



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Broadland District Council, held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on 15 June 2021 at 10.00 am when there were present:

Committee Members Present: Councillor: S Riley (Chairman), M L Murrell (Vice-Chairman), N J Brennan, P E Bulman, S J Catchpole, S I Holland, C Karimi-Ghovanlou, D King, K G Leggett, G K Nurden and S M Prutton.

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Place, Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager, Communities Manager, Senior Governance Officer (SW), and Democratic Services Officers (LA, JO)

Also In Attendance Amanda Murr and Liam Bannon from the Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr K Kelly and Cllr N Shaw.

10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

11 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman noted reference in the minutes to the Environmental Strategy, which was raised under minute 6 - Strategic Performance and Finance

Report Quarter 4, and that a presentation from the newly appointed Environmental Coordinator was to be raised as a future item for the Work Programme.

12 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

Amanda Murr advised the meeting that she was the manager of the Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership (NCCSP). The NCCSP was unique in that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had a memorandum of understanding with Norfolk County Council that the NCCSP would lie within the PCC, which allowed for the coordination of the Norfolk Community Safety Plan and the Police and Crime Plan.

Norfolk's Community Safety Plan was in the process of being refreshed and was currently out for consultation to allow Norfolk residents to give their views on community safety priorities, approaches, and long-term outcomes. The consultation would run until 16 July 2021.

The NCCSP's strategic assessment of crime and community safety issues affecting Norfolk informed the seven proposed priorities for the next three years. These were:

- Serious violence
- Domestic and sexual abuse
- Preventing terrorism
- Criminal exploitation, including modern slavery and county lines
- Neighbourhood crimes like robbery, burglary, anti-social behaviour, vehicle crime, and other theft offences
- Hate crime and community tensions
- Fraud, which amounted to £16m a year in Norfolk

The proposed approach to responding to these priorities used the evidence-led Public Health Model. This meant the NCCSP would develop an understanding of the proposed priorities using available data and information. It would then develop interventions that would be effective in achieving its long-term outcomes.

The NCCSP wanted to make the public and professionals aware of a variety of community safety issues in order to enable them to better protect themselves and others. Once the priorities had been agreed, the partnership would use a variety of approaches to promote important community safety messages to both the people of Norfolk and professionals.

The NCCSP had proposed setting 12 long-term outcomes, which it would work to achieve over the course of the next three years. These were spread across the following four strategic areas:

Building resilient, cohesive communities

- So people felt safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in Norfolk
- Reducing overall levels of hate crime, fraud and anti-social behaviour
- So victims felt confident reporting their experience and were able to cope and recover.

Tackling and reducing neighbourhood crime

- So victims of neighbourhood crime were supported to cope and recover from their experience
- To reduce overall neighbourhood crime levels
- To reduce reoffending.

Reducing the threat of criminal exploitation

- So people were prevented from being drawn into criminal exploitation and terrorism
- So victims of exploitation were made to feel safe
- People most at risk of criminal exploitation in Norfolk were identified and supported as early as possible.
- Safeguarding communities from abuse and serious violence
- So victims were more confident reporting their experience and were satisfied with the response
- So victims of abuse and violence were supported to cope and recover
- To reduce overall victimisation, risk, harm, perpetration and reoffending for rape and sexual offences, domestic abuse and serious violence.

The Community Safety Partnership brought together organisations from across Norfolk to tackle crime and disorder, and thematic priority delivery groups would be responsible for responding to these priorities, including domestic abuse, modern slavery, serious violence and community cohesion.

A member noted that when crime statistics were presented to parish councils and Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels they were often not up-to-date or comprehensive enough.

In response, the Committee was informed that this would be taken on board and that the NCCSP had an ambition to include measures to ensure that relevant and timely information was made available as one of its outcomes in the Plan. The Committee was advised that the NCCSP website was also due for a refresh, but the partnership did not wish to be digitally exclusive and wanted the public to know about its work through a wide range of media.

