

Communities Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 17 January 2018

10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Mrs M Dewsbury – Chairman

Ms J Barnard

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton

Mr N Dixon

Mr J Fisher

Mr R Hanton

Mr H Humphrey

Mr M Kiddle-Morris – Vice-Chairman

Mr D Roper

Ms C Rumsby

Ms S Squire

Mrs M Stone

Mr V Thomson

1. Apologies and substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Bills (Mr V Thomson substituted); Mr I Mackie (Mr J Fisher substituted) and Mrs S Butikofer (Mr D Roper substituted).

2 Urgent business

- 2.1 The Committee **agreed** to consider the following item as urgent business so the Police & Crime Panel would have a clear view of Norfolk County Council's position when it met at its Extraordinary meeting on Monday 22 January 2018.

2.2 The Local Business Case Update on Police and Fire Collaboration

- 2.2.1 The Committee received and considered the Independent Review of Options for the Future of Police and Fire and Rescue Service Governance in Norfolk, produced by Grant Thornton and Commissioned by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Norfolk.
- 2.2.2 The Committee considered that the report appeared slightly biased in favour of transferring governance to the PCC; that the report failed to demonstrate that such a move would provide value for money; and Members questioned whether the money spent on commissioning the report could have been spent more effectively within the Fire Service itself. Members also felt there were other ways collaborative working could be promoted.
- 2.2.3 The Committee was of the view that Norfolk already had an excellent Fire and Rescue Service, being one of the most efficient in the country and felt that there was insufficient evidence within the report for changing the current arrangements.

2.2.4 The Committee considered that Option 1 of the report (Voluntary Collaboration – Continue with the Fire and Rescue Authority as part of the County Council and continue to try to drive additional benefits from voluntary collaboration) was the option they wished to support, as there was already a lot of voluntary collaborative working between the emergency services.

2.2.5 Mr D Roper proposed, seconded by Mr H Humphrey that:

- Norfolk County Council should retain governance of the Fire and Rescue Service, while continuing to support and promote appropriate collaboration between emergency services and that Option 1 was the Council's preferred way forward.
- The PCC should not progress to a full Business Case and public consultation, due to the marginal nature of the Outline Business case and the associated costs, which could be more effectively used for front-line services.
- It would not support Options 3 or 4 in any way.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion was **unanimously CARRIED**.

3 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017.

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Matter arising

The Director of Public Health was in the process of organising some basic training for Members on mental health difficulties.

4 Declarations of Interest

4.1 Ms J Barnard declared an other interest in agenda item 7 (Alcohol and Drug Services Update) as she had a family member in employment with the current drug and alcohol service contract holder. Ms Barnard also declared an other interest as the organisation she worked for was in receipt of a grant from public health, although the organisation concerned did not feature on the agenda at this meeting.

4.2 Mr D Roper declared an other interest as he was employed by National Probation Service which had a common client group with the Drug and Alcohol Service.

5 Public Question Time

5.1 No public questions were received.

6 Local Member Issues / Members Questions

6.1 No Local Member Questions were received.

7 Adult alcohol and drug services update

7.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Public Health updating it on the current performance in adult alcohol and drug treatment; the new adult alcohol and drug behaviour change service and future policy and strategic work.

7.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:

7.2.1 Change, grow, live (CGL), the new provider of the drug and alcohol service was a very experienced organisation and would be helping service users along their long and sometimes hazardous journey to recovery. The contract specification included after-care and many stakeholders and users had been consulted in the procurement process of the contract. Events were taking place around the county to engage with as many stakeholders as possible to ensure the service could be effectively delivered.

7.2.2 Although there was a national shortage of Hepatitis B vaccinations, CGL would in future pursue all available avenues to source vaccinations from other parts of the country. Contingency arrangements would also be put in place in emergency situations, such as areas being flooded, to ensure medication was delivered to clients

7.2.3 As the contract was new, coming into effect in April 2018, and the improvements in performance could take anything between 6 months and 18 months to come to fruition, it was proposed that there would be no reporting to Committee on key indicators for the first six months of the new contract.

7.2.4 Work was being carried out with services and public health to have a strong focus on families, particularly with regard to safeguarding. CLG had a strong framework in place for the involvement of service users, which had been one of the strengths of their bid.

7.2.5 NHS England had taken back the responsibility for commissioning the prison service psychosocial contract, the funding for which previously went through Norfolk County Council.

