

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

25TH FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT:- Councillors June Ashworth (Chairman), Caroline Jackson (Vice-Chairman), Roger Dennison, Tony Johnson, Roger Mace, Ian Pattison, Margaret Pattison (substitute for Pam Pickles) and David Whitaker

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillor Pam Pickles

Also in Attendance

Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox
Helen McConville - Commissioning Manager, Lancashire North CCG

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Davies	Chief Officer (Environment)
Debbie Chambers	Democratic Services Manager
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer

52 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January, 2015 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Caroline Jackson declared an interest in respect of Minute 56 as she was a Director of More Renewables.

54 DETECTION OF ATRIAL FIBRILLATION AS PART OF A WIDER STRATEGY FOR STROKE PREVENTION

The Chairman welcomed Helen McConville, Commissioning Manager, Lancashire North CCG to the meeting.

Members were reminded that the Committee had requested at the last meeting that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) provide details of how it was detecting Atrial Fibrillation to prevent the onset of strokes.

It was reported that detection of Atrial Fibrillation was not undertaken as much as it should be in local GP practices. The CCG was working within a Strategic Clinical Network which was set to encourage the detection of Atrial Fibrillation more widely in the district.

Once Atrial Fibrillation was detected, an anti-coagulant could be prescribed to prevent a Stroke occurring.

The Committee asked questions regarding coping with an increase in the number of people being diagnosed with Atrial Fibrillation, training for staff in care homes and for carers going into people's homes, the rehabilitation process and prevention of strokes.

Resolved :-

That Helen McConville be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

55 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

During consideration of the following item of business (Minute 56) it became necessary to refer to the exempt information within the appendices to the report and it was therefore moved by Councillor Roger Dennison and seconded by Councillor David Whitaker :-

"That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act."

Members then voted as follows:-

Resolved unanimously:

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

56 ENERGY STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Officer (Environment) to the meeting.

The Chief Officer (Environment) presented a report on the Energy Strategy that was being produced for the City Council.

It was reported that Cabinet had approved the Energy Strategy/Action Plan as a working document and further detailed appraisal of the project which would be reported back to Cabinet.

Further work was to be undertaken on the development of a solar farm on the former Shell site in Middleton using the Invest to Save Reserve that had been set up for this purpose. Members were advised that other schemes that were being investigated for longer term development were Biomass boilers and Biomass Supply chains. The solar farm was seen as the obvious way forward initially as the feasibility study had demonstrated it was the most advantageous for the City Council in terms of returns and minimal environmental impact.

Members asked a number of questions relating to the risk to the City Council of installing the solar farm, the lifespan of the solar panels and possible biomass partners.

It was agreed :

- (1) That Committee receive a report on the further detailed appraisal of the project.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change be requested to provide this report prior to Cabinet's final decision.

Resolved :

That the actions above be approved.

The Press and Public were readmitted to the meeting.

57 UPDATE ON EMPTY PROPERTIES

The Chairman welcomed David Lawson, Regeneration Manager to the meeting.

Members were given a presentation on the City Council's Empty Properties Strategy 2013-15 and the current situation in the district.

It was reported that a long term empty home was defined as being empty for six months or more often for reasons such as abandonment, repossession, bankruptcy, inheritance, family disputes or relationship breakdown, probate, owner is overseas, and the property being kept as a financial investment.

Since July 2013, 422 owners have been contacted by letter with 401 responding or taken further action, leaving only 21 owners who had not responded and were being pursued. Currently there were 250 live cases that were being dealt with by the City Council. The Empty Homes Officer had brought back 122 properties into use through a range of interventions and also a comprehensive monitoring system had been set up.

The Committee was informed that two major projects underway were Chatsworth Gardens in partnership with Place First and also a partnership with Methodist Action North West (MANW).

Chatsworth Gardens would see 46 dwellings being remodelled to create 92 properties and brought back into use funded by Cluster of Empty Homes monies and these would be leased at market rents by a registered provider.

Members were advised that the MANW would work with the City Council to identify suitable empty properties and bring them back to use with government grants that were available. Once work was completed, a long lease would be entered into between MANW and the owner.

It was reported that Government funding had now ended and Cabinet had approved a £200K dedicated fund available to spend on empty homes for the next two years subject to approval at Budget Council.

A number of questions were asked by Members of the Committee relating to provision for vulnerable people, premiums for properties and how other local authorities dealt with empty properties.

It was noted that the Strategy would be refreshed in the Summer.

Members discussed the possibility of the creation of a Task Group to assist in the update of the Strategy which was planned for the new municipal year.

It was agreed :

- (1) That Committee receive a report on the draft Empty Properties Strategy for 2015-17.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Economic Regeneration be requested to provide this report prior to Cabinet's final decision.
- (3) That details of the targets set for bringing back empty properties into use be circulated along with Council Tax figures for arrears on empty properties.

Resolved :-

That the action set out above be approved.

58 CONSIDERATION OF ANY REQUESTS FOR COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action process.

59 CONSIDERATION OF ANY PETITIONS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in the accordance with the Consideration of Petitions process.

60 LOCALITY WORKING

Councillor Whitaker advised that the Three Tier Forum had not met recently.

61 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Democratic Support Officer presented the Committee's Work Programme. Members were reminded that with regard to the Public Health Statistics, a meeting had taken place with representatives from Public Health and the CCG to discuss the statistics for the district, particularly for self-harm and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It was suggested that the public health figures could be considered in the work the Committee was going to undertake later in the year on the Marmot Review.

It was agreed that it would be useful for the Committee to have the Action Plan circulated that was being considered by the Health and Well Being Partnership in March. This would tie in to the work the Committee was planning to undertake on the Marmot Review later in the year and avoid duplication.

With regard to the earlier agenda item on Detection of Atrial Fibrillation as part of a Wider Strategy for Stroke Prevention, (Minute 54 refers), Members felt that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) should promote Atrial Fibrillation and agreed to request the CCG to undertake this.

Resolved :

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Action Plan being considered by the Health and Well Being Partnership in March 2015 be circulated to the Committee.
- (3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee request the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to promote the simple pulse check to detect Atrial Fibrillation to local GP practices within the district.
- (4) That the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) be requested to encourage nurses to undertake pulse checks to detect Atrial Fibrillation in the surgeries and whilst on home visits.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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