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## **SOCIETY, ENVIRONMENT, AND COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD**

23 February 2017

- \* Councillor Adrian Chandler (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Pauline Searle (Vice-Chairman)

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Councillor Christian Holliday | * Councillor Tony Phillips |
| Councillor Liz Hooper         | * Councillor David Quelch  |
| * Councillor Jennifer Jordan  | Councillor David Reeve     |
| Councillor Nigel Kearse       | * Councillor James Walsh   |
| * Councillor Dennis Paul      | * Councillor David Wright  |

\*Present

Councillors were also in attendance.

### **S46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christian Holliday, Liz Hooper, Nigel Kearse and David Reeve. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23(j) Councillor Susan Parker attended on behalf of Councillor Reeve.

Councillor Iseult Roche, Lead Councillor for Community, Health and Sport, and Councillor Richard Billington, Lead Councillor for Rural Economy, Countryside, Parks and Leisure were also in attendance. Also present was Councillor Caroline Reeves.

### **S47 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

### **S48 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 January 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **S49 HEALTH AND WELLBEING REVISED STRATEGY**

The Board received a presentation from the Public Health Co-ordinator, setting out an overview of the revised Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Board was asked to give its support for the themes set out in the revised Strategy which would be submitted to the Executive for consideration on 18 April 2017.

Guildford's Health and Wellbeing Board had set its first Strategy in 2015, and the Public Health Co-ordinator explained that the revised Strategy would run from 2017 to 2022. In drafting the revised Strategy, the authors took cognisance of major changes in NHS funding that had led to the introduction of Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs). Although the STPs were part of an NHS-led planning process, the Public Health Co-ordinator stressed that council involvement would be crucial to their success. The revised Strategy also took account of increasing demands on budgets and resources, and the integration of health and social care. The Public Health Co-ordinator highlighted the complexity of health systems in Surrey, and went on to explain emerging issues that were reflected in the revised Strategy. Smoking and Alcohol, which used to be separate priorities, had been combined as part of a Substance Misuse priority, which also included New Psychoactive Substances (legal highs). Mental health was being considered as a theme in its own right as part of the health

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inequalities priority. It was recognised that air pollution was emerging as a concern at a national level, and the revised Strategy merged air quality and road safety into one priority. Within the revised Strategy, actions had been divided into themes to make them clearer, and the Public Health Co-ordinator gave some illustrations of action plans, as well as detailing some examples of previous successes.

The Lead Councillor for Community, Health and Sport thanked the Public Health Co-ordinator and the team for their work on the Strategy.

Councillors queried how much work had been done in terms of planning a shift away from hospital acute services towards community services, particularly as adult social services would play a key part in facilitating this. The Board were reassured that there was commitment at all levels, and a social and political will to make STPs work, and to prevent ill-health through 'self-care' where people would take responsibility for looking after their own health.

In response to queries about the detail of the successes referred to in the presentation, the Public Health Co-ordinator agreed to send the Board further information.

The Board also discussed the issue of social care and recognised that funding social care was a national problem, and that the integration of social care and the NHS was a complex issue. Concern was expressed about the impact on this Council of the ongoing financial issues facing Surrey County Council in terms of funding for adult social care.

The Board discussed the extent of this Council's involvement in community health initiatives. These included aids and adaptations, care and repair, community transport, meals on wheels, day centres, dementia support, the elderly mentally infirm unit, and voluntary sector support. It was acknowledged that these services would use increasing proportions of available resources, and that it was therefore important to build resource and capacity within communities.

The Board recognised the importance of providing support for carers, and of preventing 'carer strain'. The Lead Councillor agreed to report back to the Board on this issue.

Discussion followed around national key health indicators, and specifically around road safety, but the Public Health Co-ordinator explained that, although an analysis had been done, there was no single cause for the worse than average accident figures. Each accident was looked at separately, and it was confirmed that the Council does take preventative measures through engineering improvements and education, for example.

The Board discussed what was being done to contact hard to reach groups who would not normally attend consultation events. The Public Health Co-ordinator had arranged to attend the Voluntary Action South West conference in April to try to broaden the opportunity for feedback on the Strategy. Project Aspire was also a way of reaching into local communities, as were the community wardens. In summary, the Board agreed that, in order to provide good care for communities with very differing needs, a broad and holistic approach was needed.

The Board agreed that its comments, as summarised above, be forwarded to the Executive.

