

Communities Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 11 November 2015
10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mr P Smyth (Chair)

Mr R Bearman (Vice-Chair)
Mr C Aldred
Mrs J Brociek-Coulton
Mr J Childs
Mrs H Cox
Mrs M Dewsbury
Mr N Dixon
Mr D Harrison

Mr H Humphrey
Mr W Northam
Ms C Rumsby
Mr M Sands
Mr N Shaw
Dr M Strong
Mr J Ward

Mr R Bearman, as Vice-Chair, was in the Chair.

1. Apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr B Hannah (substituted by Dr M Strong) and Mr J Law.

2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2015.

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2015 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Vice-Chair.

2a. Matters arising

With regards to point 8.3 of the minutes, it was confirmed that the Director of Public Health would be bringing a financial plan to a future Committee. The Committee also AGREED that a workshop should be arranged to give Members the chance to consider the details in-depth.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. Urgent business

4.1 There were no Member questions.

5. Local Member Issues

5.1 There were no local Member issues.

6. Update on Key Service Issues and Activities

6.1 The Committee received the report from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided Members with fortnightly updates about key service issues and activities. The update enabled Members to discuss the latest position and identify any areas where the Committee would like to receive further information or updates.

6.2 Members heard that a workshop would be arranged for Members to give their views on the new website for the Customer Service Centre. The public would also have a chance to input.

6.3 Recognition for the excellent work that the library staff had put into the summer reading challenge was given, as well as other events such as the 'Apple Day' at Gressenhall.

6.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Review the latest service update at Appendices A to C and identify any areas where the Committee would like to see further information or update.

Mr P Smyth, as Chair, took the Chair.

7. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2014/15.

7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which enabled the County Council, as the Fire and Rescue Authority for Norfolk, to meet its statutory obligations to produce an annual Statement of Assurance.

7.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the assurances that financial, governance and operational management of Norfolk Fire and Rescue meet statutory requirements.
- To consider and approve the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2014/15 and commend the statement for signature by the Chief Fire Officer and by the Committee Chair on behalf of the Communities Committee.

8. Report on progress made in Norfolk Community Learning Services (formerly Norfolk Adult Education Service)

8.1 The Committee received the annexed report (8) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which outlined the improvements made and the plans for the future of the Service following the Ofsted inspection of this

service in January 2015 where a judgement of 'inadequate' was made.

- 8.2 The Service had recently received a letter from the Further Education Commissioner stating that he was withdrawing his intervention from the Service which was a good sign that the Service was on the right step to improvement.
- 8.3 In response to Members' questions, the forecast outturn for the Service is that it will break even at the end of the financial year. The business plan for the forthcoming year would take account of the cost of a permanent Head of Service. The interim post is being funded through a loan from NCC.
- 8.4 The Committee requested that a detailed business plan was considered by them, and the Assistant Director confirmed that this was still the intention. Further funding, and the business plan were still in development as stakeholders and other partners views were being taken into account.
- 8.5 The recent IT changes had been made using the Service's ICT budget and had not required additional financial support. The £60k identified in the report was the direct contribution to the County Council for the shared services such as HR, property, and IT.
- 8.6 The Committee were assured that there had been a series of continuous professional development opportunities that all tutors were required to attend as well as some that they could choose to take and were encouraged to take. This would ensure that all tutors were up to a high standard for all the learners' sakes. The Service had also developed a robust observation process for all tutors which Ofsted and the Skills Funding Agency had approved. Tutors were graded and appropriate steps were then taken to share good practice and quickly address areas of weakness.

The meeting was adjourned at this point in the agenda for 25 minutes and reconvened at 11.10am for the Norfolk County Council Remembrance event.

- 8.7 In the new vision for the Service it was made clear that the way the Service delivers courses will change with a focus on addressing the needs of communities and individual learners and in a place and way that is appropriate to their needs. For example, NCLS is working closely with library users to help identify the required learning provision.
- 8.8 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- Approve the new vision and new operating model for Norfolk Community Learning Services appended to the report.

9. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

- 9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which detailed the use of RIPA by the Council for the 18 months from 1 April 2014 and summarised the changes to the Council's Policy and Guidance.

- 9.2 With regards to page 78 of the report, the Committee heard that there were varying rules over the type of communications data that officers of the Council and other enforcement agencies could access. Trading Standards Officers would only be able to access the name of the person who held a specific mobile phone number for example.
- 9.3 Surveillance techniques could only be used for offences that could warrant more than 6 months custodial sentence as punishment. The Committee were reassured that offences investigated by Trading Standards fit into this definition.
- 9.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- Note the use of RIPA by the Council for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 September 2015;
 - Approve the revised Policy and Guidance document for RIPA.

10. Annual Review of the Enforcement Policy

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services. The Enforcement Policy provided a framework to ensure that we work in an equitable, practical and consistent manner in the way we deliver regulatory activities and law enforcement. Norfolk County Council was committed to the principles of better regulation, reducing burdens on business with proportionate responses and ensuring we acted to protect and support residents, businesses and the environment.
- 10.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- Approve the Enforcement Policy

11. Communities Committee Finance Monitoring Report at Period 6 2015-16.

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) which provided them with information on the latest monitoring position for the Committee for 2015-16. It provided information on emerging issues and the position on the expected use of reserves for Communities purposes.
- 11.2 It was clarified that the figures for Active Norfolk seemed obscure because this service was covered by external grant funding.
- 11.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note:
- The forecast revenue outturn position for 2015-16 as at Period 06.
 - The forecast capital outturn position for the 2015-16 capital programme.
 - The current forecast for use of reserves.

12. Quarter 2 Performance and Risk Monitoring Report

- 12.1 The Committee received the annexed report (12) which outlined the progress that was being made with the review of the Council's performance management

system and some of the key principles that were guiding its development over the financial year. The report also provided an overview of the key performance and risk issues facing those services which were covered by the Communities Committee.

- 12.2 Although there was concern expressed at the high sickness levels of staff in the customer service centre, it was confirmed that it was within industry norms.
- 12.3 It was clarified for Member's information that more people had undergone a health check than in previous quarters. This is due to a greater increase in the number of referrals made by GPs. The indicator would change for future reports as this was not providing a useful insight into performance in this area.
- 12.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- Consider the improvements being implemented to strengthen the Council's performance and risk management system.
 - Review and comment on the performance and risk information.
 - Consider any areas of performance or risk that require a more in-depth analysis.
13. **Appointment of a Representative to the Theatre Royal (Norwich) Trustee Board**
- 13.1 On being put to the vote, the Committee **RESOLVED** to appoint Mr B Hannah to the above role.

The meeting closed at 12.00pm

Chairman



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