

Communities Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 8 March 2017
10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mrs M Dewsbury - Chairman

Mr R Bearman

Ms A Bradnock

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton

Mr J Childs

Mrs H Cox

Mr N Dixon

Mr D Harrison

Mr H Humphrey (Vice-Chairman)

Mr J Law

Mr W Northam

Mr R Parkinson-Hare

Ms C Rumsby

Mr M Sands

Mr N Shaw

Mr P Smyth

Mr J Ward

1. Apologies and substitutions

1.1 No apologies were received.

2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2017.

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2017 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

2.2 Matters arising from the minutes

As agreed by the Committee, the letter to the Home Office Chief Fire Adviser, advising that Norfolk County Council had made a recommendation that the Council had chosen to ignore in recommending removal of the cuts it proposed in December 2016, had been sent. A copy of the letter would be circulated to the Committee.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 Mr P Smyth declared an other interest as he worked at RAF Marham.

4. Urgent business

4.1 There was no urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 No public questions were received.

6. Local Member Issues / Members Questions

6.1 No Local Member Issues / Members Questions were received.

7 Annual report of the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant.

7.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing the Committee with an annual progress report on Norfolk's Armed Forces Community Covenant strategy and action plan. Overall, progress on the action plan over the last year had been strong, and a national independent review had rated Norfolk's Covenant in the top 20% of all UK covenants.

7.2 The Committee welcomed Tony Tomkinson, Norfolk's Armed Forces Commissioner, and Major Tim Jones, from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, Robertson Barracks, Swanton Morley to the meeting. Mr Tomkinson introduced the report and thanked Norfolk County Council for its continued support of the Covenant which was greatly appreciated by both the Armed Forces Board and armed forces communities in the county.

7.3 The following points were noted in response to questions by the Committee:

7.3.1 The Covenant funded the mobile libraries service to armed forces bases across the county during the summer period. This allowed children within the armed forces communities to access initiatives such as the summer reading challenge.

7.3.2 As the Armed Forces Champion at Norwich City Council, Mr M Sands, urged homeless veterans to contact Norwich City Council for assistance. The Committee was informed that homeless veterans was a county-wide problem and work was being undertaken with the District Councils to address the issue. There were two district council representatives sitting on the Covenant Board.

7.3.3 Some work was being undertaken to raise awareness of those veterans who needed care within communities. One initiative had been the creation of a poster titled "Tell Us" which was displayed in GP surgeries, libraries and community centres around the county. The poster encouraged veterans to identify themselves and included a telephone number signposting them to the ways they could access available services.

7.3.4 The Covenant spend to date had been less than the allocated budget, although Members were advised that the money had been reserved for a particular project. The project was considering how to develop ways to assist veterans with mental health problems. Therefore, it was unlikely there would be an underspend in the budget for this financial year which could be reallocated elsewhere within the County Council.

7.3.5 Major Tim Jones spoke of the work carried out and how having the Covenant in place had allowed his regiment, 1st The Queens Dragoon Guards to work in, and be part of, the community. He wished to place on record his appreciation for the support offered by Norfolk County Council.

7.4 The Committee **NOTED**:

- the progress of the Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant.
- that a revised strategy and action plan for 2017-20 would be brought to Communities Committee for information in due course, following endorsement by the Covenant Board.

8 **Adult Drug and Alcohol Services**

8.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Public Health setting out three options for consideration by the Committee for adoption.

8.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- 8.2.1 When recommissioning of the service commenced, in order to identify best practice, expert views would be sought from across the country to identify a holistic approach which would meet the needs of those vulnerable people achieving a successful recovery.
- 8.2.2 Colleagues within the procurement team recognised that the timescales for redesign of the service was very tight and they were working with providers to implement the service in a managed way. The Committee would be kept up to date if there was any possibility of slippage in the implementation timescale.
- 8.2.3 Mr R Bearman proposed, seconded by Mr D Harrison, that the Committee adopt option 1 (Proceed now to redesign the service through a reprocurement starting in March 2017, with successor service starting in April 2018). The Committee **agreed** this proposal.
- 8.3 The Committee **AGREED** option 1 (Proceed now to redesign the service through re-procurement starting in March 2017, with successor service starting in April 2018) for the commissioning of drug and alcohol services and delegate its implementation to the Director of Public Health.

