



Communities Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 7 November 2018
10:00am, Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Mrs M Dewsbury – Chairman

Mr T Adams
Ms J Barnard
Mr D Bills
Mr N Dixon
Mr R Hanton
Mr H Humphrey

Dr C Jones
Mr K Kiddie
Mr B Long – Vice-Chairman
Ms C Rumsby
Ms S Squire
Mr J Ward

1. Apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Butikofer (Mr T Adams substituted).

2. To agree the minutes of the meetings held on 10 October 2018.

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10 October 2018 were agreed as an accurate record by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 Ms J Barnard declared an Other Interest in item 12 as she worked for an organisation that received a community grant from Public Health.

4. Urgent business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

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 No updates were received.

8 Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant Strategy and Action Plan

8.1 Mr K Kiddie, Armed Forces Champion, informed the Committee that Norfolk County Council had recently been awarded the Bronze Award in acknowledgement of its employee recognition scheme by the Ministry of Defence. Mr Kiddie said he was very proud that Norfolk had been recognised as one of the most friendly Armed Forces counties in the country and he thanked officers and Members for their continued support.

The Committee congratulated everyone involved in the achievement.

8.2 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services providing it with the mid-year progress report on Norfolk's Independent Armed Forces Covenant Board's Strategy and Action Plan 2017/2019. The report also set out the Board's emerging forward strategy for 2019/2021 which was being developed following its successful first conference in June 2018, which was attended by Members of Communities Committee and representatives from local partner agencies and charities, the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

8.3 Mr T Tomkinson, Chairman of the Armed Forces Covenant Board advised the Committee that he would be retiring in March 2019 at the end his term as Armed Forces Commissioner. He paid tribute to the support given by officers at Norfolk County Council, particularly Caroline Money, Merry Halliday and Bev Herron who had provided excellent assistance to both himself as Chairman as well as the work of the Covenant Board.

8.3.1 In introducing the report, the Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer advised that the recent Armed Forces Conference had proved very successful and had enabled the Board to obtain sufficient information to allow it to develop its action plan. A report, detailing the specific projects the Board had decided to focus on, would be presented to the Communities Committee at its March 2019 meeting.

8.3.2 The Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer informed the Committee that interviews to select a new Armed Forces Commissioner (who would also be Chairman of the Covenant Board) would be taking place during week commencing 12 November 2018.

8.4 The following points were noted in response to questions and comments from the Committee:

8.4.1 Members welcomed the Covenant and the progress which had been made. They commented that more information was needed with regard to veterans' mental health and homelessness, as there was only a small reference to this in the report.

The Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer responded that the issue of mental

health was being tackled nationally and had been discussed at the recent conference. The Board was currently trying to ascertain exactly where its focus should be within Norfolk and once this work had been completed, the Committee would receive further information.

Regarding Homelessness, the Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer advised that the Board had an excellent working relationship with District Councils, particularly Norwich City Council, and that some work was being undertaken to try to identify the number of homeless veterans and what could be done to provide help and support.

- 8.4.2 The Chairman commented that, at a recent meeting between Norfolk County Council Committee Chairmen and Healthwatch representatives, the subject of dental services in West Norfolk had been raised again. The Committee noted that work was continuing to try to resolve the problem, although it was recognised that skilled dentists were difficult to recruit nationally. The Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer advised that a meeting had recently been held with representatives from RAF Marham and the NHS Dental Commissioner to discuss how to take the matter forward and the NHS was expected to report to the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the near future.
- 8.4.3 When the Covenant Board was established, it had been agreed to include the two District Councils which had the highest number of serving military personnel living in their area. Some work was being carried out to engage with other District and Borough Councils, with the possibility of inviting them to attend meetings.
- 8.4.4 It was considered that mental health provision on the Board Membership was adequate, as there was a Strategic NHS representative leading on mental health, a GP and a representative from Public Health. As the Board considered how to develop its mental health services, there may be an opportunity to include other mental health representatives.
- 8.4.5 In an effort to address the lack of dentistry services, the Covenant Board had facilitated meetings between the NHS Dental Commissioner and RAF Marham which had already been referred to in paragraph 8.4.2 above. The Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer advised that RAF Marham was trying to identify a suitable building for setting up a dental practice although this was proving difficult.
- 8.4.6 Stand Easy Military Support for Veterans was a charity which provided acupuncture for veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to try to help them recover and move on with their lives. To date, Stand Easy had enabled 20 veterans to receive acupuncture treatment. The project had been overseen by Healthwatch who had monitored the therapy and, following feedback, had recommended that acupuncture was recognised as a valid treatment for PTSD.
- 8.4.7 Some Members asked if it may be possible to introduce a publicity campaign to lobby for silent fireworks, or ban fireworks completely except for organised displays, as they had received feedback from some veterans that loud fireworks were traumatising them.