In answer to a query about extremism, the Committee was informed that this could happen anywhere, even in the most rural of areas, and that members, with a good local knowledge of their wards, were a vital source of intelligence for the detection of potential terrorist activity.

The Committee were asked to support the approach and priorities set out in the Community Safety Plan.

The Assistant Director for Individuals and Families advised the meeting that a formal response from the Council to the consultation was to be drafted. The Chairman thanked Amanda Murr and Liam Bannon for their comprehensive presentation.

13 PROVISION OF LEISURE PRINCIPLES

The Communities Manager and the Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager gave a presentation on Community Wellbeing, which encompassed the means of supporting individuals and communities to be:

- Independent
- Self-sufficient
- Physically and mentally active
- Creative
- Healthy
- Prosperous
- Supportive
- Able to access local, regional, national and global funding, knowledge and expertise

Community Wellbeing supported the Council's priorities of:

- Growing the economy
- Supporting individuals and empowering communities
- Protecting and improving the natural and built environment, whilst maximising the quality of life
- Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively

All these priorities were covered, but a particular emphasis was placed on supporting individuals. The economy was also stimulated through investment, job creation and up skilling the workforce. Protecting and improving the natural and built environment was carried out through Assets of Community Value and moving with the times was demonstrated by digital content and the lottery.

This work was all part of a bigger picture, which saw Broadly Active patients referred to the Help Hub and Community Connectors for support and advice and preventing problems at an early stage.

Three key elements of this were

- To act as a broker to ensure that communities were aware of what is out there and how to access it.
- To deliver when services were not privately viable, but necessary

- To enable communities to develop their own services or provide wider services at a local level and use time, skills and resource to let the community grow themselves

The Council undertook a wide range of projects and activities as part of the Community Wellbeing agenda including: Broadly Active, Tots2Teens, Member Ward Grants and the Community at Heart Lottery. Many activities had no core expenditure and those that did represented very good value for money such as Tot2Teens. Moreover, Broadland was the only such provider that worked on a one to one basis with children with special needs and a discounted service was also provided for people on benefits.

Other elements of the wellbeing agenda included Member Ward Grants, which funded 33 projects in 2020/21. It was intended to gather more data on these projects in future to provide evidence of the number of people benefiting from these projects.

The Community at Heart Lottery had proven to be a success, with core annual expenditure of £1,042 absorbed in the income from the lottery and an estimate of £48,500 generated for good causes by the end of the year. So far 53 good causes had signed up for lottery funds.

Sports Grants of £150 were awarded to promising individuals, whilst selected applicants chosen as Sporting Champions had received £1000.

Wellbeing groups had been established across the District, and it was emphasised that it was usually officer time, rather than money, that was required to start up these groups.

There were over 13,500 residents registered with parkrun in the District which had no ongoing costs after the £4,000 one off cost to get the schemes started.

Projects such as the Community at Heart Lottery or parkrun cost very little in terms of time, resource and finance, but supported a huge number of people. Members were advised that as a resident's individual needs increased, so did the cost of intervention, for example Broadly Active was relatively expensive per person and required a lot of staff time, but each individual had much greater level of need that would present more expensive challenges to other elements of the public purse compared to the costs of the scheme.

The Chairman requested that officers bring a report back to the Committee prior to the final Cabinet report that would set out any areas of variance in policy or pressures in the delivery of service that the Team were experiencing together with any proposals from officers as to how these could tackled.

The Assistant Director for Individuals and Families confirmed that a report would be brought back to the Committee.

The Committee adjourned at 11.25am and reconvened at 11.35am, when all the Committee members listed above were present.

14 MAINTENANCE OF BRIDGES IN BROADLAND

The Director of Place introduced the report, which had been drafted following concerns raised by the Committee about the level of reserves that had been set aside to meet the Council's future liabilities for bridge maintenance.

