

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Committee
9 February 2021
(11:00-12:35)

Meeting held by video conference call

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman
Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary
Bev Markham, Community Support Officer
Carole Howard, Office Administrator

Carol Dennis, Jenny Gregory, Di Old and Val Perry, Members

1 Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed all participants to the video conference.

An apology was received for the absence of Dawn Ladbrook.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 12 January 2021

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them in due course.

4 Finance report

The report for January was presented.

The average monthly expenditure this month for the year to date had been £9,281, still below the five-yearly average but continuing to rise. Actual spending in January had been £9,725, in line with previous monthly average expenditure. A total of £858 had been spent in the year to date in dealing with the consequences of Covid-19.

There were no other matters to which attention needed to be drawn.

5 Engagement projects

The Committee received the draft Monitoring Report for Quarter 4 of 2020/21. This document was one of several provided to the Council as part of their continuing monitoring of compliance with the Healthwatch contract. The Chairman explained that it had been decided in future to present the draft at each meeting of the Committee as a convenient means of keeping members updated on progress.

Oral updates were given on the following projects:

- **NEL survey of effect of Covid on disabled people** – the survey would be launched shortly. At a meeting with Healthwatch colleagues from the other NEL Healthwatches, the Chairman had indicated that Havering did not wish to offer people incentives for participating in the survey and preferred to use an Easy Read format for everyone. The survey would be hosted by Healthwatch Tower Hamlets, who would share borough-specific data with the individual Healthwatches.

The data for Havering would also be used to support a discussion with Havering's Individuals Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

- **LAS: development of ambulance hub in Havering** – the Committee noted that the LAS was working on a project that would replace some 68 ambulance stations across London with 18 hubs, at which vehicles and crews would be based. It had recently been learned that the first such hub would be in the Havering area, replacing the Romford and Hornchurch stations. The precise location of the hub had yet to be announced but it was expected to be operational by the end of 2021 if all went well.

The LAS would be asking Healthwatch to assist with publicising the new facility in due course.

- **Dentistry: HW England report** – Healthwatch England had recently published a report following concerns raised by Healthwatches across the country about the provision of dentistry by the NHS. The report broadly came to the same conclusions as had the Havering report published in November, that dentistry services were in need of significant improvement.

The Committee agreed that a further survey of dentistry in Havering be undertaken once the NEL survey had been completed.

- **Safeguarding** – the Chairman reported that safeguarding was a growing problem nationally, with domestic violence in particular increasing. The Borough Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) had asked Healthwatch to take a greater role in strategic safeguarding issues, and the Chairman and Director were now members of the main Board while the Community Support Officer and Ms Ladbrook were members of two sub-groups.

The Community Support Officer advised that training was available on domestic abuse and the Committee agreed that it should be offered to any member wishing to take it. She also suggested that training should be offered on diversity and equality.

- **Patient participation** – it was suggested that a future engagement project could explore the support given by GP practices to their Patient Participation Groups, given recent evidence that some practices made little use of the PPGs with some staff being unaware of their existence.

6 Improving the reach of Healthwatch Havering

The latest version of the new website was demonstrated to the Committee. Recent discussion with Healthwatch England suggested that the website might be able to go live in April.

It was noted that Twitter, which had suspended the company's account for no apparent reason, had recently reinstated it, again without further explanation. At the moment, only occasional use was being made of the platform but greater use of it would be made once the new website went live. Among the advantages of the website was a facility that would enable Tweets to be sent about items published on it from it.

7 Other business

- **Awayday** – it was agreed that the possibility of arranging an Awayday in April should be explored.
- **Covid vaccinations** – it was noted that, although the question of a "Covid vaccination passport" had previously been dismissed, ministers were now looking at the possibility in conjunction with other governments.

8 Next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 9 March 2021.

Chairman