

Communities Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 10 October 2018
10:00am, Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mrs M Dewsbury – Chairman

Ms J Barnard

Ms C Bowes

Ms J Brociek-Coulton

Mr M Castle

Ms K Clipsham

Mr N Dixon

Mr R Hanton

Mr H Humphrey

Mr B Long – Vice-Chairman

Ms C Rumsby

Mr T Smith

Mr J Ward

1. Apologies and substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Bills (Ms C Bowes substituted) and Dr C Jones (Ms J Brociek-Coulton substituted).

2 To agree the minutes of the meetings held on 29 August 2018 and 5 September 2018.

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 August 2018 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5 September 2018 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Urgent business

- 4.1 The Head of Libraries agreed to pass on the Committee's congratulations to Great Yarmouth Community Library who had won a Gold medal in the Great Yarmouth in Bloom competition and had been chosen as the overall winner.

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 Verbal update/feedback from Members of the Committee regarding any Member working groups or bodies they sit on.

7.1 Mr B Long advised that he attended a session with Change Grow Live (CGL) Norfolk and had found it very interesting to hear about their ethos and the work provided by the service.

7.2 Mr Long had also attended an emergency planning event titled "operation springboard" where he had worked on an exercise about tidal surge and dramatic weather events. He said that several representatives from District Councils had also attended the event which he had found very valuable in getting everyone thinking about what to do in the event of an emergency.

7.3 Mr K Kiddie advised that, as the Armed Forces Champion, he had attended a Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant meeting at RAF Marham. The meeting had followed up on the work of the Covenant and had also agreed a forward work programme. The meeting had also agreed to start the process of finding a replacement for the current Chairman, Tony Tomkinson, who would be standing down from the role in April 2019.

7.4 The Chairman advised that she had attended a recent Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC) meeting on behalf of Communities Committee. She advised that the meeting had learned that there had been an increase in the number of parish councils attending training sessions. NALC ran approximately 200 websites on behalf of Parish Councils, although this service would be transferring to Broadland Digital soon. The Chairman also advised that the NALC Annual General Meeting would be taking place on 22 November which she would be Chairing as Dr Ian Gibson had resigned from his appointment as President. They would be seeking to appoint a new President.

8 Annual Review of the Enforcement Policy.

8.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out how the Enforcement Policy, which was subject to annual review by Members, had been reviewed and updated to reflect recent changes to legislation and guidance and now included a new enforcement protocol for Blue Badge Enforcement.

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

8.3.1 The main content of the Policy document was dictated by the Regulator's Code, with very few areas asking for comments from the public.

8.3.2 No changes would be made to the Member Protocol in the Planning Enforcement Policy about the decisions made under delegated authority, performance statistics and enforcement update for the work of the Monitoring and Control Team. Members would continue to be informed if an Enforcement Notice was served in their Division.

- 8.3.3 In response to a question about any increase in the number of crimes in disadvantaged areas of Norfolk as a result of enforcement action against illegal tobacco sales, the Head of Trading Standards advised that no correlation work had been carried out. The enforcement action targeted illegal tobacco sales in King's Lynn, Thetford, Norwich and Great Yarmouth as they tended to have the highest number of incidents of illegal tobacco sales. The aim of the enforcement policy was to try to reverse that trend with targeted enforcement action.
- 8.3.4 The list of the stakeholders that had been contacted and asked to comment on the consultation document included individuals and businesses that had been in contact with Trading Standards over the last five years. The Head of Trading Standards would try to find some generic information about which stakeholders had been consulted and circulate it to the Committee.
- 8.3.5 Some Members expressed concern about planning enforcement and the fact that there was no pot of money available for the different agencies to draw on to carry out enforcement work. The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services responded that work was undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Agency and Borough Councils which had led to a number of successful prosecutions but suggested that a request for the provision of a pot of money being made available in the event of a breach of planning policy could be presented to the Norfolk Leaders Group for its consideration.
- 8.3.6 Some concern was expressed about the low number of responses to the consultation. The Head of Trading Standards advised that the consultation had been published on the Norfolk County Council website and stakeholders had been contacted and directed to the consultation. No follow-up action had been carried out to try to increase the number of responses, although it was acknowledged that the timing of the consultation, which had taken place during the summer holiday period, may not have helped the response rate. It was also considered that if the stakeholders were happy with the document, they may not have bothered to comment on it. The Head of Trading Standards advised the Committee that she had received some good feedback about the Policy.
- 8.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **confirm** the revised CES Enforcement Policy and its annex documents meet the requirements of Communities Committee services, prior to final approval by the Policy & Resources Committee. (Policy & Resources Committee is the approval body for the policy).

