

Uttlesford Locality Board: Minutes

Uttlesford District Council, 13 June 2016

Attendees: Cllr Susan Barker (UDC/ECC), Cllr Ray Gooding (ECC), Dawn French (UDC), Cllr Howard Rolfe (UDC) -Chair, Cllr Julie Redfern (UDC), Cllr Lesley Wells (UDC), Maggie Cox (UDC), Peter Fairley (ECC) and Adrian Webb (UDC).

Apologies: Cllr Simon Walsh (ECC) and Cllr John Lodge (ECC/UDC)

- 1. Welcome and introductions** Cllr Rolfe welcomed all present.
- 2. Minutes of previous meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2016 were agreed.
- 3. Education White Paper and Schools** Cllr Gooding gave a presentation on the Educational Excellence Everywhere White Paper that set out the Government's plans for the next 5 years. It was noted that as a result of disquiet amongst local authorities it was no longer compulsory for schools to convert to academy status, but this still appeared to be the ultimate aim. However this was a very complex process and there were still significant flaws to be resolved.

The main aim of the White Paper was welcomed, to increase standards and to be as effective as possible. Essex was already performing well against national standards. It had benefited from the Essex School Improvement Strategy and would continue to work to get ECC above the national average.

Members made the following comments:

The National Funding Formula was likely to adversely affect a significant number of schools.

There was concern about the removal of the requirement for School Governors.

The speed of the removal of grants was worrying, as was the possible gap between academy and funded schools.

More information was required on the role of the Regional Commissioners and how they could acquire local knowledge.

Following the recent high court ruling, the situation with truancy penalty notices was unclear and national guidance was required. The Isle of White Council had agreed to fund the next stage appeal and was lobbying other authorities for support.

Councillor Redfern said that Uttlesford secondary schools applied different admission criteria which had led to children from the same family attending different schools and children being bussed past their nearest school.

Cllr Gooding explained the recent Government initiative – Progress 8,

which was looking at performance of children in school in a different way – taking the progress of a child from when they arrive to when they leave.

Cllr Rolfe said the two authorities could work together for the district in the following ways.

- Provide support for staff retention
- Ensure sufficient school places are provided and develop a protocol to demonstrate how the planning authority works with education
- Lobby MP over White Paper

Cllr Gooding said there had been a recent presentation to ECC members on 'what education is doing in your area'. It was agreed to circulate the relevant slides to Uttlesford members.

4. Potholes and customer reporting

Peter Fairley gave a short presentation on reporting highway issues. He explained the most effective way to report problems and how ECC dealt with these in terms of prioritising and the expected response times. He explained the categories of roads and the frequency of inspections and details about the treatment of defects. *(See slide pack for further details)*

Members were informed that ECC Highway Maintenance and Implementation Board would be running a session about highway maintenance issues. Councillor Ranger would be attending on behalf of UDC, and if it was deemed helpful a further session could be arranged in Uttlesford when parish councillors could also be invited.

Members discussed problems with reporting potholes. When an issue was reported through the website it was difficult to follow the tracking number to find out whether action had been taken or ascertain the timetable for the repair. Peter Fairley said that ECC was aware of these problems.

Cllr Rolfe said the reporting had gone from a personalised service to an anonymous one and it was not efficient to use. He understood that it wasn't possible to fill every pothole but the process needed to be transparent. Cllr Barker said ECC had completed hundreds of good repairs and this should be communicated to the wider public. It was difficult for the public when certain areas of the district were targeted first. Cllr Wells added that it would be helpful for parish council's and the public to understand about defects, when they could be filled and the purpose of the markings on the road. It was agreed that it was important to match ECC efforts with public perception.

5. Queens speech

Peter Fairly (ECC) gave a presentation on the Queen speech and highlighted areas that had an impact on UDC/ECC. The Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Bill proposed reforms to the planning system to give local communities more power and control to shape their own area. The Local Growth and Jobs Bill would give local authorities

control of money raised through business rates, although the details and implications for Uttlesford were still awaited. The Digital Economy Bill would put in place a legal right to a broadband connection and the Bus Service Bill gave local authorities power to govern local bus services and work in partnership with local authorities. This could have an impact in rural areas.

6. Sports agenda

Ray Gooding (ECC) gave a presentation from Public Health England on the Clinical Champions Network guidelines for physical activity in the UK. The study had looked at levels of physical activity in the UK comparing these with other countries and by age group. It highlighted the importance of physical activity in the prevention of disease. It was noted that in comparison with other countries England was quite inactive and also the over 65 age group had the greatest fall off rate for undertaking physical exercise.

Members discussed how UDC/ECC could work together in this area. It would first need to look at the current provision, and work together with local partners to avoid overlap. There was likely to be grant funding available once there was a preferred strategy. Members thought it should target specific age groups and project such as the fit trail but there would need to be a network of community champions to encourage neighbours and friends to participate. The councils should ensure that their local plan provided sufficient sport facilities.

7. Feedback from key meetings

Cllr Rolfe said that both the Essex Partnership Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board had appointed new chairmen and were looking at the role and purpose of their respective groups.

At the recent meeting of Essex Leaders and Chief Execs there had been a presentation on the Essex Housing Board. It was proposing a number of initiatives but a key part was working in partnership around the provision of infrastructure. It was agreed to invite Cllr John Spence (ECC) to present this to the next meeting.

8. Agenda for next meeting

Cllr Rolfe suggested the theme of the next meeting should be how the two authorities can work better together. Possible items to include:

- Essex Housing Board
- An update on Schools
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Health and Wellbeing
- Highways

The next meeting to be held in October 2016 at the UDC offices – date TBC.