9 **Progress made in Norfolk Community Learning Services**

9.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing it with the latest information on service progress and in particular the two strategic objectives previously determined for 2016-17 for the Service.

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

- 9.2.1 Members requested that the figures outlining the number of enrolments in the autumn term 2016-17 for Broadland and North Norfolk should be shown separately. In response, the Head of Service - Norfolk Community Learning Services explained that was how the localities had been set up initially but these were in the process of being reviewed. An update on the number of apprenticeships in each area would be circulated.
- 9.2.2 The Committee expressed its gratitude to all the staff involved in raising the standards of the service sufficiently to receive a “good” rating in the last Ofsted

inspection.

- 9.2.3 With regard to apprenticeships for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) Members were reassured that work was being undertaken with the Apprenticeships Manager to identify a programme specifically aimed at the 14-19 age group. It was hoped that this would be developed within the next 12 months.
- 9.2.4 At the first Community Partnership meeting, which had been held on the 7 March 2017, it had been agreed that there was a recognised need for a service to help people living in rural areas to improve their reading and writing skills. The Partnership had agreed that a community learning strategy should be developed which could help people access mainstream programmes in rural areas.
- 9.2.5 As the service had improved significantly in recent months, the Committee agreed it no longer needed a report to be presented at each meeting.
- 9.2.6 The Committee thanked the Assistant Director and his team for all the work they had carried out and also congratulated the NCLS team on winning an OSCA in the Real Jobs category.
- 9.2.7 Some work was being carried out to identify apprenticeships for people aged between 40-50 who may have left long-term employment and needed to consider a career change in order to get back into employment.
- 9.2.8 Everyone who expressed an interest in enrolling on a course, was interviewed to ascertain the skills they had and what they wanted to achieve from the course. From the formal assessments carried out, people could be signposted to the most appropriate course according to their aspirations and abilities.
- 9.2.9 The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was in the process of reviewing the Strategic Economic Plan. The LEP had identified that the average wage in Norfolk was below the national average and that this average wage needed to be brought in line with the national average. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services stated that he did not think there was any direct competition for funding with the LEP and that funding would still be available from the Skills Council.
- 9.3 The Committee **APPROVED** the further improvement and development of NCLS as Norfolk's provider of 'second chance', employment/skills and leisure learning through:
1. Raising the quality of provision to responding to increased demands and challenges set by Ofsted for the adult skills sector.
 2. Further development of its curriculum offer to meet the needs of stakeholders including: NCC service teams, the voluntary/community sector, employers and residents.
 3. As the provider of choice in supporting the implementation of the Apprenticeship Levy for Norfolk County Council.
 4. Positioning the service to grow as a provider of Skills Funding Agency (core) delivery in a changing funding climate which presents challenges and opportunities.

- 10 **Trading Standards Service Plan including Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan (FFLEP) and Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Products Plan (EARSITPP).**
- 10.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services presenting recommendations to Committee on the proposed priorities for 2017/18 for consideration and comment prior to making recommendations on adoption of the plan to full Council. The report introduced the Trading Standards Plan 2017-18 including –
- The Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Products Plan (EARSITPP), and
 - The Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan.
- 10.2 In introducing the report, the Head of Trading Standards handed out a briefing on the achievements of the Trading Standards Service over the past year. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix A.
- 10.3 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:
- 10.3.1 Members were reassured that the Trading Standards Service did not have access to personal data on mobile 'phones, computers or any other devices. If Trading Standards had received a flyer advertising services which only included a mobile telephone number and no other identifying details, legislation allowed Norfolk County Council to apply to access information about who owned the mobile 'phone. In order to access this information, authorisation was required from a senior manager and then approval needed to be sought through the Magistrates' court.
- 10.3.2 The Committee commended the Friends Against Scams initiative and suggested that this could be an excellent way of involving Parish Councils in the work of Trading Standards.
- 10.3.3 Defra identified and designated Avian flu prevention zones. As a prevention measure, poultry keepers within the designated zone had been asked to keep birds housed to prevent the spread of avian influenza. New legislation had identified high risk zones and non-high risk zones.
- 10.3.4 Members suggested that Trading Standards could promote the BT Call Protect initiative. This was a free service offered by BT to fight nuisance calls.
- 10.3.5 Over the last two years, work had been carried out to ensure staff across the Trading Standards Service were multi-skilled so they could deal with the workload of the service. If there were multiple outbreaks of, for example, avian influenza which would require a sustained response, additional staffing resources may need to be deployed via the resilience team.
- 10.3.6 It was clarified that Appendix 4 – Annex III (Animal Health) did not need to be adopted by Full Council.
- 10.3.7 It was becoming more difficult to retrieve proceeds of crime money. Every attempt was made to include a proceeds of crime request with a prosecution case, if

