

Corporate Affairs Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23 September 2009

Present:

Mr M Brindle	Mr M Langwade
Mr S Clancy	Ms J Mickleburgh
Mrs D Clarke	Mr A Proctor
Mr J Dobson	Mr R Smith
Mr R Hanton	Ms J Toms
Mr M Hemsley	Mr A White
Mr C Jordan	

Substitute Members Present:

Mrs D Irving

Cabinet Members Present:

Mr A Williams	Corporate & Commercial Services
Mrs J Chamberlin	Partnerships and Performance

Deputy Cabinet Members Present:

Mr J Herbert	Corporate Affairs and Human Resources
Mr B Borrett	Efficiency

Also in attendance:

Cllr S Woodbridge	Leader of Broadland District Council
Ms L Mowl	Head of Policy, Broadland District Council
Ms K De Vries	Co-ordinator, Broadland Community Partnership

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr J Carswell, Mr B Collins (Mrs D Irving substituted), Mr S Dorrington and Mrs C Walker.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Paragraph 10.3: Mrs Chamberlin, Cabinet Member for Partnerships and Performance would report further information concerning where people were less assured to the 18 November meeting, not the 23 September meeting as stated.

3. Declarations of Interest

Mr A Proctor declared a personal interest in Item 8, Broadland Community Partnership, as a member of Broadland District Council.

Mrs J Chamberlin declared a personal interest in Item 8, Broadland Community Partnership, as the Norfolk County Council member on the Broadland Local Strategic Partnership.

4. Matters of Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues

There were no local member issues.

7. Cabinet Member Feedback on Previous Review Panel Comments

In her new role as Cabinet Member for Partnerships and Performance, Mrs Chamberlin informed members that she had attended several partnership meetings and had been received in a very positive and friendly manner. She said that the position of Cabinet Member for Partnerships and Performance formed an important link between the partnerships.

8. Broadland Community Partnership

8.1 The Panel received the annexed report (8) by the Head of Policy and Performance which set out the results of the questionnaire looking at the Broadland Community Partnership (BCP), the local strategic partnership for the Broadland area.

8.2 Councillor Simon Woodbridge the Leader of Broadland District Council (BDC), together with Liz Mowl, Head of Policy and Ms K De Vries, BCP Co-ordinator, attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the BCP (attached at Appendix A).

8.3 Following the presentation a question and answer session ensued during which the following was noted:

8.3.1 Councillor Woodbridge explained that the level of partnership funding under-spend by the BCP had been due to the rigorous evaluation processes in place to ensure funding was allocated where it was most needed. Currently, there were many projects that could benefit from the funding but due to the current significant global financial situation, the decision had been taken to undertake rigorous evaluations of each proposal. Most of the funding under-spend would be allocated to projects by the end of the year. The BCP had also received £0.5M funding from the Central Government for a family support centre. Members acknowledged that the under-spend did not represent a lack of activity or of aspiration on the part of the BCP.

8.3.2 Councillor Woodbridge noted that the allocation of Second Homes money to the district councils could change in the future.

8.3.3 Members noted that the partnership questionnaire advised that the BCP was complex and Councillor Woodbridge confirmed that this was the case. The Partnership Strategy and Action Plan is based around nine vision themes (as listed in Appendix A) as a conduit to enable all partners, for example the police or the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), to become involved but to ensure that partners do not waste time on projects where their expertise is not required. Current projects included:

- **Fit for Learning, Fit for Life:** (first joint BDC, City of Norwich and South Norfolk Alliance project) to support the homeless by offering training to hostel staff
- **Broadland Community Bank:** the Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) funding of £10,000 kick-started the roll out of a credit union within Broadland.
- **Housing Adaptations Project:** BCP funding added value to a BDC project to reduce the complexity in processing Disabled Facilities Grant awards.
- **Stairway pilot projects - YBYz and Respectful Relations and Bully Richard:** the projects raised awareness of domestic violence and issues such as bullying. Young people gained awareness of issues and debated coping mechanisms.
- **Sanctuary Project:** support for victims of domestic violence to stay in their own homes.
- **YMCA Homelessness Worker:** BCP's input into what had been a BDC and YMCA part-time project allowed for much stronger monitoring and evaluation procedures which it is hoped will allow the project to approach Children's Services for future funding.
- **County Wildlife Site review:** BCP paid for a review of County wildlife sites not visited since 1995
- **BCP Small Grants Programme:** offers up to £500 to local community projects – between 9 and 11 projects supported annually across the whole of Broadland.
- **Broadland Link Up Project:** to increase the two way flow of information between community groups and the BCP. To be achieved by supporting community groups in consultation activity and by funding events which raise the profile and celebrate the diversity of communities within Broadland, for example the Taste of Broadland event at the Thorpe St Andrew Summer Festival.
- **Taverham Help Shop:** financial support for a local venue offering advice on all areas (50% of advice around debt).
- **Vulnerable People's Project:** making use of existing Adult Social Services staff to deliver key BCP partner messages to the vulnerable and elderly.

