



People and Communities Select Committee Minutes of the Meeting Held on 31 May 2019 at 10am in the Council Chamber, County Hall

Present:

Cllr Shelagh Gurney (Chairman)
Cllr Fabian Eagle (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Tim Adams	Cllr Chrissie Rumsby
Cllr David Bills	Cllr Thomas Smith
Cllr Penny Carpenter	Cllr Mike Smith-Clare
Cllr Ed Connolly	Cllr Fran Whymark
Cllr David Harrison	Cllr Sheila Young
Cllr Brenda Jones	

Officers Present:

Helen Edwards	Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer), Norfolk County Council
Sara Tough	Executive Director Children's Services, Norfolk County Council
James Bullion	Executive Director, Adult Social Services, Norfolk County Council
Sarah Jones	Assistant Director, Early Help and Prevention, Norfolk County Council
Suzanne Meredith	Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services), Norfolk County Council
Janice Dane	Assistant Director, Early Help and Prevention (Adult Social Services), Norfolk County Council
Debbie Bartlett	Assistant Director, Strategy & Transformation, Norfolk County Council
James Wilson	Business Design and Change Lead, Children's Services, Norfolk County Council
Louise Smith	Director of Public Health, Norfolk County Council

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 There were no apologies.
- 1.2 The chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the first meeting of the committee.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 Cllr Whymark declared a non-pecuniary interest as a foster carer

3. Items received as urgent business

- 3.1 There were no items of urgent business.

4. Public Questions

- 4.1 One public question was received and the answer circulated

5. Member Questions

- 5.1 Two Member questions were received and the answers circulated
- 5.2 Cllr Smith-Clare asked a supplementary question: Cllr Smith-Clare reported that with school budgets at breaking point, at Great Yarmouth North Deans High School, staffing and resources were being used to support food banks; he asked how many schools were supporting food banks as part of the school-based curriculum. The Executive Director of Adult Social Care agreed to provide a written response.

6. Terms of Reference and Working Arrangements

- 6.1 The Committee considered the report outlining sections of the Constitution relevant to the working of the People and Communities Select Committee and other Select Committees and Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.2 The following points were discussed and noted
- A discussion was held about setting up a process to call witnesses to Meetings from outside the Council to inform policy development, such as members of the public and representatives from charities, providers and businesses; the Monitoring Officer confirmed that calling witnesses was the right of the Committee and no process needed to be agreed in order to do so, however, witnesses could not be compelled to attend
 - The level of support provided to select Committees was queried; the Monitoring Officer confirmed that scrutiny would be supported in the same way as the executive; Democratic Services would provide support for the function of meetings and Departmental Officers would provide support related to reports
 - The Chairman welcomed the opportunity to continue with the ethos of engaging with user groups and fully supported the opportunity to invite people with expertise and knowledge to meetings
- 6.3 The Committee **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the terms of reference set out in this report, and the Constitution as attached at Appendix A of the report.

7. Prevention Strategy for Adults, Children and Public Health

- 7.1.1 The Committee received and discussed the report setting out the Joint Prevention Strategy which aimed to support the Council's ambitions and building on the council's core vision, priorities and principles
- 7.1.2 The committee heard a presentation by the Head of Public Health (see appendix A):
- The strategy focussed on building a culture of self-care and resilience
 - A further report would be brought to Committee in November 2019
 - A white paper, "prevention is better than cure", had been published at the end of 2018 promoting the prevention approach which had been shown to be cheaper, more cost effective and to give a better return on investment
 - The largest population increase in Norfolk was forecast to be in over 75s

