

## **Communities Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 25 January 2017  
10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

### **Present:**

Mrs M Dewsbury - Chairman

Mr R Bearman

Ms A Bradnock

M Chenery of Horsbrugh

Mr J Childs

Mr S Clancy

Ms E Corlett

Mr T Garrod

Mr D Harrison

Mr H Humphrey – Vice-Chairman

Mr W Northam

Mr R Parkinson-Hare

Ms C Rumsby

Mr M Sands

Mr P Smyth

Mr J Ward

Mr M Wilby

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

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs J Brociek-Coulton (Ms E Corlett substituted), Mrs H Cox (Mr T Garrod substituted); Mr N Dixon (M Chenery of Horsbrugh substituted); Mr J Law (Mr M Wilby substituted) and Mr N Shaw (Mr S Clancy substituted).

### **2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2016.**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2016 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### **4. Urgent business**

- 4.1 There was no urgent business.

### **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were no public questions received.

### **6. Local Member Issues / Members Questions**

- 6.1 There were no Local Member Issues / Members Questions

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item 13 (Strategic and Financial Planning 2017-18 to 2019-20) as its next item of business after confirmation was received that there were no financial monitoring issues which would affect the budget decision.

## 7 Strategic and Financial Planning 2017-18 to 2019-20

7.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out proposals which would inform the Council's decisions on council tax and contribute towards the County Council setting a legal budget for 2017-18 which would see its total resources of £1.4bn focused on meeting the needs of residents.

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

7.2.1 Savings which had not been realised within other departments had been taken into account in the planning assumptions. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed that, in discussion with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, the proposals in the report had been signed off as being balanced and deliverable.

7.2.2 Some Members raised concern about the recommendation made by Communities Committee in May 2016 to remove £900k cuts over three years which had subsequently not been agreed by Policy & Resources Committee. Mr P Smyth proposed the following motion which was seconded by Mr M Sands:

“As the Fire Authority, the Committee should write to the Home Office Chief Fire Adviser advising that this Authority had made a recommendation that this Council had chosen to ignore in recommending removal of the cuts it proposed in December 2016”.

7.2.2.1 The Committee received reassurance from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and the Chief Fire Officer that Communities Committee had removed some savings after discussion with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and that ongoing dialogue continued to ensure that a robust set of services was deliverable. In addition, there was a sizeable capital investment included in this budget to help secure the longer term resilience of the Fire Service.

7.2.2.2 The Chairman advised that herself and the Vice-Chairman had attended a meeting with Peter Holland, Chief Fire Adviser who had visited Norfolk recently. The Chief Fire Adviser had confirmed he was content with the way Norfolk Fire Service was performing.

7.2.2.3 The Chairman advised that the fire service would be able to work within the allocated budget, with the Chief Fire Officer confirming this, adding that safety of fire crews and the community was top priority.

7.3 Mr Smyth's proposal, which had been seconded by Mr M Sands was then put to the vote. With 9 votes in favour and 8 votes against, the Committee **agreed** to write to the Home Office Chief Fire Adviser accordingly.

- 7.4 In response to a question about proposal CM016 (Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library opening times – Reduce the opening times for Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library but install Open Plus technology to enable the ground floor to be open longer via self service), it was confirmed that this related to the £130k savings previously agreed by the Committee and that no further changes were planned.
- 7.5 With regard to CM22 (Libraries self-service – introduce technology (Open Plus) to enable libraries to open with self-service machines), it was clarified that the £622k was for 2018-19 and that the service was also looking at alternative ways of meeting the savings required.
- 7.6 Upon the recommendations being put to the vote, with 13 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 3 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- (1) Consider and comment on the Committee's specific budget proposals for 2017-18 to 2019-20 in respect of:
    - The budget proposals set out in Appendix A (summary of new proposals) and Appendix B (list of full proposals);
    - The new and additional savings proposals to contribute to the supplementary target of £4.000m for the Council as identified to Policy and Resources Committee in November 2016; and
    - The scope for a general Council Tax increase of up to 1.99%, within the Council Tax referendum limit of 2% for 2017-18, noting that the Council's budget planning is based on an increase of 1.8% reflecting the fact that there is no Council Tax Freeze Grant being offered, and that central government's assumption is that Councils will increase Council Tax by CPI every year. The Council also proposes to raise the Adult Social Care Precept by 3% of Council Tax as recommended by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services. Bringing forward increase in the Social Care Precept will mean that the 2% increase planned for 2019-20 will not occur.
  - (2) Consider the findings of the equality and rural assessment (included at Appendix D) 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.
  - (3) Consider and agree any mitigating actions proposed in the equality and rural impact assessment at Appendix D.
  - (4) Agree and recommend to Policy and Resources Committee the draft Committee Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix B:

