutes of the previous meeting.

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

**3/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

**4/15 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

No questions or petitions were received.

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

There were no responses to report.

**6/15 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER [Item 6]**

The Board was informed that the September Resident Experience Board would be a workshop at Surrey Fire and Rescue Service HQ and would cover information requested in Recommendation CSC 1.

The Cabinet Member details would be added to the tracker.

The Board noted and agreed the Recommendations Tracker.

**7/15 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) 2014/15 [Item 7]**

**Witnesses:**

Steve Ruddy, Head of Trading Standards  
Amanda Poole, Assistant Head of Trading Standards

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Head of Trading Standards introduced the report and informed the Board that the item was part of an annual cycle and would provide information on specific activities. It was noted that the outcome of the inspection of RIPA by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner was positive and feedback said Trading Standards had effective internal guidance for the use of RIPA.
2. The Board questioned the data in the report stating there was a reduction the number of times RIPA had been used. Officers explained that Trading Standards moved to focus more on serious crime and the numbers of prosecutions fluctuate each year. It was

added that RIPA was only available to be used once all options had been pursued; however the use of RIPA may increase in the future due to increasing cyber crime. The Board was informed that Buckinghamshire has a similar approach to Surrey and were equally cautious in using RIPA, meaning low numbers in data across the joint service.

3. There was a discussion around the service working with Police; It was noted that in many investigations officers worked closely with the Police sharing intelligence and expertise. Depending on the case, either the Police or Trading Standards would prosecute. Where possible Proceeds of Crime legislation is used to recoup money from rogue traders and where possible money recovered would go back to the victim. In other cases the proceeds of crime that are recovered by the courts is split between the courts, the Home Office and the prosecuting authority such as the Council or the Police.
4. The use of covert CCTV was questioned and the Board was informed that cameras can only be used covertly in strictly controlled circumstances. For a RIPA authorisation the issue needed to be classed as a serious crime where the penalty could be up to 6 months in prison. As with all RIPA applications it needed to go through an internal approval process and then to be approved by the Magistrates court in advance. This is not the case with the overt use of cameras.
5. The Board was informed that each authority is responsible for RIPA authorisations during an investigation, although other elements of legal work are carried out jointly, within the Service.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Board noted the summary of the Council's use of RIPA provided in the report.

**Action/further information to be provided:**

None.

**8/15 WELFARE REFORM [Item 8]**

**Witnesses:**

Bob Gardner, Chairman of the Welfare Reform Task Group  
Helen Jenkins, Scrutiny Manager

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Chairman of the Welfare Reform Task Group introduced the report and informed the Board that overall, the Task Group was generally satisfied that Surrey County Council was prepared for the reforms, however they remained very concerned about the impact that the changes to the welfare benefits system may have on the residents of Surrey.
2. The Chairman of the Task Group explained the concern that Members had about the impact of the time taken during the appeal process on a vulnerable person's mental health and wellbeing. It was noted that often a large percentage of negative benefit decisions were overturned

at appeal, incurring unnecessary costs that could have been avoided if the correct decision had been made in the first instance.

3. The Board discussed housing benefit and expressed concern that this was not directly paid to landlords. It was noted that national policy currently dictated that that housing benefit be given first to the claimant so they could pay their own rent. This was to give tenants more social responsibility; however, the Board recognised that in some cases this method would not prove effective and was a national issue. The Board suggested that Central Government be contacted to express the concern raised regarding direct Universal Credit. The Chairman said that representations were being made to central Government on this point.
4. It was noted that the recommendations were going to Cabinet the following week. The Board decided that Welfare Reform would be a standing item on the Resident Experience Board and nominated Councillor Thomson as a member of the task group.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Board agreed the next steps, milestones and activities for the Task Group in the next 12 months.
2. Welfare Reform would be added to the Resident Experience Board agenda as a standing item.
3. That Barbara Thomson be nominated to sit on the Task Group and report back to each meeting of the Board.

**Action/further information to be provided:**

None.

**9/15 MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP ON SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE TRANSFORMATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN [Item 9]**

**Witnesses:**

Mary Lewis, Chairman of the Member Reference Group on Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Transformation and Public Safety Plan.

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Chairman of the Member Reference Group (MRG) introduced the report and informed the Board that the MRG began to look at Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Public Safety Plan (PSP) a year ago. She added that the MRG began to look at deeper transformation as the PSP refresh would have an element of transformation.
2. Colin Kemp and Robert Evans volunteered to join the MRG; they were informed that the next meeting was 16 September.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Board agreed the membership of the Member Reference Group and opened up membership to any interested Members. Robert Evans to be added to the membership.

**Action/further information to be provided:**

None.

## **10/15 APPOINTMENT OF A PERFORMANCE & FINANCE SUB-GROUP [Item 10]**

### **Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Board discussed the establishment of a Performance and Finance sub-group and the following volunteered to be members of the group; Rachael I Lake, John Orrick, Barbara Thomson. Alan Young was nominated by the Chairman to also join to group.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Board agreed the membership of a Performance and Finance Sub-group. Democratic Services to organise a date for the first meeting.

### **Action/further information to be provided:**

None.

## **11/15 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME PLANNING [Item 11]**

### **Witnesses:**

Mark Irons, Head of Customer Services

### **Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Chairman informed Members that the Resident Experience Board (REB) would aim to engage residents to attend meetings and share their experiences dealing with Surrey County Council. It was specified that REB would not be the forum for complaints to be brought, but would focus on how a situation was dealt with. It was suggested that to engage residents in the first instance, Members could cascade information to their residents.
2. The Head of Customer Services informed the Board that the most common reason for complaints was a lack of information and communication. A Member expressed that from personal experience it can be difficult to get a response from Surrey County Council and often raises complaints to ensure a response.

