

WELLBEING PANEL

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Wellbeing Panel of Broadland District Council, held on Wednesday 3 February 2021 at 6pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: M Murrell (chairman), A Crotch, R Foulger, S Lawn, J Neesam, S Prutton, N Shaw, L Starling and F Whymark.

Officers in Attendance: The Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse), the Communities Senior Manager (K Gallagher), the Housing and Benefits Manager (R Dunsire) and the Committee Officers (DM and LA)

Colin Dutton and five members from the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) were also in attendance.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

No declarations of interest were made.

36 MINUTES

The minutes of the Wellbeing Panel meeting held on 9 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

37 YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

The Youth Advisory Board gave members an update on the work carried out in the Broadland community. The group emphasised the importance of giving young people a voice on issues alongside a chance to learn, grow and meet new people. Members were advised of the achievements of the group, including participation in the Norfolk Youth Against Bullying conference and, campaigning as part of Black History Month and Pride Month. The Panel was advised of the group's action plan for the upcoming year which included a focus on the wellbeing of the young people in the Broadland area. The group presented their *Recipe for Happiness*:

- Being creative
- Zoom meetings with Friends
- Spending time alone
- Spending time with our pets
- Cooking
- Listening and making music

The Chairman thanked the speakers and congratulated them on their informative presentation. He opened the meeting for discussion and comments from members.

A member asked how the group was coping with the COVID pandemic and the YAB explained that all meetings were being held on the Zoom platform to comply with Government Guidelines. It was noted at the time of the meeting, the group was holding two sessions each week but were looking forward to being able to meet in person once restrictions were lifted. A follow-up question was asked on how other young people could get involved with the group. Members were advised that all young people were welcome to join at any time and there was no formal commitment when attending YAB meetings.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing spoke of the importance of hearing from the young people of Broadland and asked what the Council could do to support the group with its aims for 2021. In response, it was suggested that a way forward could include an opening of dialogue between Councillors and the group outside of the meetings where discussion could take place on key topic areas.

In response to further questions on how young people could engage with the group and with organisations such as parish councils, it was noted that access points consisted of local magazines and through the youth worker assigned to the group. Members were keen to encourage opportunities for participation in the work of the group and suggested further advertisements in schools and parish newsletters could be an option.

In response to the discussion, the Assistant Director for Individuals and Families commented that often the young person's voice was overlooked and, moving forward, the Council would need to champion these voices within the early stages of discussions. The Director of People and Communities agreed and stated there were several areas where this could be incorporated. It was noted that a starting point could be around the revision of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and work around the current COVID pandemic.

The chairman thanked the Youth Advisory Board for their attendance and looked forward to working with them in the future. Members congratulated them on their contribution to the meeting which had been very professional and useful.

38 FUTURE POLICY DISCUSSION FOR COVID RECOVERY

Officers delivered the update on the work undertaken to support residents during the pandemic through a presentation attached at appendix one to the signed copy of these minutes. Members noted that the Council had been working closely with partners on a range of issues around the impact of COVID on residents. With regard to the topics covered in the presentation, members were asked to identify areas where policies could be developed and explored further in the future. Throughout the presentation, members were given the opportunity to comment and discuss the different areas.

Communities and Help Hub

In response to the Communities and Help Hub section, a member was pleased to hear the vaccine programme was going well but stressed the need for people who were offered the vaccine to take it up. The Senior Communities Manager assured members that the Council was working with several partners to support the vaccine rollout, including help with transport.

A member raised concern about social isolation, stating there had been a loss of some community resources as a result of COVID. Speaking about a project in her Ward, the member explained that, in the current climate, it was becoming harder for volunteers to keep the community group going and wondered if there was anything the Council could offer to support these groups. Officers were concerned to hear of the potential loss of community groups and encouraged any group facing difficulties to contact the Council for help.

Several Members raised concerns over the statistics regarding social prescribing. Officers explained when social prescribing had originally been commissioned, it was on a countywide basis involving different partnership arrangements. As a result, individual areas had different social prescribing contracts. The Broadland area was covered by a consortium of voluntary partners which also enveloped Norwich. It was noted that a lot of the work tended to focus on the city without the same emphasis in the more rural Broadland area. Members were informed of the key differences in the approaches to social prescribing which included areas where Social Prescribers were embedded in the GP Surgeries, allowing engagement with people on a first-hand basis. Officers were hopeful as time progressed that social prescribing would develop in the area with better engagement with GP Surgeries and the Voluntary Sector Partners to achieve this.

The Director for People and Communities acknowledged the importance of having a strong social prescribing structure in place, and the long term benefits it would achieve. Members were informed that a business case was being developed by officers, to demonstrate that investment in a service such

as social prescribing, would see a benefit by reducing demand on the Housing and Benefits statutory functions. A member asked if this issue could be brought back to the Panel as soon as possible to review and discuss further and it was agreed that this would be revisited later in the meeting as part of the forward work plan.

Housing and Benefits

The Housing and Benefits Manager presented this section and updated members on the following work: Test and Trace £500 isolation payments, COVID-19 Hardship Fund, the new Housing telephone system, the £250 heating payments and the temporary accommodation figures.

The Chairman opened the discussion by commenting on the importance of the Test and Trace isolation payments in providing essential support for residents. The presenting officer confirmed the payments were being processed within a three-day turnaround.

During the discussion, members thanked officers and their teams for all the work they had undertaken. The Housing and Benefits Manager added that recognition needed to be given to the staff who had been redeployed from other areas of the Council and had helped the team meet its targets.

Housing Standards

The Assistant Director for Individuals and Families gave members an update on Housing Standards. In the main, officers had been able to continue to access residents' houses and implement work associated with Disabled Facility Grants in the current lockdown unlike the previous lockdown, with unspent funds being carried forward. It was also noted that the Council had received additional funding to help with a range of adaptations to keep people in their homes. Officers also explained that new options had become available where the money could be spent; this included Mental Health and Care Support grants.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing emphasised the value of Disabled Facility Grants in allowing residents to access help at an early stage, and helping to avoid calls on other services at a later date.

Potential areas to explore and the Forward Work Plan

Members' attention was drawn to the areas which officers had identified to explore. These included: mental wellbeing, housing, employment, domestic abuse, community development, loneliness and isolation, hospital discharge and admission avoidance and home adaption. Members were asked to comment and suggest changes to these areas alongside the forward work programme.

In relation to the earlier concerns around social prescribing, officers confirmed the item would be added to the work programme with a report coming back to the Panel as soon as possible.

In supporting the key areas to explore, the Chairman made reference to the impact of Covid on employment and skills and that this was an area for further investigation. Members were advised that this was currently part of the Delivery Plan, but officers would look to bring this forward in light of the current pandemic.

The discussion turned to the review of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy scheduled for Q4 21/22 and whether this could be brought forward. It was noted that the strategy linked with several other items listed on the work programme. The framework for the Strategy was already in place and whilst items could be brought forward for review, a big part of the review would include consideration of people's long-term wellbeing resulting from the current pandemic as well as short-term implications.

The Chairman acknowledged the future involvement of the YAB when shaping and discussing policies, highlighting that there was a need to gather different viewpoints on the topics in the work programme.

The Chairman thanked officers and members for their participation in the meeting and it was

RESOLVED

To note the information presented and that the discussion outlined above be used to help inform future Policy Development.

(The meeting concluded at 8pm)

Chairman