- a. including all of the savings for 2017-18 to 2019-20 as set out.

For consideration by Policy and Resources Committee on 6 February 2017, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a sound, whole-Council budget to Full Council on 20 February 2017.

- (5) Agree and recommend the Capital Programmes and schemes relevant to this Committee as set out in Appendix C to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration on 6 February 2017, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a Capital Programme to Full Council on 20 February 2017.

## 8 **Norfolk Museums Service - an update**

- 8.1 The Committee received a presentation by the Acting Assistant Director Community and Environmental Services (Cultural Services and Lifelong Learning), Head of Norfolk Museums Service and Head of Norfolk Arts Service. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix A.
- 8.2 Members commended the work of the Norfolk Museums Service and fully endorsed the applications to be made to the Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund to secure funding from 2018-2022.
- 8.3 The Committee **noted** the presentation.

## 9 **Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan.**

- 9.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Public Health presenting a county-wide suicide prevention strategy and action plan which outlined key principles and actions which were shared across a range of partners. In line with national guidance, Public Health was leading on the regular audit of suicides, the development of the strategy and the implementation of the action plan.
- 9.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:
  - 9.2.1 Feedback from relatives who had experienced the loss of a family member had identified that the preferred terminology was the phrase "take their own lives".
  - 9.2.2 Statistics had not identified an increase in the number of people discharged from hospital, readmitted, then discharged again before taking their own life. Statistics had also not identified Norfolk as being a known hotspot for people taking their own life.
  - 9.2.3 British Transport Police were Members of the Suicide Prevention Group. In Norfolk there was a very small number of people who took their own lives by train. The British Transport Police had a programme of training for their staff and the Samaritans carried out training for Network Rail staff.
  - 9.2.4 Members commended the work of the organisation SOBS in Norfolk which offered support to families who had a relative that had taken their own life.
  - 9.2.5 Some Members asked for more ambition with the Key Performance Indicators and

suggested a trend report before the date of September 2018 as outlined in the Strategy. In response it was pointed out that the timescales outlined in the report were in line with the need to await the verdict from the coroner's office.

9.2.6 Some Members asked about statistics for ex-servicemen and women as the Ministry of Defence did not hold such data. In response, it was noted that a charity called Walnut Tree had carried out a lot of work with men in targeting interventions and was also keeping a database of vulnerable people. It was recognised that more work needed to be carried out about how this group could be supported in future.

9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **approve** the Norfolk suicide prevention strategy and action plan.

## 10 **Norfolk Library and Information Service – update on music sets service.**

10.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing it with an update on progress made by Norfolk Library and Information Service (NLIS) in partnership with music groups based in Norfolk, to secure a future for the Performance Sets (Music Sets) service

10.2 During the presentation of the report, the Committee was pleased to note that income for music sets had been greater than expected, as had donations from Friends Group which would enable the service to break even this financial year.

10.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **note** the activity achieved to date and authorised officers to continue to explore and develop opportunities for developing an efficient and effective way of delivering a performance Sets service.

## 11 **Norfolk Association of Local Councils – Service Level Agreement**

11.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out proposals to replace the existing three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC) which would expire in March 2017 and replace it with a new three-year agreement, supporting building local community capacity. The new SLA would commence on 1 April 2017 and end on 31 March 2020 and would be reviewed annually.

11.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to

1. Agree the priorities and outline action plan for the three-year Norfolk ALC SLA (2017-20).
2. Convene a Member workshop to further develop the SLA/action plan with Norfolk ALC for joint working with local Councils and communities. Delegate agreement of the SLA to the Executive Director of Communities and Environmental Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Communities Committee.