- appropriate, although this did not always mean that money awarded by the court would be received.
- 10.3.8 The Committee wished to place on record its congratulations to the Trading Standards Service for the excellent work they carried out on behalf of residents in Norfolk.
- 10.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend adoption of the Trading Standards Service Plan including Annexes I and II, to full Council.
- 11 **Finance Monitoring**
- 11.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing it with information on the budget position for the Committee for 2016-17. It provided information on any forecast over- and underspends and the forecast use of reserves.
- 11.2 In introducing the report, the Finance Business Partner Community and Environmental Services advised that no issues had been identified that would have a detrimental effect on the budget and that a balanced budget was forecast.
- 11.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note:
- a) The revenue budget for 2016-17.
 - b) The current risks being managed by Services.
 - c) The capital budget for the 2016-17 capital programme.
 - d) The balance and current forecast of reserves as shown in Section 4 of the report and that proposals for any further use of reserves in 2016-17 will be highlighted to this Committee if the resulting forecast level of reserves falls below the 31 March 2017 balances anticipated at the time the budget was set.
- 12 **Update on key service issues and activities (including decisions taken under delegated authority) plus Forward Plan.**
- 12.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing it with an update on key issues and activities. The report also set out the Forward Plan for Communities Committee and updated it on relevant decisions taken under delegated powers by the Executive Director within the Terms of Reference of this Committee.
- 12.2 The Committee agreed that, in future, it would receive an update on the Norfolk Community Learning Service via the quarterly performance report.
- 12.3 In response to a question about whether Norfolk County Council provided a school dental service, the Director of Public Health advised that Norfolk County Council was not directly responsible for a school dentist service. This was a service which was promoted through the Healthy Child Programme.
- 12.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report.

As this was the last Communities Committee meeting before the election on 4 May 2017, the Committee wished to place on record its thanks to all Officers for the contributions they had made and the work they had carried out on behalf of the Committee. The Chairman added her thanks to those Members of the Committee who would not be standing for re-election in May.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am.

Chairman

Trading Standards – Some Achievements – 2016-17

NCC Priority *Real jobs – Making Norfolk the first choice for business*

Providing businesses with access to information and compliance advice to help them succeed; targeting support to start-up, small, high-risk and non-compliant businesses

- The Service has formed two Primary Authority Partnerships (PAPs) with the National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association (FARMA) and Lily's Kitchen, a pet food manufacturer. Through their PAPs, the Service will deliver consistent and reliable advice and information to FARMA's members and Lily's Kitchen to ensure a level playing field; with advice being respected by all other local authorities. The Service is currently in discussion with a further five businesses on forming PAPs, which will incur fees and charges payable to the Service, in line with our Business Services Policy.
- Focused inspections were conducted at catering establishments to coincide with Allergy Awareness Week (25 April to 1 May 2016), to highlight the new food law requirements whereby if any of 14 allergens are present, they must be declared and highlighted in the ingredients list on the labelling of prepacked food. Key messages on the subject were also highlighted to both businesses and consumers via our social media channels.

Safeguarding communities and public health by tackling the supply of alcohol, tobacco and other age restricted products to young people and the supply of illicit alcohol and tobacco

- The Service ran an illegal tobacco roadshow in conjunction with BWY Canine and the Stop Smoking Service, funded by Public Health, in September/ October. The roadshow visited Kings Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Thetford and Norwich. There was a great deal of media interest; which raised public awareness of illegal tobacco and the issues with its sale and led to a sharp increase in the intelligence the Service receives about it.
- The Service has conducted 10 illegal tobacco operations, five with sniffer dogs, and one in conjunction with HMRC. Seizures have been made in King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Thetford and Norwich. 177,140 illegal cigarettes and 47.9kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco have been seized.