7.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- The approach to targeted prevention was welcomed, and Officers were asked how barriers to health in some communities, such as housing, poverty, emissions, access to healthy eating and hunger, would be overcome. The Director of Public Health acknowledged there was not a simple solution to such barriers but working with communities and district councils were important alongside introducing schemes such as social prescribing. Engagement with GPs was an important step to access a wide proportion of the population
- Cllr Carpenter, Member Champion for Social Mobility, hoped to be involved with the work mentioned in the report; she spoke about how local businesses played an important role in helping to overcome intergenerational issues
- The difficulty in making healthy food choices during the holidays for children and families who relied on breakfast clubs and school lunches was discussed; the Director of Public Health recognised this as an issue for some families; lunch clubs were run in the School Holidays in some libraries
- The reduction in minimum income guarantee was raised as an impacting factor for people with disabilities to live a free and independent life; the Executive Director of Adult Social Care recognised that the change in way of working in adult social care towards early intervention and charging for means tested social services represented a change for some people
- A Member queried what changes would be seen “on the ground” and **requested** that in the future prevention strategy report, progress on delivery of outcomes was shown in a measurable way
- The model of co-location of night nurses and Swifts in West Norfolk was raised as an example of best practice; the Executive Director of Adult Social Care reported that Swifts and Night Owls were a core part of the investment of Adult Social Care by the NHS and co-location was an important part of the model
- The Executive Director of Children’s Services responded to a Member query that Departments worked together to ensure funds were used effectively on joint arrangements
- Signs of safety had been an important part of practice change in early intervention with training delivered across the Council, Schools and police, and due to be delivered more widely. Signs of Wellbeing was also being looked into.
- Officers were asked for an update on “Transformation of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)”; there was a proposal to open up to 4 special schools and 750 additional mainstream school places over approximately 3 years, including alternative provision for children with Emotional, Social and Behavioural needs and building on the County’s existing residential care provision, which had a good reputation. Officers **agreed** to bring more information on development of the project
- A Member **suggested** that issues in some parts of the County related to poverty, including social, personal, monetary and educational poverty, should be addressed in the strategy. The Director of Public Health reported that the second part of the ambition was aimed at reducing the life expectancy gap for those living in the poorest circumstances by making the most intervention where there was most need
- Support for teenage parents was queried; the Director of Public Health reported that the Family Nurse Partnership provided support for young pregnant women and during the early years of parenting. This service had been shown to lead to stronger attachments and more confident parenting, better school attendance and improved child behaviour. There was also now better access to contraception through outreach services from sexual health clinics.
- The Executive Director of Adult Social Care reported that some prevention work

outlined in the plan was already underway so the impact of these measures was already available; outcomes could be set out in terms of targeted groups and the differences being made could be outlined in a future meeting. Members **requested** measurable and achievable targets to be shown in the strategy

- Benjamin court was discussed as a good example of reablement; the Chairman had visited and discussed its success; more reablement services were planned
- A Member requested more detail on mental health prevention including frontline services in Mental Health and Crisis Services; actions were underway with NSFT (Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust) as part of Better Care Fund funding; the Director of Public Health **agreed** to bring further information on Prevention and Mental Health. Information on the AMP (Approved Mental Health Professional) service and support for offenders with Mental Health was **requested**
- The Executive Director of Children's Services reported that health providers and the Local Authority were working together on support for Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health; a work programme was in place as part of the STP (Sustainability and Transformation Partnership) to work with communities, reduce duplication, share information and improve multi-disciplinary working
- A Member requested an "aide memoir" of the strategy to send to divisions
- Information on the percentage of children who received free school meals would be **sent** to Cllr Connolly after the meeting
- Information on measures to tackle incidents in the home such as accidental poisonings was requested; the Director of Public Health clarified that previously reported unusually high levels of hospital admissions for accidental poisonings in Norfolk had returned to the expected level; the cause of this was unclear but it was not an ongoing trend.
- Detail about the Council's approach to exclusions and the impact of this on Young Peoples' Mental Health was **requested**; this would be included in the transformation around SEND report being brought to Committee in September
- Information was requested on long wait times for sexual health appointments in West Norfolk and HIV and other tests available by post; the Director of Public Health reported that postal testing had been very successful and reduced the numbers of people waiting for appointments. It had not delivered the forecast financial savings because of its high level of success so the data, the tests and frequency of testing was being reviewed to align with clinical practice. Work on PrEP continued nationally, and the trial had expanded, including in parts of Norfolk. The Director of Public Health **agreed** to send detail to Cllr Smith on waiting times and access to appointments in West Norfolk
- A Member suggested that it was important to communicate the "prevention is better than cure" ethos to the public. The older persons forums were suggested as an effective way of disseminating information to older people. Officers were looking at the language used to communicate to the public, engaging with public forums and visiting communities to inform plans

7.3 The Committee **AGREED** to

1. Support the ambitions for a Joint Prevention Strategy and principles as set out in sections six and seven.
2. Continue to support the maintenance and development of the Norfolk County Council Preventative approach as a priority, despite the financial constraints and uncertainty.
3. Receive a further report on the Joint Prevention Strategy at the Peoples and Communities Select Committee meeting on 15 November 2019.