The Committee was advised that the Council owned five bridges along the Marriott's Way and 19 bridges along the Bure Valley Railway (BVR). The bridge maintenance contract had historically been managed by Norfolk County Council's Bridge Team, but due to a high workload and limited resources there had been no recent programme of inspections or maintenance work carried out.

In order to address this issue the Council had appointed a specialist company to carry out an inspection programme for all the Council's bridges. The findings of the inspections were split into Low, Medium or High priorities along with their associated total costs. These were

- Low priority works: £170,800
- Medium priority works: £160,700
- High priority works: £6,500
- Total: £338,000

The budget for bridges had been separated by Cabinet in 2020 into two budgets, which totalled £270,000 for the BVR and £60,000 for Marriott's Way.

The works identified as a result of the inspections would now be translated into a programme of works that could be carried out within budget over the next 2-3 years, utilising the existing capital funds, as set out above.

In answer to a query about forming a trust with other public bodies to pay for the maintenance, it was confirmed that there was no short term pressure to form a trust at this stage, although it might be a consideration for the future.

Members were also advised that no major defects had been identified, but any future major repairs which would exceed the relevant budget, would be referred back to Members for approval. Discussions would also take place with the BVR over any major works.

In respect of the European Interreg project, led by the County Council, it was confirmed that this funding was for tourism and could not be used for ongoing maintenance.

In response to a query from the Chairman about the Adam and Eve Bridge at Little Hautbois, the Director of Place confirmed that emergency repairs had been commissioned and carried out. He would update members on these works after the meeting.

The Committee were advised that bridge repairs could be very costly. An example of this was Hoveton Footbridge, which had repair costs of £124,000.

The Chairman commended the level of detail included in the report, which had allowed the Committee to thoroughly scrutinise the budgetary measures that the Council had in place to fund the maintenance of the bridges that it was responsible for.

The Committee was informed that a new Community Assets Manager would shortly be in post and that a review was being conducted of all of the Council's assets.

AGREED

To note the report and the works required to maintain the Council's bridges on the Bure Valley Railway and Marriott's Way and to endorse the intention to draft a programme to carry out the identified maintenance works within the allocated budgets.

15 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Senior Governance Officer drew members' attention to the Work Programme. The Community Safety and Bridge Maintenance items had been satisfactorily concluded. The Leisure Principles item would be brought back to the Committee with a further report in August.

There were two items scheduled for the 24 August 2021 meeting, these were; Guidance for Town and Parish Councils in Respect of Public Open Space, as requested by Sprowston Town Council and Engagement in Public Consultations, which had been put forward by Cllr Shaw. The latter item was quite timely, as a new Customer Experience and Insight Lead had been recruited who would be able to advise the Committee on a preferred approach. Currently each Council department devise its own way to conduct consultations.

The 11 November 2021 meeting would review the Housing Allocations Policy following its implementation in April 2021. A review of the Member Grants Scheme would also be held at that meeting.

A date was still to be arranged for the Apprenticeships and New Schemes item, as a report to support a recommendation to the Secretary of State was still awaited.

A review of the Empty Homes Policy would be scheduled for June 2022.

The Time and Task Panel looking at Staff Turnover would be meeting in July. There were no updates from Cllr Copplestone regarding Broadband or water supply and management, although an all member briefing on Better Broadband for Norfolk was to be arranged for summer 2021.

The Council partnerships Register Review was on hold due to the pandemic.

The Committee confirmed that they would like the newly appointed Environmental Coordinator to come to a meeting to explain to members what projects she was proposing to undertake with the £750,000 Environmental Projects Reserve.

In response to a query about Committee the start times of meetings, the Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer that this would be scoped out with all members, but initially it would be considered through the Member Development Panel.

Discussion turned to the lack of any papers for today's presentations. It was confirmed that officers would seek to provide links or a brief summary for presentations in the future.

(The meeting concluded at 12.16pm)

Chairman