- 8.5 The Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:
1. Note the progress against the current Norfolk Armed Forces covenant Action Plan 2017/19.
 2. Note the scope of the Board's emerging forward strategy for 2019/21.

9 Norfolk Community Learning Services

- 9.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services providing an update on the performance and continuing improvement journey of Norfolk Community Learning Services (NCLS).
- 9.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:
- 9.2.1 An Architect had recently been appointed to investigate how the Wensum Lodge site could be fully utilised whilst ensuring it remained a community asset.
- 9.2.2 At the moment the progress of individual learners was not always tracked, although plans were underway to ascertain if the CRM system could track course attendees and how they were progressing, as well as future employment.
- 9.2.3 Work was being undertaken with the customer services team to trial new technology which would hopefully reduce the number of complaints received about online course enrolment.
- 9.2.4 Discussions were taking place with the Economic Development team about highlighting the benefits to businesses of offering apprenticeships. The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services advised that some contracts, for example Tarmac, made provision for apprenticeships and that 15 apprentices had been appointed to date with scope to offer more.
- 9.2.5 Several people had used creative courses as a stepping stone to starting up their own small business or moving on to further education courses. Investigations were taking place to consider the possibility of offering space and equipment to individuals to use without taking up learning space whilst not being in direct competition with other learners and organisations.
- 9.2.6 The gap in the digital offer was recognised as an opportunity for IT business skills to be offered over and above those offered by the library service.
- 9.2.7 The Assistant Director, Community, Information and Learning would speak with Ms Squire about the work being undertaken by the steering group to provide curriculum topics in areas they were most needed.
- 9.2.8 The specific difference between community learning and adult education and training was that participants enrolling on education and training courses were usually required to pass an exam or certificate at the end of course which some learners found daunting.
- 9.2.9 Achievement for participants on life and work preparation courses was

measured by the number of people who had joined a course, against the number of people who finished the course. This measure also included people with learning disabilities.

9.2.10 The Committee **agreed** the following amendment to recommendation 1 of the report:

“**Acknowledge and commend** ~~Note~~ the continued progress of Norfolk Community Learning Services.”

9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Acknowledge and commend** the continued progress of Norfolk Community Learning Services.
2. **Approve** the amended terms of reference for the NCLS Steering Group.

10 Smarter Information and Advice

10.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out how the Smarter Information and Advice programme aimed to make it easier for people to find trusted, reliable information and advice to make better decisions that improved their physical, emotional and financial independence and wellbeing. The report provided the Committee with an overview of the aims, objectives and progress within the Smarter Information and Advice workstream.

10.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

10.2.1 A copy of the Digital Inclusion Strategy would be circulated to the Committee.

10.2.2 The Digital Inclusion Strategy had been developed to try to make on-line services available to as many Norfolk residents as possible, including those people who were not confident with technology.

10.2.3 The information on the Norfolk County Council corporate website had been designed to work on any device, for example computer, smartphone or tablet. In slow broadband areas, the technology had the ability to lose some of its features, for example pictures, fancy text, etc. so it just included basic, text-based information.

