

## **Communities Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 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 J Law  
Mr W Northam  
Ms C Rumsby  
Mr M Sands  
Mr N Shaw  
Mr D Thomas  
Mr J Ward

### **1. Apologies and substitutions**

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr S Hebborn (substituted by Mr J Childs).

### **2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2015.**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2015 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Vice-Chair.

### **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 The Committee made reference to the fact that the updates were very valuable and were useful to highlight good work that was being carried out that would otherwise be missed.
- 6.3 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.

## **7. Norfolk Adult Education service: Update on progress post Ofsted Inspection**

- 7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which updated them on the work of the Steering Group for Norfolk Adult Education Service.
- 7.2 The Committee heard that the improvement programme would require investment from the department's resources, with the expectation that it would be paid back. The Committee requested a more detailed action plan to be able to identify risk and allow the Committee to make an informed decision. Although there had been investment to date, this was mostly in terms of time (for example in the quality of teaching) and IT systems using existing budgets.
- 7.3 Inspections that had been carried out had been encouraging about the improvement work that had taken place. The Further Education Commissioner's Adviser would be visiting soon, and if the improvements had not been delivered in the timescales set by Ofsted, funding agencies could withdraw their money.
- 7.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Note the progress made in the Norfolk Adult Education Service since the last report in May 2015 and following the Ofsted 'inadequate' judgement received in January 2015.
  - Approve the new vision which will better align the service to address identified needs across Norfolk and more effectively target resources and learning opportunities.
  - Agree to the change of name of the Norfolk Adult Education Service to Norfolk Community Learning Services, which more clearly describes what the service will do in future.

## **8. Public Health Lifestyle Service**

- 8.1 The Committee received the annexed report (8) by the Executive Director of Resources which explained an Integrated Healthy Lifestyle Service (IHLS) for adults. This would improve health and wellbeing in Norfolk and help reduce the need for future health and social care services.

- 8.2 Although the smoking trend was downward, it was felt that the target to decrease smoking by 1% could be ambitious, as the number of people now stopping smoking was reducing nationally. It would mean finding new ways to tackle smoking knowing the circumstances of those who continue to do so.
- 8.3 It was felt that by choosing option C, it would achieve much better value for money in order to address key gaps.
- 8.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Support option C: The procurement of an Integrated Healthy Lifestyle Service. Procurement will be led by Public Health in collaboration with Adult Social Services and Children's Services.

## **9. Re-Imagining Norfolk – service and financial planning 2016-19 for Communities Services**

- 9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and the Executive Director of Resources. The report set out the implications of Re-Imagining Norfolk for the services of the Communities Committee.
- 9.2 The Committee highlighted that some departments of Norfolk County Council are more efficient at delivering their service than others, and have been cut too far already. There needed to be fairness amongst the budget savings, and the potential of savings from each department needed to be considered.
- 9.3 Some Members of the Committee felt that there needed to be one big change for the entire County in order to address the funding issues, rather than the continuation of making small changes.
- 9.4 The Committee heard that commercial awareness was being supported in targeted areas by Hethel Innovation Limited in order to help some services increase their income. Benchmarking exercises were also being carried out to identify how similar organisations arrange their demand led services.
- 9.5 A workshop would be held before the October meeting to identify what budget savings could be made and Members were encouraged to attend with the objective of devising some solutions.
- 9.6 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Note the service models set out at Appendix 2
  - Note and comment on the savings proposals set out in Appendix 3
  - Ask Officers to bring back further detailed savings proposals in October which will contribute to the development of budgets based on 75% of the Committee's addressable spend, to allow for choices and options to be considered, and to support the delivery of a balanced budget for 2016-17, for subsequent consideration at Policy and Resources Committee in October.

## **10. Final report of the Member Steering Group on Libraries**

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Environmental and Community Services, which outlined the recommendations of the Member Review Group on the future direction of library and information service delivery.
- 10.2 The Committee noted that the OpenPlus self-service scheme was working well in Acle Library where it had been installed as a pilot. This was confirmed as costing approximately £20k to implement per site, and the service would like to implement it in 39 sites at a total cost of approx. £780k. This money would be paid back within 2-3 years.
- 10.3 It was clarified that the reasonable distance was no longer a statutory obligation and could therefore be altered as the Committee saw fit.
- 10.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Agree that there should be a consultation with communities about their use of libraries and their longer term aspirations for libraries.
  - Agree that libraries should have a strengthened role in supporting NCC's early help and community development agendas. Libraries should be used as hubs in communities for supporting literacy, information, learning and for facilitating access to communities for NCC and other agencies and councils.
  - Agree that funding should be agreed to introduce self-service access to libraries to enable an increase in the availability of the service while reducing staff costs, and enabling buildings to be used by other service and organisations.
  - Agree that the proposed reasonable distance for travel to a library as outlined in 1.1.3.
  - Agree that the service should continue to encourage community engagement and involvement in libraries, including for example increased volunteering opportunities and installing donation boxes in appropriate libraries.

## **11. Fire and Rescue Strategic Review – Report from the Member Working Group**

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided a further update on the working group's considerations and deliberations.
- 11.2 Some Members of the Committee expressed that the 5 year budget for the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service should be ring-fenced. It was exclaimed that it was an efficient service already with one of the best control rooms in the Country as well as being the cheapest per head and therefore they should not be cut anymore.
- 11.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Acknowledge the detailed analysis and options considered by the Fire and Rescue Working Group.
  - Agree that these options be considered in detail at a proposed workshop for Committee members held in advance of the October meeting, to provide

Members with the opportunity to inform the recommendations to be presented in October.

A moment was taken at this point to thank the Chief Fire Officer, Nigel Williams, for his sterling work as he was attending his last meeting of the Communities Committee before retiring at the end of September.

## **12. Communities Committee Finance Monitoring Report at Period 04 2015-16**

- 12.1 The Committee received the annexed report (12) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services, which provided the Committee 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 purpose.
- 12.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note;
- The forecast revenue outturn position for 2015-16 as at Period 4.
  - The forecast capital outturn position for the 2015-16 capital programme.
  - The current forecast for use of reserves.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm

Chairman



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