Ensuring the standards, quality and safety of the food chain, including food, animal feeds and agricultural fertilisers

- Analysis of a sample of coconut oil taken at a Norfolk based importer found it to contain much higher levels of pollutants, benzo pyrene and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), than permitted. This resulted in the issue of a pan-European food alert, ensuring increased vigilance at European entry points. Further sampling locally has revealed no further failures.
- In February ten targeted meat samples were taken and 6 of the 10 were found to be contaminated with other meat species not mentioned on the product's labelling. However, in all cases, the level of contamination was low, pointing to cross contamination in the production process rather than the deliberate substitution of lower value meat to mislead the consumer. Other issues found by way of food sampling/analysis included meat products with meat content lower than that declared, imported drinks with non-permitted additives, products with non-permitted food colours and products with higher than allowed levels of permitted food colours. In all instances the appropriate action was taken to ensure the non-compliant product was removed from the marketplace; including raising food safety incidents with the Food Standards Agency and working directly with the supplier and/or their local Trading Standards Service to ensure compliance was achieved.

Safeguarding the standards of animal health and welfare and reducing the risk of animal disease outbreaks and associated risks to the Norfolk economy and public health

- The Service was well positioned to respond to the Avian Influenza (AI) outbreak at Redgrave, Suffolk, having hosted a multi-agency contingency planning exercise in

November based on this scenario. The exercise was facilitated by and delivered under the auspices of the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) Animal and Plant Disease group; which is chaired by Trading Standards. Participants were officers from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex Trading Standards, Norfolk Resilience Team, Broadland and Breckland District Councils, the Animal and Plant Health Agency and the Broads Authority and the member for Bowthorpe division, Councillor Mike Sands.

- Lessons learnt from the exercise enabled Trading Standards to respond immediately and effectively to the Suffolk outbreak. Our Business, Food & Farming Manager attended the Forward Operating Branch “birdtable”, Highways put up road signs highlighting the Prevention zone and the Service mobilised 12 officers to conduct foot patrols in the Prevention/Surveillance Zones on Day 1 of the outbreak.

Ensuring the safety of consumer products, fair trading and legal measurement of goods through a programme of intelligence-led market surveillance and enforcement activities

- The Service has test purchased and had tested cheap electrical goods, second hand goods, amusement arcade prizes, leather goods for the presence of Chromium 6 and Azo dyes and costume jewellery for the presence of heavy metals such as cadmium and nickel. Where unsafe products are detected, our primary aim is to remove them from the marketplace.
- The Service supported National Consumer Week (NCW) in November/ December; which is an annual consumer education campaign. The theme was ‘Switched On’ – be Switched On to your rights with faulty or unsafe electrical goods. Problems with the purchase of unsatisfactory and unsafe white goods has been a continually recurring theme throughout 2016. The Trading Standards Service supported NCW by circulating both locally and nationally produced messages via Twitter and Facebook and to those consumers and businesses who have requested weekly alert updates. The messages reached an audience of just under 10,000 people; many of whom we know will have shared them with friends, family and local communities.

NCC Priority Supporting vulnerable people –All vulnerable people who live, work, learn and are cared for in Norfolk will be safe

Safeguarding vulnerable people by tackling rogue traders and scams

- 185 victims of scams have been supported to prevent them suffering further financial abuse. Norfolk’s scam victims’ profile reflects that of the national picture. In Norfolk the average age of the victims that are helped by Trading Standards is 76. While it is not possible to say how much money Norfolk scam victims have lost to scammers, the National Trading Standards Scams Team believes that victims lose, on average, just over £1,060 before they are helped by Trading Standards services.
- 5001 consumers and 2102 businesses are signed up to our scam and information alerts. A recent survey to subscribers has identified that the information sent has increased people’s confidence in dealing with scams and the alerts are shared by subscribers with colleagues, relatives, neighbours and friends, thus raising awareness of scams.

Building community resilience through our Consumer and Community Champions, No Cold Calling Zones, HomeShield and Trusted Trader scheme

- There are 160 No Cold Calling Zones in Norfolk, covering 7,530 homes (with another eleven being set up). An NCCZ is a residential street or development where a large majority of people living there has requested that Trading Standards designate it as a place where the residents have said no to being cold called by traders; thus reducing the risk of falling victim to rogue doorstep cold callers.
- Our Homeshield Norfolk scheme is a cross-agency referral service for professionals who work with vulnerable people and their carers. It is used by 147 partners and enables them to efficiently refer their clients to the appropriate agency to meet identified needs.