8. Forward Work Plan

8.1 The Committee discussed items they would like to add to the Forward Plan

8.2 Members **REQUESTED** the following items to be added to the forward plan

- Care market update - Date TBC
- Support for Carers; to include information on infrastructure, disabled toilets and changing places - November 2019
- Integration with the NHS - November 2019
- Prevention and Mental Health to include AMP and mental health support for Offenders - Date TBC
- The Chairman would to move some items from July to a later date - TBC
- Report on improving joined up working between swifts, night owls and the NHS including examples of good practice in West Norfolk - Date TBC
- Domestic Abuse Services in Norfolk - Date TBC
- Performance of Vulnerable Children Social Impact Bond - Date TBC
- Report on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning- Date TBC
- Childhood Hunger - Date TBC
- Care Leavers' access to Effective Opportunities - Date TBC

8.3 Information was requested on:

- Impact of minimum income guarantee; the Chairman asked that this was taken to Cabinet as a Member Question
- Social work vacancies; the Chairman asked that this was taken to Cabinet as a Member Question. The Executive Director of Adult Social Care would look into how regular Member briefings could be provided on this

The Meeting Closed at 11.40

**Cllr S Gurney, Chairman,
People and Communities Select Committee**



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Item 5; Public Questions

Question from John Simmons:

Schools in Great Yarmouth Borough have been hit hard by cuts, North Denes has seen a loss of -£156,227 and St. Nicholas Priory -£335,419 since 2015 and now we are seeing cuts to teaching staff and loss of provision of after school clubs which parents rely upon to be able to work. How are Norfolk County Council addressing these cuts with the Department for Education and what measures are being made by Norfolk County Council to protect staff and levels of provision to ensure equal access to education by children and parents in Norfolk?

Response from the Chairman:

NCC is aware of the funding pressures schools face both nationally and locally, and through our collective work with the Department for Education and Local Government Association we continue to raise issues of education funding overall with government. We also work with headteachers and governors via the Schools Forum on these issues. As schools are independent of the local authority (Academies exclusively and Maintained Schools regarding the majority of their 'operational' decisions) we would not be made aware as a matter of routine. NCC Early Help service also works with community services to address areas of need at a local level.

Item 6; Local Member Issues/Questions:

Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare:

According to reports there are now over 1000 schools in England relying on crowd funding to provide essential education supplies. In addition many are closing early on Fridays in an attempt to lessen their financial difficulties.

How many schools does this apply to in Norfolk - and what measures are in place to protect the education of children and support for colleagues locally?

Response from the Chairman:

The Local Authority is not aware of any schools in Norfolk who are in this situation, however, as schools are independent of the local authority (Academies exclusively and Maintained Schools regarding the majority of their 'operational' decisions) we would not be made aware as a matter of routine. However, the issue of school funding is one that NCC is fully aware of, both nationally and locally, and through our work with headteachers and governors via the Schools Forum and through our collective work through the Local Government Association, we continue to raise issues of education funding overall with government.

Question from Cllr Sandra Squire:

Once an EHCP is approved and finalised specifying the support a child should receive in school, and funding has been applied for to cover the costs of this, what are the timescales involved with the council actually providing the payment to the school for the support they provide. I have heard examples where schools are still waiting for their funding after 12 months. Does the chair consider it fair that schools are effectively having to cover costs from their budgets for services that were agreed and should be provided by this council?

Response from the Chairman:

In mainstream schools: School applies for EHCP Banding. Requests are sent to SEN Finance for payment every month. There should be no delays much over a month and the funding will be back dated. Requests for exceptional circumstances funding are dealt with on a case by case basis.

Special Schools: all children start on the same band and will be audited and reviewed annually to ensure funding is sufficient.

We are unsure why a school would have waited 12 months for an allocation, if you would like to pass on the details of this school we can investigate further.