

Item 9b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
18 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor J.E. Higgin (Chairman) and

Councillors B.F. Avery J.P, Mrs. J. Croft, M.A. Dalton, Mrs. E.M. Paylor,
J.K. Piggott, T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P

Tenant Representative

A. McGregor

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray,
D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington, G. Morgan, K. Noble, A. Smith and
Mrs. I. Jackson Smith

Apologies: Councillors J. Burton, Mrs. L. Hovvels, G.M.R. Howe and G.W. Scott

OSC(2).23/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no declarations of interest to declare.

OSC(2).24/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

OSC(2).25/04 SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

N. Porter, Chief Executive of the Sedgefield Primary Care Trust attended the meeting to give a presentation regarding the out-of-hours service and the Annual Report.

It was explained that the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2003/04 provided an overall picture of health for the population including vulnerable groups, gave a snapshot of health-related issues in each of the five localities and acted as a stimulus to local action.

The Annual Report was organised around the four key pillars of the PCT, which were as follows: -

- Get closer to the public
- Improve health services
- Bring services together
- Improve the health of local people

Discussion took place in relation to the following topics: -

Factors influencing health

Members were informed that education, employment and housing all had an effect on health. It was noted that 38.4% of pupils in Sedgefield Borough gained five or more A-C's at GCSE level compared with 5.1% for England.

Unemployment benefit was claimed by 2.8% of the working population in Sedgefield compared with 2.5% in England.

Lifestyle Issues

It was reported that 9% of the population in Sedgefield Borough did not exercise, 20% of the population smoked with 34% of these thinking about trying to give up and 16% of the population ate five or more portions of fruit and vegetables every day. It was also pointed out that 28% of men drank excessively.

Health Protection

It was noted that immunisation and vaccination rates were above the national rate.

Big Killers

Members were informed that Sedgefield Borough was above the national average for deaths caused by heart disease and cancer. It was noted that 7.9% of the population reported pain or disability from heart disease and that standard hospitalisation for heart attacks was over twice the national rate.

In relation to cancer, it was noted that locally the overall standardised mortality rate was 114 although for lung cancer it was 146. The national average was 100.

Chronic Disease

It was noted that the percentage of the population reporting pain and disability were as follows: -

- Arthritis 25.9%
- Asthma 11.2%
- Depression and Anxiety 9.2%
- Stroke 2.4%
- Heart Disease 7.9%

Specific reference was made to a number of listening events, which the PCT had held throughout the Borough. These events had been successful with a number of people attending. It was hoped that through community engagement, the public would be encouraged to make simple changes to their lifestyle.

With regard to improving services, the Committee was informed that waiting lists for patients requiring hospital treatment had reduced and that no one should now wait more than 48 hours for access to a GP. It was also pointed out that Pharmacists could offer advice and issue

appropriate medication for certain illnesses.

Reference was made to the integrated teams based in Trimdon Village. It was anticipated that by the end of 2005 there would be five integrated teams based throughout the Borough.

With regard to financial performance it was noted that in 2004 the PCT had a budget under spend of 2%.

Members expressed concern in relation to reduced waiting times for those patients opting for private health care. It was explained that Consultants who signed the Consultant Contract could only work with a limited amount of private patients. It was also anticipated that as NHS waiting times reduced the amount of patients opting for private health care would also reduce.

With regard to out-of-hours services, it was reported that the implementation of the GP Contract had given GP's the opportunity to opt out of providing out-of-hours services. All out of hours services would be provided at the Urgent Care Centre at Bishop Auckland Hospital. The PCT had taken full responsibility for out-of-hours services on 1st December, 2004.

Members referred to a letter, which had been distributed to members of the public detailing the services that would be provided by the Urgent Care Centre. Some Members expressed concern that the letter did not publicise that, where necessary, the Urgent Care Centre would provide patients with transport to the Hospital.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Doctors Surgery in Sedgefield would continue to open on a Saturday morning in order to assess if there was a high demand for the service.

Discussion took place regarding the positive health benefits that swimming provided and who should be responsible for the maintenance of these facilities.