9 Development of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2023.

- 9.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services updating it on the work being done to develop the new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and providing an opportunity to consider and shape the scope of the work that would be carried out over the next 18 months to enable a new IRMP to be approved by the County Council in early 2020.

- 9.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:
- 9.2.1 The Committee **agreed** that the first bullet point in the draft Terms of Reference should be amended to include the wording in paragraph 2.2.2 of the report and the addition of the word “rescue” so the sentence reads:
- “To consider the full range of fire **and rescue** related community risks in Norfolk. The following areas are proposed to be specifically considered as part of the IRMP process:-
- a) Identify opportunities to strengthen the capability and capacity of our statutory fire and community safety provision.
 - b) Examine the opportunity for NFRS to contribute to improving patient outcomes through emergency medical response and prevention.
 - c) Model fire station locations in relation to new and future infrastructure and housing development.
 - d) Identify and model opportunities for optimising estates and resources.
 - e) Review our emergency service models, response standards and capabilities to identify whether they fully reflect the communities and the geography of Norfolk, Norfolk’s Community Risk Register and the National Risk Register.
 - f) Review the strategic outcomes and financial sustainability of our Youth Engagement services.
 - g) In the absence of grant funding, model the capabilities and capacity required for responding to and securing safe systems of work for water rescues in Norfolk.
 - h) Identify opportunities for NFRS to further help in delivering our County Councils 20 year vision and opportunities to contribute to demand reduction through the Local Service Strategy / Norfolk Futures.
 - i) Identify further opportunities for blue light and other agency collaboration to meet the requirements of the Policing and Crime Act 2017.
 - j) Consider the national fire reform agenda and the capacity of Norfolk Fire and Rescue to respond to it.
- 9.2.2 Members were reassured that the new IRMP 2020-2023 would not change if there was a change in the Governance arrangements.
- 9.2.3 The Committee asked for an invitation to be extended to the Police & Crime Commissioner inviting him to attend future Communities Committee meetings.

- 9.2.4 Ongoing private discussions were taking place with the Fire Brigade Union about the possible broadening of fire fighter roles to incorporate other elements of emergency work.
- 9.2.5 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services advised that there were no additional budget proposals affecting NFRS for the foreseeable future, although once the IRMP process had been completed the position may change.
- 9.2.6 The Committee considered that the outcome from the imminent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection should be included in the final IRMP document.
- 9.2.7 The Committee appointed the following Members to the IRMP Task and Finish Working Group:

Ms C Rumsby
Mrs M Dewsbury (Chair)
Mr H Humphrey
Ms S Butikofer
Ms S Squire
Mr N Dixon

- 9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- **Approve** the scope of work to develop an IRMP for 2020 onwards, as set out in paragraph 2.2.2 of the report.
 - **Establish** a Member Task and Finish working group to support and oversee the IRMP development process.
 - **Approve** the proposed terms of reference for the Member Task and Finish working group, as set out in appendix A of the report, including the addition in paragraph 9.2.1 above.

10 Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22

- 10.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services providing it with an update on the Council's budget setting process and setting out details of the actions required by Service Committees to enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2019-20. The report detailed the link between the Council Strategy, the Norfolk Futures transformation programme and the development of transformation and savings plans relevant to Communities Committee.
- 10.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:
- 10.2.1 The replacement of the current emergency services "Airwave" communications system had been deferred by the Government for approximately 3 years. It was now expected that this system would be replaced by 2020 and would be funded without Section 31 grant funding from the Government. It was not expected that any additional costs would be incurred by local authorities but the Chief Fire Officer would contact some of his Fire Authority colleagues and if there

were any anticipated cost implications, he would circulate details to the Committee.