7.2.6 The contract had been designed to focus on both group support as well as bespoke services to individuals.

7.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Endorse the direction and progress in improving delivery of adult alcohol and drug services, with a focus on recovery and in line with the new National Drug Strategy 2017.
2. Endorse the development of a network to address key strands within the National Drug Strategy 2017, tackle harms caused by alcohol and drugs misuse, and provide support and guidance for service delivery in order to better meet the needs of the residents of Norfolk.

8 Casualty Reduction Partnership Delivery Plan Update – 2017-18

8.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Public Health outlining the

activities of Norfolk County Council's Road Safety Team and wider partnership.

8.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:

8.2.1 The Killed, Seriously Injured (KSI) statistics allowed accident trends to be plotted, so a deeper level of information could be made available. Some work was being undertaken to lobby for the inclusion of a category called "serious or life-changing".

8.2.2 A serious injury could be defined as anything from a broken finger to full ongoing life-support and without a facility to drill down into each incident further separation was not possible.

8.2.3 Although potential future risks and hazards were hard to predict, one potential future hazard could be the increase in the number of autonomous vehicles on the roads. Some work would be undertaken to benchmark other authorities to find out what work they were undertaking to identify future hazards.

8.2.4 If a suitable candidate could be identified, the knowledge of someone with a psychological background could prove invaluable on the Task and Finish Group.

8.2.5 The Vulnerable Road Users Sub-Group had been working to address some of the issues identified in the "adult male commuter cyclists" cohort.

8.2.6 A significant amount of work was being carried out, for example talking to adult groups and using social media, to influence the behaviour of both drivers and cyclists and help reduce casualties.

8.2.7 The Committee **agreed** to set up a Member Task and Finish Group to develop a revised strategy for road safety and appointed the following Members to the Group:

Margaret Dewsbury
Mark Kiddle-Morris
Ron Hanton
Julie Brociek-Coulton
Sarah Butikofer

8.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the progress so far on the Road Casualty Reduction Partnership (RCRP) delivery plan for 2017-18.
2. Endorse the development of performance measures and updated communications strategy in the delivery plan for 2018/19.
3. Set up a Member Task and Finish Group to develop a revised strategy for road safety.

9 **Strategic and Financial Planning 2018-19 to 2021-22**

9.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out details of the County Council's strategy

which would set out the future direction, vision and objectives for the Council across all its services. The report provided an overview of the financial issues for the Council, including the latest details of the Autumn Budget 2017 and the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2018-19. It summarised the Committee's saving proposals for 2018-19, identified budget pressures and funding changes, and set out the proposed cash-limited revenue budget as a result of them. The report also provided details of the proposed capital programme.

9.2.1 The Committee sought reassurance that any cuts in the grant awarded to Healthwatch would enable it to continue with its excellent work. The Director of Public Health explained that Healthwatch in Norfolk had received significant funding in the past and the proposals put forward would mean they would not only receive the statutory funding but would also receive an additional £100k from the Public Health budget. The additional funding would allow Public Health to work closely with Healthwatch in carrying out evaluation and research work.

9.2.2 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services explained that the £622k saving from the Library and Information Service had already been agreed and was built into the budget proposals for the previous financial year, including an element of remodelling of the mobile library service. The Committee had previously asked officers to reconsider the proposed savings to ensure they did not weaken frontline provision. The Committee was reassured that any proposed changes to the mobile library service would be considered and agreed by the Communities Committee before any changes were made to the service.

9.2.3 The Chairman also reassured the Committee that the remodelling of the mobile library service was being carried out so the County Council could ensure the best use of the available funding was maintained.

9.2.4 It was clarified that proposal CMM042 (Providing a joined up Library and Children's Centre Service) referred to fixed library provision and how the assets could be most effectively used.

9.2.5 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services reassured the Committee that the proposals with staff changes in branch libraries referred to in the report resulted in a reduction in the number of managers within libraries and an increase in the number of front-line staff. The Committee was advised that, in recognition of the significant role front-line staff undertook within libraries, the Personnel Committee had considered the job specifications and agreed to upgrade those roles.

