

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL – PEOPLE

held in the Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough

1st March 2012

commencing at 6.30p.m.

Present:
Councillor Graves (Chairman).

Councillors: Beesley-Reynolds, Mrs. Burrell, Everett and Mrs. Robinson.

Guest Speakers: Councillor Golding, Inspector P. Mc Kinder and N. Williams (Chairman of the Harborough Disability Access Group).

Officers: E. Bird, T. Day, E. O'Neill, S. Renwick and P. Rowbotham.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Birch and Dr. Bremner (Ex Officio).

518 MINUTES

RESOLVED that: the Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Panel – People held on 2nd February 2012 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

519 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REVIEW

The Panel was joined by Councillor Golding (Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership and Harborough District Council Executive Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement), T. Day (Community Partnerships Manager at Harborough District Council) and Inspector P. Mc Kinder (Leicestershire Constabulary).

The Panel NOTED that:

- (i) Community Safety Partnerships have made significant progress over the past ten years, but further development is always required. There have been a number of changes made as a result of recent reforms leading to reductions in bureaucracy, devolution of responsibilities to the local level, and the streamlining of processes. The powers now given within the Police and Justice Act 2006 enable councillors to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership.
- (ii) The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced a requirement for local authorities to have a crime and disorder committee with the power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken by Responsible Authorities in relation to the discharge of their crime and disorder functions. In July 2008 the Council designated the Scrutiny Panel for People as the 'crime and disorder committee' for this purpose.
- (iii) The Community Safety Partnership Plan is a three-year plan required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 that describes how the Community Safety Partnership will fulfil its statutory obligation to reduce crime, antisocial behaviour, substance misuse and reduce re-offending. The Council is a responsible authority under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and the Plan will form part of the Council's Policy Framework. The Council's most recent three-year plan was presented to the Scrutiny Panel – People Meeting of 3rd March 2011.

The priorities set out in the plan were:

1. Serious acquisitive crime. Serious acquisitive crime is defined as domestic burglary (residence), theft of a motor vehicle, theft from a motor vehicle and robbery. We will have a greater focus on burglary.
2. Anti social behaviour and criminal damage – continue to reduce anti social behaviour, particularly in those areas with the highest level of incidents.
3. Violent crime
4. Road traffic accidents and speeding
5. Re offending – reducing re offending (With a focus on families with complex needs)

There were also overlapping priorities:

1. Alcohol and substance misuse – reducing substance related crime and disorder. This includes minimising the negative impact on families and improving their health and well being..
 2. Vulnerability – Protecting the most vulnerable in communities, particularly in those areas with the highest level of incidents.
 3. Confidence – increasing user satisfaction with local crime and disorder services.
- (iv) to help monitor the performance against targets in the three-year plan an annual Partnership Strategic Assessment is produced. The purpose of a Strategic Assessment is to provide the Harborough Community Safety Partnership with a comprehensive picture of crime, disorder and community safety issues across Harborough District. The report provides information on police recorded crime, anti-social behaviour incidents, domestic and hate incidents and offences, Fire and Rescue primary and secondary fires, road traffic accidents, Youth Offending, Probation and Substance Misuse.
- (v) the Council's financial contribution to the Community Safety Partnership is around £119,000. CCTV provision has a budget of around £50,000 (this is provided for from a different budget from the Community Safety Partnership). Financing of the Community Safety Partnership is likely to change with the introduction of the Police Commissioner model.

The Panel thanked the guests for their attendance at the Meeting.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that: in the interest of transparency, Minutes of the Meetings of the Community Safety Partnership be made available, via the Council's website, for public viewing.

520 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND ADULTS IN NEED OF SAFEGUARDING POLICY

S. Renwick, the Council's Children's Rights Coordinator, introduced the Panel to this report. The purpose of the report was to outline the reason for the review of the Leicestershire District and Borough Councils Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and to propose adoption of two separate policies: (1) Children's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and (2) Adults in Need of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

The Panel NOTED that:

- (i) the Council adopted the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy on 8th September 2008 as part of a county-wide District Councils development to have one common policy from which all Councils would work. This was in order to ensure that all District Council Safeguarding policies in Leicestershire met the requirements of the Children Act 2004 appropriately. Sharing a common policy means simplification and a sharing of expertise when there is need for review and revision, and a common understanding of implementing best practice across all Districts. The latest revision in March 2010 was approved by the Council's Executive.
- (ii) the development of two new separate policies and set of procedures for children and adults in need of safeguarding was organised through the District Implementation

Group (DIG), for the Leicestershire Children and Young People Plan, which is chaired and hosted by Simon Jones, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Human Resources departments and Officers responsible for Children and Young People's services, as well as those responsible for safeguarding adults, within each District or Borough Council in Leicestershire contributed to the development of the separated policies. Guidance for the policy development was received from the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board and the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- (iii) the rationale behind separating the policies is that more specific legislation is available to children's safeguarding than to adults, and it was felt the combined policy was confusing in trying to combine the two legislative areas. Separate policies now clearly outline the key legislative support to each group.
- (iv) there are some specific categories of abuse that apply to adults in need of safeguarding which do not apply in children's safeguarding. Combining these in one document was felt to be confusing.
- (v) the procedures associated with the policies are distinct in terms of specific considerations of safeguarding practices in relation to the two different groups. It was felt a separate Adults in Need of Safeguarding Procedure was needed.