8.3.4 Feedback and follow up from 'YBYz' Magic Show suggested that young people were influenced by attending the show. A six-month evaluation suggested that the Show also had a long term value.

- 8.3.5 Value is added to the projects due to the partnership environment. For example, BDC had responsibility for the housing Adaptations project. Previously, there would be a triangle of activity between Adult Social Services, NCC and Broadland District Council but by working in partnership this had been devolved to a district level which allows Broadland District Council to be much more responsive. This project has also funded bathing equipment so that it could be trialled by the client prior to purchase – and importantly offered the same service to those who were ineligible – making it more likely that satisfied clients would make the necessary private purchases.
- 8.3.6 The Small Grants Programme encourages communities to find solutions to their own problems.
- 8.3.7 A Care and Repair scheme to enable older people living alone in private housing to receive small repairs to their properties could also be considered to play an important role in the Community Partnership context as it acts as an ‘eyes and ears’ alert for Adult Social Services when problems arise due to elderly people living alone. There is a very strong team of people who come up with new ways to deal with issues and who use lateral thinking to add value to the Strategic Partnership.
- 8.3.8 The Partnership does investigate ‘green spaces’ link to its priorities in the following ways:
- By considering what deployment of green space is required to provide ‘pride in place’.
 - In terms of green corridors, to allow people to cycle into work.
 - In terms of food production, the impact on landscape and how green spaces are to be protected in growth areas.
 - Green spaces are about biodiversity and Broadland District Council has launched an initiative ‘Save Broadland Bumblebees’ which if not taken seriously could lead to a serious threat to food production.
- 8.4 Members offered their congratulations to Councillor Woodbridge and the officers concerned for their enthusiasm and commitment to the Community Partnership which shined through the presentation.
- 8.5 Councillor Woodbridge voiced concern that whilst the County Strategic Partnership has responsibility for bringing together all information for the Local Area Agreement, this information could be better used at district level. BCP could offer a unique opportunity to test and trial projects in the Broadland context and would welcome the opportunity to trial key projects.
- 8.6 The Chairman thanked Councillor Woodbridge and his team for their very interesting and informative presentation.

Resolved:

- 8.7 Members confirmed that the scrutiny of the BCP was now complete and that the Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership would be the next partnership to undergo the scrutiny process.

9. Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

- 9.1 Members considered the outline programme for scrutiny which had been updated to show progress since the 22 July 2009 meeting.
- 9.2 It was noted that a risk management presentation had taken place in March 2008 and further risk management training for Members was being offered on 24 and 28 September and 13 October. This was a very important issue and Members were encouraged to attend one of the training sessions. Mr Adams said that if enough Members expressed an interest, evening training sessions could be arranged or alternatively, if training was required for one or two members, then a meeting could be arranged with the officer concerned.
- 9.3 Members suggested that if they are unable to attend a training session then comprehensive information should be made available to them. Various ways of making this information available were suggested, including via Members Insight but some twin-hatters stated that they could not gain access to this site via their district council supplied IT equipment.

Resolved:

- 9.4 Following discussion it was agreed that the following scrutiny topics should be added to the forward work programme:
- i) Freedom of Information enquiries and complaints - officer time spent providing information and other related costs (to include the number of people who habitually make FOI requests and the costs incurred). This information should be included as part of the 'Compliments and Complaints Report' to be presented at the 18 November meeting.
 - ii) A brief review report on making NCC's ICT systems greener.
 - iii) To examine the framework that this Council uses to deliver shared services (both internally and with other Councils) to ensure it is robust.