- 10.2.2 The savings targets set out in Table 5 of the report were considered to be a prudent approach. The Committee was keen that if there was any scope to bring some savings forward this should be done.
- 10.2.3 Regarding the proposal to reduce search room opening hours at the Norfolk Record Office, the Committee suggested introducing a small charge to cover the costs of accessing records. In reply, the Committee was advised that there was an increasing number of people accessing records from the Record Office through IT, but consideration would be given to the suggestion. Care would be needed to ensure that Norfolk County Council did not propose introducing a charge for any of its statutory services.
- 10.2.4 Any reduction in staffing numbers was primarily being achieved through the management of vacancies within the CES department.
- 10.2.5 The public consultations for those budget proposals which required it would commence in November 2018 and would include all the proposals relating to Community and Environmental Services Department as the department covered several Service Committee areas. The consultation would be shared with Members in advance of its publication.
- 10.2.6 The reduction in the Strategic Arts Development Fund proposal would still enable Norfolk County Council to support some strategic projects. The Committee was reassured that, although the fund was reducing, it was considered sufficient funds remained available to take forward priority projects.
- 10.2.7 The majority of the vacant posts it was proposed to remove had been vacant for 12 months or more. Community & Environmental Services Department had successfully redeployed staff in the past and any redundancies had generally taken place for only those staff that had requested it. Members expressed the need to be mindful about the impact on jobs for future generations with a reduction in the number of jobs available.
- 10.2.8 Members queried whether the 2020/21 saving amount relating to the Castle Museum and the need to deliver the saving for 2019/20 so it could be used to offset anticipated income as a result of work to the Castle Keep during the year should be a one-off saving. In reply the Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage advised that this would be a permanent saving from the following financial year.
- 10.3 Upon each recommendation being put to a separate vote, the Committee **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Unanimously note** the content of the report and the continuing progress of change and transformation of Communities services;
 2. **Unanimously note** the Council's latest budget assumptions and pressures and the resulting revised forecast budget gap of £45.322m, which has been updated by Policy & Resources Committee to reflect the latest available information and following Service Committee input in

- September (paragraph 4.3 and table 1 of the report);
3. **Unanimously note** the revised council tax planning assumptions as set out in table 2 of the report;
 4. **With 9 votes in favour, 4 votes against and 0 abstentions, the Committee approved** the proposed savings for the 2019-20 budget round for recommendation to Policy & Resources Committee in October (table 5), in particular confirming those savings that are recommended to require consultation as set out in paragraph 6.4.
 5. **Unanimously note** and identify any further key areas of risk in relation to 2019-22 budget planning for the Committee's budgets, including any additional pressures and the robustness of existing planned savings as set out in table 4, noting that any changes may impact on the overall budget gap and will require additional offsetting savings to be found;
 6. **Unanimously note** the budget planning timetable (section 7).

The Vice-Chairman asked for it to be recorded that, although the Labour Group Members had voted against the proposals they had not offered any alternative proposals. Representatives from the Labour Group advised that alternative proposals were being worked on, although the details were not yet available.

11 Mobile Library Services.

- 11.1 The Chairman received a petition from Ms S Butikofer, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, on the impact of cuts to the library service, particularly in rural areas.
- 11.2 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out the outcomes of the route planning exercise and alternative delivery work and looking at the impacts and possible options required to deliver the planned financial savings.
- 11.3 In introducing the report, the Assistant Director, Community, Information and Learning) advised that the Committee had agreed at its meeting on 4 July 2018 that:

“The proposed criteria for route planning and pilot schemes would be reviewed by the Committee and adjusted if necessary based on predicted impact”.

Following the completion of an outline mobile route review against the criteria, and its assessment against the equality impact assessment process, the overall potential impact was significant. Therefore, to maintain a consistent and viable service, which did not disproportionately affect people with protected characteristics or rural service users, it was proposed to adopt an alternative approach to reduce the cost of running the mobile library service by £100k and address the remaining funding gap of £100k through further operational efficiencies set out in the report.

The Committee was asked to

- adopt the proposals set out in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the report to reduce costs by £100k, and
- agree not to replace 2 mobile libraries vehicles and to agree the proposal to save the remaining £100k through operational efficiencies.

- 11.4 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:
- 11.4.1 Out of the 154 mobile library routes, 125 took place monthly and 29 took place fortnightly.
- 11.4.2 The Committee was reassured that there were no overdue charges for books borrowed from the mobile library service.
- 11.4.3 Members were reassured that the proposal was to only remove those stops which were redundant and to change those services which were currently fortnightly to a monthly service.
- 11.4.4 The report on the trial carried out at Shipdham would be circulated to the Committee.
- 11.4.5 The Assistant Director, Community, Information and Learning advised that the proposals relating to children's centres was currently out for public consultation, the outcome of which it was not possible to predict.
- 11.4.6 Some work was being carried out with the Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee to update library computers. One of the proposals was to increase the amount of time members of public could use a library computer from 1 hour to 2 hours which would hopefully allow individuals sufficient time to complete benefit and other forms.
- 11.4.7 The Assistant Director, Community, Information and Learning agreed to take comments on board about the perceived inequality of mobile library services in villages which had fewer residents with more mobile library stops.
- 11.4.8 It was suggested that mobile libraries could hold some information to help signpost individuals to various services, for example if someone needed help to complete benefit or job application forms.
- 11.5 Upon the recommendations in the report being put to a vote, with 10 votes in favour, 3 votes against and 0 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Adopt** the proposals in section 2.1 and 2.2 of the report to reduce costs by £100k and agree not to replace 2 mobile libraries vehicles.
 2. **Agree** the proposal to save the remaining £100k through operational efficiencies.