10.2.4 To obtain feedback from users about the information and advice the document needed to include, a series of engagement sessions were being planned for December 2018. Adult Social Care and Children’s Services departments had also provided feedback, including some parents with special education needs (SEN) children, which would feed into the Strategy.

10.2.5 The Assistant Director, Community, Information and Learning explained that the trajectory tracking the number of customers visiting the website target rising in December 2018 could be due to the increase in demand for information at that time of year. It was hoped that a reduction in demand for face to face contact would be seen when customers were able to access services and information online.

10.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- **Note** the approach and strategic direction of the Smarter Information and Advice workstream.

11 **Recommendations from the Road Safety Member Task and Finish Group**

11.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services presenting the findings from the member Task and Finish Group on road safety and outlining a series of recommendations which set the strategic direction going forward.

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

11.2.1 Some Members asked if it would be possible to receive information about the determining factors of accidents in their constituency which would allow them to decide if they wished to offer part of their £6000 highways grant money to make improvements. Members were referred to recommendation 6 which came about as a result of the task and finish group raising these questions. The Road Safety Team Manager advised that determining factors for all road traffic accidents was collated although the information was not available on the website. The Road Safety Team Manager suggested Members speak with their local Highways Engineers, who could help them access the information.

11.2.2 Following a comment about a driving instructor in Thorpe St Andrew offering a free course to users of the Broadland Northway on how to drive on the road, the Road Safety Team Manager said he was aware of the work and noted its potential value.

11.2.3 Members highlighted the need to continue to work with key partners including highways authorities such as Norwich City Council as part of the new partnership approach detailed in recommendation 2.

11.2.4 Members commented that the mapping browser website was a helpful resource which could be used to highlight the details of accidents.

11.2.5 Members commented that some insurance companies offered a smartphone app which monitored the driving habits of young drivers. Depending on how the person drove, insurance premiums could either rise or fall.

11.2.6 The Committee **agreed** to amend recommendation 8 and recommendation 10.

Recommendation 8. Add "Withdraw the vital sign and introduce a".

Recommendation 10. Remove the reference to Local Members.

11.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. As a Council, develop a wider strategy for road safety based on the safe system approach.
2. Recommend the adoption of the Safe System Approach to partner

- agencies with a new partnership approach to take it forward.
3. Support the Highways Department to continue the prioritisation of maintenance programmes whilst seeking opportunities for safety improvements through developer and maintenance schemes.
 4. Support the Highways Department to identify sources of funding to enhance and innovate local safety schemes in accordance with the new Safe Systems Approach.
 5. Seek to agree a shared approach to the management of speed which considers limited resources – aspire to shift efforts to proactive prevention and not just reactive responses.
 6. Highways engineers support members to prioritise the use of their highways budget on schemes across their division.
 7. Integrate Highways and Road Safety communications to promote a single Safe Systems Approach.
 8. Withdraw the Vital Sign and introduce a new package of data and intelligence that identify local risks and include data from a range of partner agencies.
 9. Members will be informed of bids submitted by Norfolk County Council to the Safety Camera Partnership funding pot.
 10. Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC) Parish Council coordinator and Highways continue to communicate effectively with town and parish councils.
 11. A review of the campaigns and communications strategy in road safety.

12 Annual Review of Public Health Strategy

- 12.1 Following an email from Diabetes UK which had been received by some Members, seeking support in campaigning the NHS to fund flash glucose monitors, the Director of Public Health advised that the matter was being referred to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee who would be deciding whether to add the subject to its formal agenda. A statement to that effect was being prepared and would be circulated as soon as it was available.
- 12.2 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services presenting the progress made in delivering the Norfolk Public Health Strategy and outlining the approach and operational priorities for 2019.
- 12.3 The following points were noted in response to questions:
- 12.3.1 The Director of Public Health advised that the number of smoking adults was now split more equally between men and women. Whilst the overall number of smokers was reducing, there continued to be a higher number of men in manual type roles who smoked. Of concern was also the number of women who smoked during pregnancy. The concerns around the number of young people starting to smoke and the need to tackle that cohort was recognised.
- 12.3.2 There was currently no definitive position around the use of e-cigarettes, although some work was being undertaken by the NHS to move to promoting vaping as an alternative to tobacco products. While an evidence base had not yet been established, indications were starting to emerge that it was more beneficial to vape rather than smoke cigarettes and legal advice was being

sought about the possibility of using vouchers for existing smokers wishing to quit to purchase vaping equipment.