AGREED: That the information be received

OSC(2).26/04 DEVELOPMENT OF OUTDOOR PLAY STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a Briefing Note regarding the development of an Outdoor Play Strategy (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that an announcement was made in December, 2002 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Department for Education and Skills/New Opportunities Fund that funding of approximately £200m nationally for improvements of Outdoor Play facilities would become available in 2003/04. Access to this funding would only be available to individual Districts developing a Play Strategy. The funding, however, had still not been allocated.

The Youth Development Officer had initially led the development of an

Outdoor Play Strategy within Sedgefield Borough. A report was submitted to Cabinet in July, 2003 and identified the scope and timescales for the Strategy. It was intended that the Council would adopt the final document in March, 2004. This timescale had not been delivered. The scope had been agreed, however, and was identified in the report. An Action Plan was yet to be fully developed.

It was reported that the Council had received a further recommendation from the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) suggesting Best Practice with regard to the time spent on the inspection and maintenance regime that had been adopted. The NPFA had recommended that more time should be spent on the inspection of play sites. It was explained that a meeting had been held with partner Town and Parish Councils to discuss the funding of increased inspection regimes and it had been agreed that January, 2005 would see an increased contribution towards the cost from those partners who wished to continue in the scheme.

The Group was informed that running parallel with the Outdoor Play Strategy was the development of an Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA). It was felt that this document would assess all of the omissions mentioned in the Outdoor Play Strategy without duplicating in particular the consultation aspect of both projects. It was recognised that the OSNA would take up to 18 months to complete and it was anticipated that the appointment of consultants would not take place until April, 2005. Conclusions from the OSNA would therefore be unavailable for approximately two years.

It was reported that there were 60 play sites within the Borough, 45 of which were owned by Town and Parish Councils. Discussion with Town and Parish Councils had identified a need to replace/increase existing play areas. It was pointed out that all play areas could not be replaced immediately and therefore a three-year programme was required based on the Audit of Fixed Play document 2004.

Members were informed that the Leisure Services Department had put a bid in to Regeneration for capital funding.

It was proposed that the Year 1 investment areas would include:

- Agnew
- Eldon
- Chilton
- Shildon
- Spennymoor (Tudhoe)

It was explained that this list was not exhaustive and provision could be made in Year 1 for investment in a further ten sites which would be identified in the near future. It was pointed out that Sedgefield was not identified as a priority area as a play area would be erected through the Winterton Park development.

Members were informed that there was a requirement for Sedgefield Borough Council to commission further studies to feed into the Outdoor Play Strategy regarding play for under 5s, 6 to 14 year olds and 15 years and above. It was explained that these studies were specialist in nature and required expertise, which was not available to the Council.

It was emphasised that the Outdoor Play Strategy required further work. The final Outdoor Play Strategy would be an overarching document with aspects of other plans and strategies feeding into it.

Members expressed concern in relation to the repaired/renewed play sites becoming vandalised and it was questioned what action the Council could take to prevent this. It was explained that best practice would be identified through the work of the Consultants.

AGREED: That the information be received

OSC(2).27/04 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committee's work programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were updated on the progress of the ongoing reviews.

With regard to the Value of Tourism Review Group, Members were informed that a further two meetings had been arranged. It was hoped a representative from Durham County Council would attend a meeting to present the Tourism Strategy covering County Durham.

With regard to the review of Cultural Facilities within the Borough, it was reported that this Review Group was to meet on 19th January, 2005.

Discussion took place in relation to the development of a Regional Gymnastics Centre attached to Spennymoor Leisure Centre. It was pointed out that the start date for the construction of the Gymnastics Centre would be delayed by approximately 3-4 months as a major electrical cable running through the site had to be diverted. The delay would result in additional contract costs of £99,750. It was suggested that the Director of Leisure Services be invited to attend a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 to answer Members questions relating to this matter.

RECOMMENDED : That the Committee's Work Programme as outlined in the report be agreed.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss L. Moore, Spennymoor 816166, ext 4240

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