12 Performance Management

- 12.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out the management report based upon the revised Performance Management System, which was implemented on 1 April 2016. This is the second report to provide data against the new 2018/19 Vital Signs list derived from measures contained within the 'plans on a page' previously presented to and agreed by Committee.
- 12.2 The following points were noted in response to questions:

- 12.2.1 Members requested that the format of the vital signs chart on page 142 of the agenda be changed to remove out of focus crosses.
- 12.2.2 The Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage agreed to investigate the reasons why the Museums visits – total visitors and school visits results were regularly below target yet remained green on the Vital Signs dashboard, but explained that it was expected the figures would even out by the end of the year.
- 12.2.3 With regard to the New STI diagnoses (excluding chlamydia in under 25 year olds) per 1000,000 population aged 15 to 64, the Director of Public Health to let the Committee have some further information about the target compared with national results.
- 12.2.4 The Committee expressed concern about the rise in the number of people killed and seriously injured on Norfolk's roads and was advised that the Steering Group would be providing an update on its work at the November Communities Committee meeting.

12.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to

- **Note** the performance data, information and analysis presented in the report.

13 Risk Management

13.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing Members with the Communities Committee departmental risks, as at October 2018, following the latest review conducted during September 2018. The reporting of risk is aligned with, and complements, the performance and financial reporting to the Committee.

13.2 In introducing the report, the Risk Manager advised that the NFRS Risk would be included in the report to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting in October 2018.

13.3 Members requested that consideration should be given to including the cost implications of the new emergency service radio network and the risk if the government grant was removed.

13.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **Note**

- a) The reconciliation report (Appendix A) which details the significant changes to the Communities department level risks;
- b) The departmental level risk register containing risks for this Committee in Appendix B;
- c) The list of possible actions, suggested prompts and challenges presented for information in Appendix c;
- d) The background information to put the risk scoring into context, shown in Appendix D.

14 Finance Monitoring

- 14.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services providing it with financial monitoring information for the services reporting to Communities Committee for 2018-19.
- 14.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:
- 14.2.1 The remit of the Director of Public Health covered 2 elements of the Communities revenue budget – activity covered by government grant money, and road safety.
- 14.2.2 It was expected that the income generated by the Registrars Service would meet the set targets.
- 14.2.3 With regard to salary budgets – 45% of the gross expenditure for Communities committee related to salary costs and the fact that an assumption had been made that there would be some turnover of staff, the Head of Support and Development (CES) would carry out some work with HR to find out the current turnover of staff and how this equated with other authorities. The information would be circulated to the Committee.
- 14.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **note**:
- a) The 2018-19 revenue budget and forecast out-turn position for this Committee.
 - b) The Capital programme for the Committee.
 - c) The balance of reserves brought forward to 2018-19 and the planned use of reserves

15 Forward Plan and Decisions taken under delegated authority

- 15.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out the Forward Plan for Communities Committee, together with the relevant decisions taken under delegated powers by the Executive Director (or his team) within the Terms of Reference of Communities Committee.
- 15.2 The Committee agreed to add the following item to the Forward work programme.
- Results of mobile library pilots – January 2019
- 15.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **note**:
The Forward Plan at Appendix A of the report.

16 Other Business

- 16.1 Members referred to Mental Health Day on 10 October and noted some of the work being done by the Council. The Chairman advised that the Vice-Chairman and herself were attending an event at Carrow Fire Station to sign the “Blue Light Pledge”. The Chairman also referred to a display available at County Hall.
- 16.2 Some Members requested the recommendations in reports be included at the end of the report as well as on the front page as they were struggling to

navigate to the correct page quick enough on their ipads. Some Members advised that other systems of providing committee papers were better and options of moving to that system were being explored.

The meeting concluded at 11.55am.

Chairman