

Communities Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 7 September 2016
10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mrs M Dewsbury - Chairman

Mr S Agnew
Mr R Bearman
Ms C Bowes
Mrs A Bradnock
Mr J Childs
Mrs H Cox
Mr N Dixon
Mr D Harrison

Mr H Humphrey – Vice-Chairman
Mr J Law
Mr N Wyndham
Ms C Rumsby
Mr M Sands
Mr N Shaw
Mr P Smyth
Mr J Ward

1. Apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr C Aldred (substituted by Mr S Agnew), Mrs H Cox (substituted by Ms C Bowes), Mrs J Brociek-Coulton and Mrs A Bradnock as she would be late.

2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016.

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Chair, subject to adding, as an appendix, the list of appointees to internal and external bodies.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. Urgent business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business raised.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 There were no public questions raised.

6. Local Member Issues / Members Questions

6.1 There were no local member's issues or questions.

7. Update on Key Service Issues and Activities (including decisions taken under delegated authority)

7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided the Committee with fortnightly updates on key issues and activities. The report is also used to update the Committee on relevant decisions taken under delegated powers by the Executive Director within the terms of reference of this Committee. There were two relevant delegated decisions taken to this meeting.

7.2 Members made considerable note of the level of activity of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service on the 23rd and 24th June 2016 which they felt emphasised the need for the service and reinforced the decision the Committee had made during the last budget savings round to reduce the impact of savings on the Fire and Rescue Service.

7.3 Although there had been 631 calls in 3 hours, these were predominantly related to the same bad weather incident. The only rescues that needed to take place were for those who had chosen to ignore warning signs and driven through deep waters. There had been an initial request in the early morning from the Department of Community and Local Government which had triggered an early warning at national level.

7.4 Members acknowledged the good work that volunteers did in Norfolk libraries and the success that they had contributed to.

7.5 Members expressed concern at the results of the suicide audit. There had been peaks around 2009 and 2012 and there seemed to be a background pattern of the rate increasing. It was hoped that the informal suicide prevention group would be made an established group and would work alongside Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust. A report would be brought to a future committee meeting.

7.6 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Review the latest service update at Appendices A to E and identify any areas where the Committee would like to see further information or update.
- Note the two decisions taken under delegated authority as set out in para 1.2 of the report.

8. Appointments to Outside Bodies – Hunstanton Convalescent Trust and St George's Theatre Trust, Great Yarmouth

8.1 The Committee received information from the Executive Director of Community

and Environmental Services which outlined the need for members consideration on two outside body appointments.

8.2 The Committee **AGREED**;

- That Cllr Richard Bird be appointed to replace Cllr John Dobson on the Hunstanton Convalescent Trust.
- That Cllr Barry Stone be appointed to replace Cllr Michael Cartiss on the St. George's Theatre Trust, Great Yarmouth.

9. Public Health – Tobacco Control Strategy

9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) from the Director of Public Health which outlined the strategy and associated action plan which in turn proposed a number of changes in focus to target key groups.

9.2 A campaign is being launched in conjunction with Trading Standards to raise awareness in market towns regarding sales of illicit tobacco which is sold cheaply on the black market and is reported to contribute to the uptake of smoking by young people.

9.3 In response to members' questions regarding e-cigarettes, although it was confirmed that e-cigarettes were safer than tobacco cigarettes due to the tar and nicotine having been removed and therefore the dangerous chemicals, they do bring different problems such as the chargers contributing to an increase of house fires.

9.4 It was suggested that a workshop could be held in conjunction with the Norfolk Tobacco Control Alliance for members to have an opportunity to express their ideas on smoking cessation. The representative for the Tobacco Alliance agreed to suggest that to the Alliance Committee.

9.5 It was suggested that the report should be taken to Children's Services Committee in order for them to endorse the recommendations of the alliance.

9.6 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;

- Note the harm that smoking does and support the vision of a smoke free county.
- Endorse the Norfolk Tobacco Control Alliance Strategy and action plan, focused on its strategic priorities to;
 - Prevent young people from becoming smokers
 - Assist every smoker to quit smoking
 - Protect people, especially children, from tobacco related harm
- Agree the proposed targets for 2020 to have reduced overall smoking prevalence to 13%, smoking in pregnancy to 8.3% and amongst routine and manual workers to 16%.
- Agree that the report should be taken to Children's Services Committee in order to endorse the recommendations of the alliance.