Chris Pitt left at 12.30pm.

3. Richard Wilson informed the Board that he is the Chair of the Customer Service Excellence Member Reference Group. Currently the MRG was working on getting engineers to communicate more directly with the public when building work or road works were happening.
4. The Board agreed ideas for future meetings, task groups, witness sessions and site visits. Ideas raised will be taken away and discussed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Robert Evans left at 12.50pm.

### **Recommendations:**

None.

**Action/further information to be provided:**

None.

**12/15 FULL YEAR OUTCOMES-BASED PERFORMANCE REPORT ON VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR (VCFS) INFRASTRUCTURE IN SURREY 2014/15 [Item 12]**

**Witnesses:**

Rachel Crossley, New Models of Delivery Lead

Saba Hussain, Strategic Partnership Manager

Barbara Musgrave, Director of Surrey Compact

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Strategic Partnership Manager introduced the report and informed the Board that there were approximately 5,700 voluntary organisations in Surrey with a small number of infrastructure organisations that support them, known as Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). They are tripartite funded by Surrey County Council, Borough and District Councils and Clinical Commissioning Groups and the amount of total grant funding to each of the CVS ranges from £60,000 to approximately £150,000 depending primarily on the amount the local Borough or District commits to them and the size of the area it covers. The CVSs support voluntary organisations with governance, finding volunteers, representation and liaison and general capacity building. The Board was informed that a Performance Management Framework was in place and a survey was sent out to all VCFS organisations in September to assess how the CVSs are performing. The Strategic Partnerships Manager updated that taking the performance information collectively commissioners were confident that value for money was being received; that the infrastructure support was effective; there was a thriving VCFS in Surrey and work was ongoing to continue to drive improvements year on year where needed.
2. The officer reported the Surrey Compact was established to drive improvements and best practice ways of working between public bodies and the VCFS. From April 2016 the way the Compact will be delivered is changing. There will be no funding for a Surrey Compact organisation but Surrey County Council and partners would share the responsibility to ensure work is ongoing to raise the profile of the Compact and working to the best practice principles.
3. The Director of Surrey Compact informed the Board that the organisation was established ten years ago. Before this, there were poor commissioning processes and practices across various aspects of working with the VCFS. Over the years much improvement has been driven, and now there are effective working relationships, e.g., there is generally co-design, improved marketing, engagement and support around commissioning.
4. It was noted that the Surrey Compact Support Group would not continue to meet but a similar group comprising champions from public and VCFS organisations would be introduced to take forward the work of the Compact. Work is ongoing with partners to understand what these structures will be and who will take responsibility for which areas

of work, for e.g., Surrey Community Action will host the website and codes of the Compact.

5. Officers also highlighted there is currently a strong working relationship with the VCFS and over the year members of the Surrey Charities Chief Executives' Group (SCCEG) in particular, have supported the Council across a broad range of work programmes and new proposals to drive better outcomes for the residents of Surrey.
6. The Board questioned how VCFS work coincided with the Family, Friends and Community Support project (FFCS). Officers updated that there was proactive activity to ensure work areas are joined up across services. For example, the infrastructure organisations had specific outcomes worked into their grant funding agreements for 2015-16 to facilitate and drive the FFCS agenda locally . Officers will continue to work with infrastructure organisations to monitor the progress against these outcomes. The Board expressed that more reference was needed to emphasise the link between both programmes. Members of the FFC Champion Group stated that the group was currently looking at gaps where there was a need for volunteering.

Mike Bennison left at 2.30pm.

7. The Board were informed of a new project to drive up Volunteering in Surrey which again is linked closely to the FFCS programme. The focus of this initially will be looking inwards, increasing volunteering through the Employee Volunteer Scheme and pre-retirees; utilising the broad range of specialist skills staff have in a strategic and useful way. The Volunteering Strategy has been refreshed and a plan of action to embed a culture of volunteering in Surrey has been developed. Officers reported that currently recorded numbers of volunteering through the Employee Volunteering Scheme were relatively low but this does not reflect the actual volunteering staff are currently engaged in. It is likely staff are undertaking volunteering without recording it on the system but also high workloads and lack of an easy accessible system to engage may be preventing staff from volunteering. The 'Building Up Volunteering Project' is looking at all aspects relating to employee volunteering improving both the processes and profile of this.

#### **Recommendations:**

The Board agreed:

- a) outcomes-based performance management framework information provided in the report covering the 2014/15 period;
- b) the Board would like to review performance framework information going forward on an annual basis;
- c) Supports the direction of travel of the Volunteering Project;
- d) Agreed the Board would like to receive an update on the Volunteering Project as part of the annual VCFS reporting;
- e) That the relevant officers include Members on the membership of the replacement group for the Surrey Compact Support Group;
- f) That Surrey County Council continues to encourage staff to volunteer and creates opportunities and time for them to do so.

**Action/further information to be provided:**

Officers to circulate Volunteering Strategy and the original proposal document for the Driving up Volunteering Project.

**13/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 13]**

The next Resident Experience Board will be held at 10.30am on Friday 16 October. A workshop for Board Members will take place at 10.00am on Thursday 24 September at the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service HQ.

Meeting ended at: 2.55 pm

---

**Chairman**