9.3 Each recommendation was separately voted on as follows:

- 1) Note the new corporate priorities – Norfolk Futures – to focus on demand management, prevention and early help, and a locality focus to service provision as set out in section 2 of this report. **This recommendation was unanimously agreed.**

- 2) Consider and agree the service-specific budgeting issues for 2018-19 as set out in section 5. **This recommendation was unanimously agreed.**
- 3) Consider and comment on the Committee's specific budget proposals for 2018-19 to 2021-22 set out in Appendix 2, including the findings of public consultation in respect of the budget proposals set out in Appendix. **This recommendation was agreed.**
- 4) Consider the findings of equality and rural impact assessments, attached at Appendix 4 to this report, and in doing so, note the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.**This recommendation was agreed.**
- 5) Consider and agree any mitigating actions proposed in the equality and rural impact assessments. **With 9 votes in favour, 4 votes against and 0 abstentions, this recommendation was agreed.**
- 6) Consider the recommendations of the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, and:
 - a. Recommend to Policy and Resources Committee that the Council's budget includes an inflationary increase of 2.99% in council tax in 2018-19, within the council tax referendum limit of 3.0% for 2018-19;
 - b. Note that the Council's budget planning includes an increase in council tax of 3.0% for the Adult Social Care precept in 2018-19, meaning that no increase in the Adult Social Care precept would be levied in 2019-20.
This recommendation was agreed.
- 7) Agree and recommend to Policy and Resources Committee the draft Committee Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix 5 including all of the savings for 2018-19 to 2021-22 as set out for consideration by Policy and Resources Committee on 29 January 2018, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a sound, whole-Council budget to Full Council on 12 February 2018.
With 9 votes in favour, 4 votes against and 0 abstentions, this recommendation was agreed.
- 8) Agree and recommend the Capital Programmes and schemes relevant to this Committee as set out in Appendix 6 to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration on 29 January 2018, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a Capital Programme to Full Council on 12 February 2018. **This recommendation was agreed.**

10 Risk Management

- 10.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing it with the Communities departmental risk register exception, as at December 2017, following the latest review conducted in December 2017. The reporting of risk was aligned with, and complemented, the performance and financial reporting to the Committee.
- 10.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note:
- a) The risk reported by exception from the Communities departmental risk register;
 - b) Whether the recommended mitigating actions identified in Appendix A for the risk presented were appropriate, or whether Risk Management improvement actions were required (as per Appendix C).

11 Performance Management

- 11.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing it with performance data, information and analysis presented in the vital sign report cards and asking it to determine whether the recommended actions identified were appropriate or whether another course of action was required.
- 11.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

12 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

- 12.1 The Committee received the report by the Chief Legal Officer and the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services detailing the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) by the County Council for 2016-17 and summarised the changes to the Council's Policy and Guidance.
- 12.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- a) **Note** the use of RIPA by the Council for 2016 and 2017, and
 - b) **Approve** the revised Policy and Guidance document for RIPA.

13 Finance Monitoring

- 13.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services providing it with information on the budget position for services reporting to Communities committee for 2017-18. It provided information on the revenue budget including any forecast over or underspends and any identified budget risks. It also provided an update on the forecast use of reserves and the details of the capital programme.
- 13.2 In introducing the report and advising Members that Communities Committee was forecasting a balanced budget this financial year, the Finance Business Partner, Community and Environmental Services made the Committee aware of the significant amount of work undertaken by service Managers and the Finance Team to highlight any risks that were in danger of becoming a budget pressure.

- 13.3 In response to a question about whether Public Health would be able to carry out its statutory duties with the available budget, the Director of Public Health reassured the Committee that the statutory duties were actually very basic, although the conditions of grant funding meant that Public Health was expected to carry out certain work to justify the grant, for example the drug and alcohol service. There was a concern that some of the education outreach and working with other partners may not be done, but its statutory duties would be carried out.
- 13.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note:
- a) The forecast out-turn position for the Communities Committee revenue budget and note the current budget risks being managed by the department.
 - b) The Capital programme for this Committee.
 - c) The current planned use of the reserves and the forecast balance of reserves as at the end of March 2018.
- 14 Forward Plan and Decisions taken under delegated authority**
- 14.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the Forward Plan for Communities Committee.
- 14.2 The Committee agreed to add the following topics to the forward work programme.
- Report on mobile library provision when remodelling had been carried out.
 - A briefing on teenage pregnancy rates.
 - Update on the Drug and Alcohol Contract once it had had an opportunity to bed in.
- 14.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note:
- 1. the Forward Plan.
 - 2. the delegated decisions detailed in section 1.2 of the report.

The meeting concluded at 11.50am

Chairman