## 12 **Voluntary and Community Sector – Engagement Contract.**

12.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services proposing the scope, funding provision approaches and

general direction of travel for engaging with Norfolk's voluntary sector in early 2017. The purpose of this was to develop a joint Norfolk County Council (NCC) - Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) engagement approach that would inform how the Council and the sector could work more effectively together in the future and would help inform procurement of the VCSE engagement contract for 2017-20.

12.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the proposed VCSE engagement with the sector of February-May 2017 – developing the funding framework for future joint working.
2. Agree Funding option 2 (Follow a Grant process).
3. Deliver a Member workshop from Communities Committee and invite representation from Adults and Children's Services Committees to support development of framework.

### 13 **Finance Monitoring**

13.1 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. The report provided information on any forecast over and underspends and the forecast use of reserves.

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

13.2.1 Mr R Bearman, seconded by Ms E Corlett proposed the following amendment to recommendation (b) – "The current risks being managed by Services including future risks from undeliverable savings". The Committee **agreed** this proposal.

13.2.2 With regard to the sound and vision income within the library service, work was being undertaken to identify the niche market for specialist dvd borrowing and identify trends in order to target a service towards that audience.

13.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note:

- a) The revenue budget for 2016-17.
- b) The current risks being managed by Services including future risks from undeliverable savings.
- c) The capital budget for 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 the committee if the resulting forecast level of reserves falls below the 31 March 2017 balances anticipated at the time the budget was set.
- e) Note the pipeline for significant contracts for Communities Committee for the period to the end of 2018 as shown in Appendix A of the report.

### 14 **Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-16.**

14.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and

- Environmental Services enabling the County Council, as the Fire and Rescue Authority for Norfolk, to meet its statutory obligations to produce an annual Statement of Assurance.
- 14.2 The following points were noted in response to questions by the Committee:
- 14.2.1 The Specialist Terrorist Team and Search and Rescue Teams were regular firefighters who had received specialist training. They had skills which were distinct from other operational staff and could be loaned to other areas if needed. The specialist team was primarily based in Dereham.
- 14.2.2 A “forced entry” service had historically been provided by the police for the ambulance service. As a pilot scheme, and after discussions with the Police and Ambulance Service, a trial was taking place with firefighters carrying out this service. Once the trial had finished, the Committee would receive an update report about whether this work could be taken on permanently.
- 14.2.3 All accidents involving firefighters were investigated and reviewed. The majority of injuries sustained by firefighters had been received during training exercises and were mainly muscular injuries.
- 14.2.4 One of the criteria for employing a retained fire fighter was that they needed to live within 4-5 minutes from a fire station. A recruitment exercise was taking place to identify if any of the 900 applicants who had applied for full-time positions matched the criteria to become a retained firefighter. If an individual was identified, they would be contacted to see if they were interested.
- 14.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to
- Note the assurances that financial, governance and operational management of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service meet statutory requirements.
  - Approve the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2015-16.
- 15 **Update on key service issues and activities (including decisions taken under delegated authority) plus Forward Plan.**
- 15.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided regular information about key service issues and activities which support the Council’s transparency agenda and enabled Members to keep updated on services within their remit. It was important that there was transparency in decision-making processes to enable Members and the public to hold the Council to account.
- 15.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the latest service updates and the Forward Plan.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

**Chairman**

## Norfolk Museums Service Update Report

Steve Miller  
Acting Assistant Director Community and  
Environmental Services (Cultural Services & Lifelong  
Learning)



## Norfolk Museums Service

- NMS is a partnership between Norfolk County Council and Norfolk's district councils
- Arts Council England Major Partner Museum
- 10 museums and a study centre spread across Norfolk
- Designated collections of national importance
- Over 400,000 visits each year
- Award-winning schools programme reaching over 46,000 Norfolk children
- A leading role in museum development across the region through the SHARE Museums East programme



**Award-winning schools' literacy programme at Time & Tide Museum, Great Yarmouth**



**New Voices from the Workhouse Galleries at Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse**



**Skills and employment for young people**



**Exhibitions 2017**



**National Portfolio Organisation 2018-2022**