## **S50 COUNTRYSIDE VISION DOCUMENT**

The Board received a presentation from the Countryside Manager, setting out an overview of the proposed 'Countryside Vision' strategy, which aimed to protect, maintain and enhance

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Guildford Borough Council's portfolio of countryside sites for future generations. The Countryside Manager explained the three strands to the vision, which were around management of the countryside estate, partnership working to improve sustainability, and contributing to the overall provision of Surrey's ecosystem services. The Countryside Manager also highlighted some of the issues and challenges and explained how these would be mitigated against. The presentation included details of local partnerships and initiatives, and how they linked into the Council's other strategic plans.

The Parks and Landscape Manager commented that the document brought the Council to the forefront of current regional and national policy and provided a platform to work with external partners. Furthermore, it gave clarity to residents about what the Council was seeking to achieve on its sites.

The Lead Councillor for Rural Economy, Countryside, Parks and Leisure explained that whilst the document did not give individual plans for individual sites, it did provide an overarching policy that could be used to attract external funding. The mental health benefits of access to the countryside had been estimated by the Department of Health to be worth around £2 billion per year nationally, and the Lead Councillor encouraged councillors to attend a presentation on mental health awareness organised by the Public Health Co-ordinator.

Members of the Board welcomed the document, and its attempt to understand the nature and range of the Council's potential obligations to its own countryside estate, but, whilst it provided an analysis of likely demands for work, it was felt that the document would not lend itself to being used as a strategy for delivery in its current form. The Board therefore recommended that priority areas should be identified, and that they should reflect the areas where the greatest impact could be made. It was noted that the report did not fully reflect the extent of work in AONBs, and it was suggested that Paragraph 2 of the document be amended to reference AONBs as comprising 60% of the Council's land area.

In response to questions raised by the Board, the Countryside Manager explained the principles of forest schools, which provided educational settings where young people could have contact with nature. It was reported that there had been tremendous interest in these, with all suitable sites having groups operating to take pupils out on school activities, demonstrating the importance to people of contact with nature. In respect of visitor numbers to the countryside estate, the Countryside Manager advised that on some sites there were counters, and these indicated that visitor numbers were increasing, reflecting a general trend. On other sites, there were different indications of increasing footfall e.g. infrastructure such as unsurfaced footpaths that had become wider.

The Board enquired how issues such as fly-tipping and dog fouling were being dealt with. In response, the Countryside Manager explained that the Council did have a certain amount of success with fly-tips, and there were occasional successes in prosecuting individuals for dog fouling offences, mainly on Merrow Downs. There was a partnership with Natural England, whereby their wardens had been educating people on the heathlands around the impact of dog fouling. The Council was also conscious of commercial dog walking, and was looking at how other landowners were managing charges and controls.

Councillors suggested a number of amendments to the main report, including:

- a change to the title, to clarify that the vision related only to the Council's countryside estate.
- additional reference to the Surrey Hills AONB.

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- On page 7, it was suggested that the strategic priorities should list the environment first, rather than third.
- the reference to the River Wey Catchment Partnership could be extended to include the work of Surrey Wildlife Trust on the AONB.
- the Background section (page 14) could be strengthened to integrate and correlate with the work of other bodies.
- It was noted that there was limited reference to SNCIs or SSSIs, and it was suggested that a map of the SSSIs could be included to highlight areas of responsibility.
- the work of bodies such as the Surrey Wildlife Trust, and volunteer groups, should be reflected in the document.
- it was suggested that references to SANGs should be removed, as they were more pertinent to a development strategy than to an environmental strategy.

In response, the Lead Councillor explained that the document had been drafted with an holistic, high level approach. The headings lined up with those in the corporate plan, and references to SSSIs, SNCIs and SANGs were included on pages 47-49. Furthermore, the Parks and Landscape Manager explained that the Countryside Section in the Council was the delivering body for SANGs, and did not designate them. The Countryside Manager agreed that it would be made clearer to the Executive that the vision was around the Council's own countryside estate.

The Board enquired about the scale of the problem of Japanese Knotweed in Guildford. The Countryside Manager explained that Japanese Knotweed was dealt with robustly when found though there was some reliance on the public to report new instances. The Countryside Manager also explained that DEFRA publish lists of species which pose threats to the environment, and these were covered within the Strategy.

The Board agreed that its comments, as summarised above, be submitted to the Executive when it considers the Document in April.

**S51      PROGRESS WITH ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE EAB**

The report was noted by the Board. The Chairman invited Councillors to submit any comments to him or the Vice-Chairman prior to the next agenda setting meeting.

**S52      EAB WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was noted by the Board.

The meeting finished at 9.00 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman