

**Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and
Community held on 25 November 2015 from
7:00 p.m. to 7:38 p.m.**

Present: Jacqui Landriani (Chairman)
Mandy Thomas-Atkin (Vice Chairman)

Margaret Belsey	Cherry Catharine	Chris King
Liz Bennett	Sandy Ellis	Anthea Lea
Anne Boutrup	Colin Holden	Howard Muddin
Pete Bradbury*	Anne Jones MBE*	Kirsty Page
		Dick Sweatman

* Absent

Also Present (as an appointed substitute): Councillor Phillip Coote.

Also Present: Councillors Moore and Webster.

**18. SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE – COUNCIL PROCEDURE
RULE 4**

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor Phillip Coote had replaced Councillor Pete Bradbury.

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bradbury and Jones.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

21. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 September 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. WORK ENABLEMENT UPDATE

The Committee received an update report on the Work Enablement Projects and the proposed commissioning intentions for 2016/17. Lucie Venables, the Partnerships Manager explained that the report includes an update on the commissioned projects jointly funded with West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) over the past year, as well as current performance to date.

She pointed out that there had been a considerable reduction in those claiming job seekers allowance in Mid Sussex compared to February 2013 and that the landscape has changed with a number of services now available to support people into work.

The report also includes performance for the Work Enablement Project provided by Working Futures Partnership whose aim is to support those furthest from the workplace back to work and includes performance for the Training and Learning

Project provided by Sussex Learning Solutions who support those in low paid roles to enhance their skills.

She informed the Committee that the Financial Capability Project ended in March 2015 and highlighted that, since March, a number of other services are now providing debt advice, including WSCC through the Think Family programme and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Finally the report provides an update on young people NEETs (Not in Education Employment or Training) in Mid Sussex. There has been an increase in the number of NEETs claiming Job Seekers Allowance over the last three years. The Mid Sussex Partnership using a one-off residual fund, commissioned a NEETs mentoring project that started in February this year in response to a recognised need in this area. Members noted the project's performance to date.

She drew Members' attention to the reduction in funds from WSCC for 2016/17 and sought the Committee's views on terminating the Work Enablement and the Training and Learning Projects in March 2016 and using the £20k funding from this Council to extend the commissioned Mid Sussex NEETs Project for 2016/17.

One Member recognised that, although the scheme was valued she questioned whether its viability should be reconsidered. She suggested that the funding could be switched to health and well-being from which more people would benefit.

The Assistant Chief Executive, whilst agreeing that that was a good idea, she explained that there is significant need for the NEETs project, as there no other funds available for this type of initiative. She reminded Members that the Health and Wellbeing funding was ring fenced from WSCC.

One Member referred to the number of young people dropping off the radar. The Partnerships Manager confirmed that the data on NEETs is provided by WSCC. She explained that young people are very transient and that WSCC have devised various ways to improve the compilation of the data on young people who are NEETs .

Another Member welcomed the creation of nine new apprenticeships which had previously been a problem in Mid Sussex.

In response to a question from a member as to whether the Council has any apprentices. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that she would report back to the Committee. She added that the Council has a number of opportunities to provide in-work training and the Council supports staff in achieving qualifications in specialised areas.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Community stated that through its working and development programme the work enablement project is a very useful programme and has worked well and that he is pleased to see that the number of jobless people seeking job seekers allowance is so low. He added that when he was the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development there were not enough suitable candidates to fill the apprenticeships. He also welcomed the initiative to improve the NEETs Project.

As there were no more speakers, the Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Health and Community be requested to end the Work Enablement Project and Training Learning Project at the end of March 2016 and reallocate the £20k to extend the commissioned Mid Sussex NEETs Project for 2016/17.

23. LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT UPDATE

The Committee received an update report on the first twelve months of the Leisure Management Contract.

Mark Fisher, Head of Leisure and Sustainability introduced the report and outlined the performance management arrangements that were in place, highlighting some of the issues that had arisen and been rectified.

He reported that, since the commencement of the contract, detailed monthly contract reports are received from Places for People Leisure (PfPL) and monthly meetings are held to review performance and all other aspects of the contract.

He also reported that Partnership Board meetings are held quarterly and annually and are attended by senior managers from both the Council and PfPL and the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability. These meetings evaluate performance achieved in the previous months and give the opportunity to look ahead to discuss plans and expectations for the forthcoming period. He also spoke of the significant investment by PfPL and improvements to facilities carried out by them.

He explained that difficulties had been experienced at the start of the contract with capturing accurate attendance data across the three Leisure Centres, due to issues with IT changes and difficulties with the swipe card mechanisms that are used to register usage. However, customer complaints had reduced significantly and there had been a 27% increase in memberships across the contract. He added that a number of initiatives and events have been undertaken which have made a significant contribution to the increase.

The Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Landriani, thanked the Head of Leisure and Sustainability for arranging the visits to the leisure centres which had proved to be most helpful and informative.

One Member was a regular user of the facilities and commented that she could visually see the significant improvements to the facilities. She referred to the 'Myzone belt' and pointed out that she would like to see it promoted further. The Head of Leisure and Sustainability confirmed that he would raise the matter with PfPL. Other Members of the Committee congratulated the Cabinet Member and officers for the work involved in ensuring the improvements to the leisure centres. The Head of Leisure and Sustainability confirmed that monitoring arrangements are constantly reviewed.

One Member welcomed the presence of a defibrillator at the Kings Centre, East Grinstead and asked whether they are situated at other leisure centres. The Leisure Partnerships Officer confirmed that defibrillators are present at all three leisure centres and staff are fully trained to use them.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the illustration of attendance levels, the Business Unit Leader for Community Services and Culture explained that

the data is based on overall figures, but it may be possible to break the figures down in the future and he confirmed that he would look into the matter.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability thanked the Committee and former members of the Committee for their tolerance and patience. She also gave her thanks to officers, PfPL and their staff for the new arrangements which were a great success.

As there were no more speakers the Chairman took the Committee to the recommendation which was agreed.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

24. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEISURE AND COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

The Chairman informed Members that several changes would need to be made to the Work Programme. She said that, as some reports would not be available, the January meeting would be postponed until 9 February.

She referred to the item on Finches Field Village Hall and the Solicitor to the Council explained that, as an application for funding was in the pipeline, it was considered prudent to wait until that application had been heard. The item can then come back to a future meeting of this Committee.

As there were no comments, the Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was noted.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Programme, including the postponement of 13 January 2016 meeting to 9 February 2016, be noted.

Chairman