10. Performance and Resources Monitoring Report

- 10.1 Members received and considered the annexed report (10) which included an update on performance and financial monitoring information.
- 10.2 Members heard that the Audit Commission had widened the scope of the assessment to look at how the authority uses resources across the organisation and the Use of Resources assessment achieved a level 3 score which meant the authority was 'performing well' – a good result.
- 10.3 There was still some uncertainty surrounding the amount recoverable from the Icelandic Banks as the administration process was not complete and it would take some time to resolve. The legal costs to be incurred by the authority as part of the winding-up process were quite small and these would be reported to the next Cabinet. These legal costs would be included as part of the authority's claim to the administrators.
- 10.4 Members noted that the 1st quarter figure for the total number of employees declaring a disability under the DDA definition was 2.09% and that this remained a key area for improvement over the coming year. Detailed analysis was made available on an annual basis as part of the Workforce Profile report received annually by the Panel. Further information, including

details of the action being taken to improve in this area could be provided on request.

- 10.5 The target for the total of orders raised through i-procurement was £135m for 2009-10. This did not represent any cash savings as it was more about standardizing systems of ordering to increase efficiency. It was suggested that the authority should simplify the process of efficiency and savings on a portfolio basis which would show actual savings. Members heard that the November meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels would receive budget proposals for 2010-11 and these would broadly be shown by portfolio.
- 10.6 The consultation process underway with religious and belief groups and lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Norfolk was being undertaken to provide information which would help the Council ensure that its services are inclusive of all people who live and work in Norfolk. There had been a good response to the consultation which had been extended.
- 10.7 With reference to paragraph 3.2, the Revenue Budget Outturn 2009-2010, Adjusted Budget included movements since the County Council approved the budget. Members heard that Government guidance had stated that the authority does not have to budget for the Iceland Bank losses incurred until 2010-2011. However, the loss of interest incurred as part of the Iceland Bank losses had been reflected in the 2008-09 accounts. In terms the Adjusted Budget, this related to movements since the budget was set by the authority.

11. Efficiency Programme

- 11.1 Members received and considered the annexed report (11) which provided a review of progress against the Council's 2009-2010 efficiency targets.
- 11.2 Energy costs had risen due in part because of the volatility of the energy markets and also the extended school and library opening hours which had led to increased energy usage. Mr Williams advised that the authority had saved £16m in the last year by purchasing its energy through ESPO.
- 11.3 The Head of Efficiency agreed to arrange for Dominic Allan, Sustainability Manager, to provide a response to Ms Toms as to how the authority's carbon footprint is calculated

The meeting closed at 11.55am.

Chairman



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Appendix A



Broadland Community Partnership

**NCC Overview & Scrutiny
23rd September 2009**

Cllr Simon Woodbridge



... leading the way

Broadland Portrait

Place Survey Results

- Satisfaction with the local area has improved from 91% to 94%, the 3rd highest district in the country
- 68% of residents feel safe after dark: 95% feel safe during the day
- 84% feel people from different backgrounds get on well together
- 4 in 5 residents say their health is good - 79%



... leading the way

BCP Portrait

- **Strategic Board**
(15 active partners with 4 supporting agencies who attend for specific issues)
- **Operational MAST** - Multi-Agency Support Team
(12 active partners, with thematic champion support for specific issues)
- **Thematic Champions** for our 9 vision themes
- **Action owners** for each action within our 2008 - 2011 action plan



... leading the way

BCP Priorities

9 Vision Themes

1. Feeling Safe
2. Ease of Access
3. Where We Live
4. Good Health:
5. Decent Homes
6. Thriving Economy
7. Our Potential
8. Living for the Future
9. Pride in Place



... leading the way

BCP Strengths

- Partnership commitment
- Strategic planning
- Delivery on the ground
- Keeping in contact with our residents



... leading the way

Now – and future

- Growth agenda – appropriate housing – service delivery - Rackheath Eco-community
- Demographics – the ageing population – inward migration and community cohesion
- Economics – skills and training – green technology
- Prevention – Stairway and the spiralling cost of cure



... leading the way

Enhanced role of NCC and NCSP

- Visioning
- Commissioning for self reliance
- Support Partnerships as well as Partners
- Flexible responses at district level
- Prevention better than cure



... leading the way