The Panel RESOLVED to endorse the report, as set out, for onward referral to the Executive.

521 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT PROGRAMME

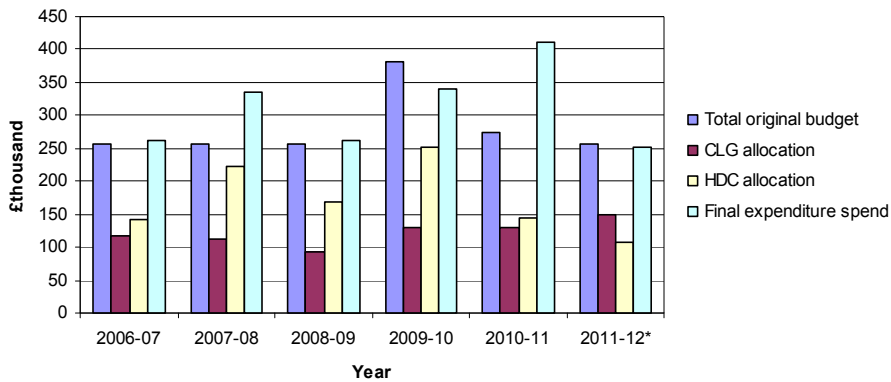
The Panel received an update on the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant Programme. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the level of demand for Disabled Facilities Grants and to advise on how the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme compares to the county-wide Service Standards and to advise on the future of the Home Improvement Agency.

The Panel NOTED that:

- (i) a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is available to residents to carry out essential adaptations to a disabled person's property to enable them to live as independently as possible in their own homes. With the exception of adaptations for children, all Disabled Facilities Grants are subject to a test of financial resources of the applicant. The maximum grant available is £30,000.
- (ii) in 2009-10 the Audit Commission carried out an assessment of the Disabled Facilities Grants process across Leicestershire. Following this assessment, consultants were appointed to undertake a County-wide review of the DFG process with a view to identifying ways to improve the service to customers and to look at value for money. Small task groups were developed to look at common service standards, procurement of equipment and co-ordination of closer working between the District Councils and Leicestershire County Council Social Care and Health Team. The outcome of this work was the development of agreed service standards to reduce the length of time it takes for an applicant to receive the assistance they need. The service standards came into effect for referrals from Social Care and Health received from 1st April 2011 and related to the installation of ramps, bathing facilities and stair-lifts/through floor lifts.
- (iii) the Council's DFG programme is delivered through the Home Improvement Agency – Mears Home Improvement Ltd. The Business Planning process has reduced the Council's core funding to the agency however sufficient funding for 2011-12 was identified to enable the existing contract to be renewed to allow for a more sustainable delivery model to be developed. As part of the discussions between the Agency and the Council it was agreed that the service could continue without the core funding, however this would be dependant on the Agency maintaining its funding through Supporting People. In September 2011 Supporting People announced they would consolidate all of their funding for Home Improvement Agencies into the provision of a single County-wide Agency. It is anticipated that the procurement of the new Agency will be completed by September 2012.

- (iv) the Disabled Facilities Grants are the only mandatory grants available and there is always a very high demand for this service and generally the expenditure is greater than the original budget allocation.
- (v) previously 60% of the budget for DFG's came from specific Communities and Local Government grants with local authorities funding the remaining 40%. From 2008-09 the 60:40 DFG funding split was removed and local authorities had been given a DFG allocation without the requirement to provide the match funding. Historically, to ensure that as many applicants as possible can access the mandatory grant funding, Harborough District Council has always funded DFGs beyond the 40% requirement.
- (vi) The graph below shows a breakdown of the DFG expenditure since 2005 showing a comparison of the total budget. Including a breakdown of how this is made up and the final expenditure on DFGs.

DFG Expenditure 2006 - 2012



- (vi) the core funding from the Council for the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) has been removed. The HIA also receives funding from the Supporting People programme. There are currently three HIAs covering several locations across the County, however during 2011-12, Supporting People announced they would be consolidating their funding to support a single HIA working across the whole of the County. Consequently during 2012-13 the County Council will be undertaking a procurement exercise for this service. Without the funding from Supporting People, Mears Home Improvement Ltd could not provide a service just for Harborough and therefore it is necessary for Harborough District Council to undertake a joint commissioning exercise with the County Council for the continued delivery of the Council's DFG and Private Sector Renewal programme. It is anticipated that the new HIA will come into operation at the end of September 2012.

The Panel RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

The Meeting ended at 7.30p.m.