

**Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and
Community held on 9 February 2016 from
7:00 p.m. to 8:00 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 Mundin
Pete Bradbury	Anne Jones MBE*	Kirsty Page*
		Dick Sweatman

* Absent

Also Present (as an appointed substitute): Councillors Edward Belsey & Phillip Coote.

Also Present: Councillors Moore and Webster.

**25. 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 Kirsty Page and Councillor Edward Belsey had replaced Councillor Anne Jones MBE for the duration of the meeting.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Anne Jones MBE & Kirsty Page.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Pete Bradbury and Liz Bennett declared that in relation to Agenda Item 8 – Strategic Review of Waste Management, they were West Sussex County Councillors.

28. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 November 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME 2016 - 2020

The Head of Housing, Environmental Health & Building Control introduced the report which contained the annual progress report and a revised Equality and Diversity Scheme. She advised that the current Scheme had been adopted in 2012 and that a review of the Scheme had to be undertaken every four years. She went on to say that there were no substantial changes to the scheme other than to streamline the objectives.

One Member asked about the Local Global events that the Council has previously organised and for further information on the attendance as they felt the objective of the events was to promote integration within local communities. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control stated that the focus of the

events were to celebrate different cultures and diversity rather than integration but would pass Members' comments onto colleagues who organise the events.

Another Member asked about where refugees were located in the 9 protected characteristics categories. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control remarked that there was no specific category for refugees but that certain individuals might come under Race or Religion/Belief categories. In answer to a follow up question regarding integration of refugees into local communities, she advised that there were no specific support groups for this purpose but advised that the numbers of refugees coming into the District would be small.

The Vice-Chairman commented on the rising numbers of residents with Dementia and long term illnesses. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control acknowledged that this was due to an increasingly ageing population with the trend likely to continue. She advised that members of the Customer Contact Team and other front line staff have received Dementia friendly training in order that they can adapt and respond to the needs of these residents in order to help them.

The Chairman raised a query about accessible public toilets within the current community toilet scheme and adequate parent and child changing facilities. The Business Unit Leader for Waste and Outdoor Services confirmed that the current scheme does include accessible facilities and that work is on-going to update the signpost system to direct people to these facilities.

One Member asked for more detail on support for carers provided by the Wellbeing Hub and the Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control agreed to provide this information after the meeting.

Following a series of questions from Members, the Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control stated that the Council had committed to a one off investment of £25,000 in the West Sussex Credit Union and while it is not under the remit of the Council to help residents with short term loans they can be directed to the Credit Union. She also confirmed that Council staff are able to use this service.

One Member asked whether the figures on sexuality on page 17 were referring to staff or the local community at large. It was noted that these figures were national due to the lack of local data.

Another Member asked for further clarification on the rise of domestic violence incidents as outlined on page 28 of the report. The Chairman noted that these figures also included instances of domestic abuse against men. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control said that it was hard to distinguish to what extent the rise in the figures is due to a higher number of incidents being reported to the police or an escalation of violence as a whole.

One Member asked for clarification on the progress made with the Gypsy & Travellers Site Allocations document. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control confirmed that progress had been slow due to changing Government definitions of Gypsies and Travellers but that work was still going forward.

One Member commented on the low turnout at the Member session of dementia friendly training and requested another session be arranged. Several other Members raised comments about dementia training and it was noted that East Grinstead Town Council had run dementia friendly courses and urged Members to attend.

The Chairman sought clarification on the Gender Pay gap at the Council. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control stated that there was no pay differential between people undertaking the same job and clarified that the pay gap at the Council was due to a large number of part-time and administrative roles being taken by women. She reminded Members that the Council's pay gap was modest compared to the national figures.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Community commented that there had been a useful debate and wished to add his comments. He advised that the Council was in routine communication with a number of agencies with regards to refugees and that they were working to make preparations in anticipation for their arrival into the District.

He continued by saying that the partnership work the Council engages in is important and issues such as Domestic Abuse had been brought to the fore by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

He recognised that there was a potential strain on services with regards to an ageing population and that he had been in conversation with West Sussex County Council to say that more support needed to be provided for families and carers. He also urged Members to attend dementia friendly training as this was a rapidly changing field and it was important that they were able to support affected residents.

As there were no further comments, the Chairman took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Committee agreed to:-

- (1) consider the proposed Equality and Diversity Scheme 2016-20 attached at Appendix 1;
- (2) recommend to Council that the Equality and Diversity Scheme 2016-20 be adopted, subject to any comments or amendments that the Committee might wish to propose; and
- (3) endorse the 2015 Equality and Diversity Progress Report included at Appendix A to the Scheme.

30. INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVERS

The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control introduced the report. She advised that this issue had been considered by the Licensing Committee in December 2015. She said that following Members' concerns and comments raised during the consultation of the new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence policy, officers had agreed to research options to test drivers' spoken English skills.

The proposal outlined in the report was considered to be the most objective and proportional process to establish the communication skills of new drivers as the Versant test would only be used for new drivers who were unable to provide evidence of appropriate formal qualifications. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control informed Members that following a discussion at the Licensing Committee it was noted that existing licence holders could not be made to

take the test retrospectively as they had already been deemed a fit and proper person. In light of this the Licensing Committee had proposed an amendment in that drivers who have been brought in front of the Licensing Sub-Committee and clearly had trouble communicating in spoken English could on a case by case assessment be required to take the test.

One Member asked if the questions used in the Versant test were changed regularly so as to prevent coaching. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control confirmed that the questions were altered.

Another Member queried why drivers could not be tested when they apply for a renewal of their licence. The Business Unit Leader for Environmental Health and Building Control stated that unless the driver had committed a breach during the term of their licence the Council would not be able to ask the driver to perform the test. This position was further clarified by the Solicitor to the Council who stated that the Council would be open to legal challenge if they required drivers, who had been deemed fit and proper to hold a licence, to undertake an additional competence test without good reason.

One Member asked a series of questions on when the Versant test would be carried out, whether the taxi companies had been consulted and whether drivers could be directed to English language courses.

The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control advised that consultation with the taxi companies would be the next stage before being considered by Council in June 2016. She also stated that the test would be carried out at the Council Offices after the written knowledge test and that the applicant had to provide ID. It was noted that there were a wide variety of English tests but that it was felt that the Versant test, as used by Dacorum Borough Council, would be the most reasonable at modest cost and where drivers failed the test officers would provide advice about English as a second language courses they could complete.

In response to a concern raised about limousines and safeguarding of young adults, the Business Unit Leader for Environmental Health and Building Control acknowledged that it was an area of concern as the current legislation does not cover such vehicles so the Council had no jurisdiction. She advised that the Council was running a series of Safeguarding Workshops with all licensed drivers and that there were companies who hired out these specialised vehicles which undertook the proper DBS and safeguarding checks on their drivers. One Member asked if a press release could be sent out nearer to the prom season to ask residents to check the credentials of the companies they hire vehicles from. The Chairman advised that these comments had been taken on board.

Another Member said that after researching other authorities who employ the Versant test asked if it should be renamed to a Communication Skills Assessment. The Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control said that this can be altered.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Community drew Members' attention to paragraph 12 of the report which highlighted the emphasis on enforcement and to prevent fraud and therefore felt it was appropriate that it remain classified as a test.

As there were no further comments, the Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorses the proposed English language requirements set out in this report as a condition of licence for future applications for licences to drive Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles.

31. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Head of Leisure and Sustainability introduced the report and advised that it would be the first in a series that would be brought for the Committee to consider. He explained that Mid Sussex is part of a joint West Sussex Waste Partnership Strategy. He provided Members with an update on the Joint Waste Materials Resource Management Strategy 2005 - 2035 and that a number of projects including TEEP assessments and Waste Composition Analysis had been undertaken to prepare for the review. He explained that the governance arrangements for the Waste Partnership had been reviewed and that a summary of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and new payment mechanism was detailed in Appendix A and requested that Members agreed to the principles.

The Chairman noted that there was a small typographical error on the MoU which would be corrected by the officers.

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and the previous training session and drew Members' attention to Recommendation B which called for a Member Working Group to develop further options for the waste service moving forward. She outlined that the commitment required from Members would be 3 – 4 meetings over June and July 2016 and would be open to all Members. She confirmed that the times of the meetings would be arranged to suit the confirmed membership which would be agreed following the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability advised that officers worked hard with colleagues at West Sussex County Council and were respected and that the MoUs work as each district and borough can work together rather than be dictated to by West Sussex County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority.

The Business Unit Leader advised that he had noted the key points raised by Members in the earlier discussion at the training session and that a joint consultation would be taken on issues such as frequency of bin collection, size of bins and public engagement.

As there were no further comments, the Chairman took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Committee agreed to:-

- (1) The principles within the revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (schedule 6) and delegation of annually amended figures to the Head of Leisure & Sustainability and the Head of Finance;
- (2) Establish a Members working group to assist with the development of options in the waste and recycling service to take forward to Committee; and

(3) Identify any specific questions within the waste and recycling collection service that Members would wish to have included within a public engagement process.

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

The Chairman advised Members that there was one meeting left of the Committee for 2015/16 and the item on Ansty Village Hall may have to be postponed.

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

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the Committee's Work Programme as set out in the report.

Chairman