10. Library and Information Service Update

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which outlined the performance of Norfolk Library and Information service for 2015/16.
- 10.2 It was reported that the most recent count showed that the summer reading challenge had nearly 12,500 pupils taking part which was an increase on last year's figures.
- 10.3 Although there were not any figures or feedback available for the newly launched app, early reports had been that there were some phones that had been unable to access the app. It was noted that by releasing more information digitally, it allowed staff to concentrate on helping the users who needed it.
- 10.4 Members suggested that it was necessary to see the impact of the self-service in order for it to be considered alongside the budget savings in October. The capital funding, for introducing self-service access to a large number of Norfolk libraries, would be given to the service in 2017/18 on an 'invest to save' basis meaning that there would need to be a staff reduction from April 2018, otherwise this funding would not be available. The committee said they felt they would be better placed to make a decision about the budget proposal if it had further information about the impact of self-service opening and the role of library staff and the impact they have in communities.
- 10.5 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Note the performance of the Library service in the 2015/16 financial year.
 - Note the elements of the service delivery and development that could be built in to service planning for 2017/18.
 - Agree that the service should continue to focus on supporting the development of digital literacy skills.

11. Administration of the Single Use Carrier Bags Charges (England) order 2015

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which enabled the Committee to determine how the County Council would discharge its new functions under the Single Use Carrier Bags Charges (England) Order 2015.
- 11.2 The Head of Trading Standards informed the committee that it would be rare for enforcement action to be taken under this legislation and therefore very low costs were anticipated.
- 11.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Delegate the functions of the administrator for the purposes of the Single Use Carrier Bags Charges (England) Order 2015 to the Head of Trading Standards.

12. Risk Management

- 12.1 The Committee received the annexed report (12) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided the Committee with the latest Communities Risk Register, following the latest review conducted at the beginning of August 2016. The reporting of risk was aligned with, and compliments, the Performance and Financial reporting to the Committee.
- 12.2 It was strongly felt by some Members that there were risks in the department that needed to be identified on the corporate risk register. There would be no funding for responses to flooding in the County from 2017 which fulfilled the criteria to be a corporate risk. The flood response risk was suggested as a current risk as the national funding would probably cease from 2017 and therefore it should be made a high priority. The County was towards the top of the list for threat of coastal flooding.
- 12.3 It was clarified by the Executive Director that risks could be escalated if it was something that could not be resolved by the Head of Service and as such there was a process for risks to be considered.
- 12.4 It was proposed that the escalation of the risk could be reviewed at the meeting to discuss the budget however MP's should be written to in order to raise the concerns of the lack of specific government funding for responses to flooding.
- 12.5 It was suggested the Policy and Resources Committee should be informed that the funding for responses to flooding risk could meet the corporate risk criteria, as the corporate risk register fell under their remit.
- 12.6 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Note the progress with Risk Management since the last Communities Committee meeting, shown in the reconciliation report in Appendix B of the report.
 - Note the risk data, information and analysis presented in the risk register report in Appendix A.
 - Review the funding for responses to flooding risk at the October meeting and in the meantime to write to MP's to raise concerns about the potential lack of specific government funding for the County's flooding risk.

13. Performance Management

- 13.1 The Committee received the annexed report (13) from the Executive Director of Communities and Environmental Services which was based upon the revised Performance Management System having been implemented as of 1 April 2016, and the committee's 27 vital signs indicators.
- 13.2 The data which related to looked after children health assessments was questioned by the Committee. More efficient process had been put in place which would see an improvement. It was also confirmed that the target was achievable.
- 13.3 Whilst benchmarking from other LA's initially fed into the process of target setting, the performance management framework model adopted was the result of assessing various different frameworks from other LA's before agreeing on a

preferred one for Norfolk. Therefore effectively some indicators can and some cannot be benchmarked against other LA's.

- 13.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Agree the vital signs identified at the workshop on 19 July 2016 as reported in section 4.1 could be removed from the list reported to the Committee.
 - Note the performance data, information and analysis presented in the vital sign report cards and **AGREE** that the recommended actions identified were appropriate.

14. Finance Monitoring

14.1 The Committee received the annexed report (14) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided the Committee with information on any forecast over and underspends and the forecast use of reserves.

- 14.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Note the revenue budget for 2016-17, and the detail of the public health budgets, as set out in section 2 of the report.
 - Note the current risks being managed by Services.
 - Note the capital budget for the 2016-17 capital programme.
 - Note the balance and current forecast of reserves as shown in section 4 of this report.

The meeting closed at 12.40pm

Chairman

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