

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 16 April 2014

Time: 18.00 hrs.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: S Walker (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair),
L Harrington, J Mead and G Snell.

Also present: HCC Director J Mcmanus and Cllr S Batson,
Portfolio Holder for Community, Health and Older People

Start/End Time: Start Time: 18.00 hrs.
End Time: 19.25 hrs.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Bell, P Stuart and Youth Mayor A Mboho.

There were no declarations of interests.

2. MINUTES – 18 MARCH 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. HEALTH DISCUSSION ITEM

The Committee received a presentation on the Health Challenges in Hertfordshire and in particular the issues facing Stevenage from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Director of Public Health, Jim McManus.

Jim McManus advised Members that the 32 “Health Profile Indicators” published annually by Public Health England provides a snapshot of the key health and wellbeing challenges facing Stevenage and other districts. He noted that of particular concern was that on most of the indicators, Stevenage and two other districts within the County were well below the County averages and in some instances were well below the National average, for example figures for the number of students achieving 5 GCSE A to C grades including English and Mathematics was of particular concern as was the number of long term unemployed, adults smoking, obese adults and acute sexually transmitted infections.

The HCC Director identified deprivation and education as major factors in relation to the various health issues within Stevenage. In terms of addressing these factors Jim McManus suggested that districts are best placed to identify their own priorities and strategies for dealing with these issues as each district knows its own community. He assured Members that responsibility for supporting public health remained the County Council's role. However, districts will set their own priorities and County's involvement will be to support the initiatives or programmes initiated by Stevenage. In practical terms HCC will provide a sum of £200,000 over a period of two years to support health priorities agreed locally in Stevenage.

In response to a question about changing people's lifestyles, the HCC Director acknowledged that any initiative would take time and that it would have to be sustained over a long period. Such an initiative needed to be measured over a period to assess its effectiveness and target vulnerable groups, for example, those who are at risk of heart attack, and identify programmes to address this issue. He also agreed that programmes introduced should be made both accessible and affordable over a long period.

Members agreed that most of the unhealthy life style that existed today was as a result of economic and cultural factors and any attempt to address it would require further promotion of some of the initiatives that were already in place, i.e. GP referrals for gym users for weight loss and heart attack prevention. Also other programmes such as cooking classes for parents, alternative forms of exercise, such as dance classes for people who may not feel comfortable joining a gym should be considered.

The HCC Director suggested the promotion of local 'Champions' who could be identified as being a catalyst for change, known in their community and able to encourage their peers to take up forms of healthy living relevant to their particular area and needs. County would identify any individuals who were identified to be able to take on this role and the funding for this would be in addition to the funds allocated to each district to support Public Health. District Councils have a role to play in terms of offering signposting and offering health checks. Targeted social marketing would also be worth looking at. Jim suggested that a good use of some of the extra funding provided by County to support Public Health would be to bring in some expertise to make sure that the correct strategies are in place to address local needs.

Portfolio Holder for Community, Health and Older People, Councillor S Batson CC highlighted the various initiatives in place that were being undertaken through the SoStevenage Health and Wellbeing Partnerships to address lifestyle changes and healthy living. These initiatives could be publicised at events such as Stevenage Day. Councillor Batson also welcomed the suggestion that districts were best placed to set their own priorities regarding public health and most importantly the additional funding and training that will be provided, which would not be a panacea to address all of the local public health issues but would certainly be put to good use in setting priorities and facilitating ways in which the community can help its self. Councillor Batson informed the Committee that Stevenage's health priorities were 1. Reduce harm from tobacco 2. Increase physical activity and promote healthy weight and 3. Improve mental health and emotional wellbeing. The Council and its local partners would be working closely with Jim McManus to deliver

strategies and programmes towards these priorities.

The Strategic Director (Community) Matt Partridge welcomed the offer of 13 Days free consultancy that the HCC Director had alluded to in his presentation and the suggestion of a Strategy Workshop. Matt also promoted the work of CLOA (Chief Culture & Leisure Officers Association) regarding the role of Leisure in improving Health and Wellbeing. Leisure Services are increasingly being seen as a Health Service and a tool for improving local health and wellbeing.

The Chair thanked both Jim McManus, the HCC Director of Public Health and SBC's Portfolio Holder for Community, Health and Older People, Councillor S Batson for their contribution to the debate.

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required

PART II

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None

Chair