- 12.3.3 Some work was being undertaken by District and Borough Councils, particularly in King's Lynn and Norwich around rough sleeping and homelessness. The Director of Public Health would bring some further information about public health involvement to the Committee when it was available.
- 12.3.4 The Director of Public Health explained that obesity and related actions to address was a complex subject noting that, if Norfolk was benchmarked across the country, it came out about average, with approximately two thirds of adults being overweight or obese.
- 12.3.5 The Director of Public Health would review the points raised by Ms Rumsby in relation to end of life provision.
- 12.3.6 The proposed removal of the Active Norfolk funding contribution from public health stemmed from Active Norfolk reviewing its strategy and deciding to become a more strategic organisation. The amount from Public Health to Active Norfolk had not been reviewed since it had been introduced in 2008. The Public Health contribution was a small amount of a much larger Active Norfolk budget. The Director of Public Health explained that the reason for the risk rating being shown as "red" was because an approach to maintaining a joint working arrangement was currently being sought to review healthy lifestyles and was not a suggestion that Public Health wanted to encourage people to be less active.
- 12.3.7 A pilot project designed to prevent young people from commencing smoking had been established with ASH. Therefore, the proposal was to end funding for this pilot and incorporate activity into the specialist stop smoking contract. The Director of Public Health would review the situation in relation to children and young people smoking.
- 12.3.8 Ms Barnard commented that she had attended a session on self-harm at a recent mental health suicide conference. Ms Barnard said she questioned best practice advice given in relation to sharp objects being removed from individuals who had indicated an intention to self-harm and asked if there was any other advice or information available for Members which provided a clear steer on the subject. The Director of Public Health agreed to seek some specialist advice and feedback the information to Communities Committee Members.
- 12.3.9 The Joy of Food programme had combined with the Norfolk Community Learning Service approximately 18 months ago and the service was now delivered jointly. As a result there was no longer a need for Public Health funding as national grant funding was available to the Community Learning Service from other sources.
- 12.3.10 The acronym CCS stood for Cambridge Community Service, who delivered the healthy child programme. The savings proposals related to a sub-contracting pilot by CCS and would not affect front-facing health visiting services.

12.3.11 It was expected that the specialist grant funding for outreach support forming links to sexual health services to address the challenges of teenage pregnancy/sexual health had succeeded enabling a move into the mainstream service.

12.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to

1. **Note** and agree progress made in relation to the delivery of the 4-year Public Health Strategy.
2. **Agree** the strategic priorities, commissioning intentions and budget plan outline over the next three years.
3. **Approve** the proposed savings for 2019-20 as set out in Appendix 5 of the report, to meet the reduction in the ring fenced Public Health Grant.

13 Finance Monitoring

13.1 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.

13.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

13.2.1 The Finance Business Partner Community and Environmental Services clarified that reserves were held for specific reasons, ie an unspent grant or contribution or planned expenditure that may fall over multiple financial years or a repairs and renewal service. A provision was an amount set aside for unknown events such as a provision for bad debts, where the event wasn't known but it was prudent to set an amount aside.

13.2.2 The Finance Business Partner Community and Environmental Services would ascertain the reasons for the forecast in year underspend on the Fire capital programme and check whether this was funded from the CLG Grant funding for of the same amount and feed this back to the Committee.

13.3 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

14 Forward Plan and Decisions taken under delegated authority

14.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out the Forward Plan for Communities Committee.

14.2 The Committee agreed to add the following item to the Forward work programme.

- Rough sleeping and homelessness

14.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to **note:**
The Forward Plan at Appendix A of the report.

The meeting concluded at 12.40pm.

Chairman