

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Tuesday, 15th October, 2019 at 5.00 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors C Sampson (Chair), L Bambridge, C Bower, A Bubb, S Collop, M de Whalley, A Kemp, J Kirk, J Moriarty (substitute for A Bullen), S Squire and M Wilkinson.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor I Devereux – Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor P Kunes – Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services
Councillor E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillors J Bhondi, C Morley and A Ryves.

OFFICERS:

Sarah Dennis – Partnerships and Funding Officer
Lorraine Gore – Chief Executive
Ged Greaves – Senior Policy and Performance Officer
John Greenhalgh – Environmental Health Manager
Duncan Hall – Housing Services Manager
Honor Howell – Assistant Director

BY INVITATION:

Dr Mark Osbourne – Norfolk County Council
Dan Wilson – Norfolk County Council

EC38: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bullen, Lawrence and Long.

EC39: MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

EC40: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EC41: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

EC42: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Bhondi – EC47
Councillor Morley – EC47
Councillor Ryves – EC44, EC45, EC46 and EC47

EC43: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

EC44: PREVENT AND COUNTY LINES

The Panel received a presentation from Dr Mark Osbourne, Prevent Co-ordinator and Dan Wilson, Operations Manager, Child Criminal Exploitation Team at Norfolk County Council on Prevent and Child Criminal Exploitation.

A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Norfolk County Council for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Bambridge asked about the Safeguarding duty in Schools. Dan Wilson outlined the role of schools in relation to the Prevent duty and explained that training would be looked at to ensure that schools were spotting the signs of vulnerability and aware of the reporting process.

Councillor Ryves addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. In response to his question the County Lines process was outlined and it was explained that if Members had any specific concerns, they should be reported to the Police.

The Panel was informed that Norfolk County Council were looking at how awareness could be raised within the community and workshops were being held around the County to look at what was working well, areas to focus on and how awareness can be raised.

It was explained that Prevent and Child Criminal Exploitation was linked with hate crime and radicalisation. Nationally and locally hate crime had increased, therefore it was important that information was shared, hence the multi-agency approach.

In response to a question from the Vice Chair, regarding reporting issues, it was explained that the risk would be assessed and reported to the Police who would conduct an initial assessment within five days. The case would then be presented to the next Channel Panel, which

usually met on a monthly basis, however a special meeting could be called if required.

Councillor Moriarty referred to Safeguarding training and it was confirmed that all Members had been offered Safeguarding training, and in accordance with the statutory duty, the relevant officers had also received training. Mark Osbourne explained that the Home Office had free online training which was available to Councillors and further training could also be provided if necessary.

Councillor de Whalley asked about training in schools and it was explained that there was an early intervention youth fund which had enabled presentations and education to be provided. Work was also ongoing to look at the provision for transition from primary to secondary school.

Mark Osbourne explained that the Prevent duty applied to schools and that they were also required to promote British Values which included tolerance and democracy etc. How schools were meeting their Prevent duty was assessed as part of Ofsted.

Councillor Wilkinson referred to an incident at a local Pharmacy and it was explained that issues should be reported to the Police as required and the Panel was informed that work was ongoing to look at how awareness could be raised within the community and this could extend to businesses and the private sector, but currently the duty did not apply to them.

Councillor Ryves addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and asked for information on the number of individuals involved in Child Criminal Exploitation in West Norfolk. It was explained that figures were unavailable for West Norfolk, but across the County it was estimated that eighty to ninety young people had been exploited.

Councillor Ryves also asked if there was a leaflet or information sheet which could be made available for inclusion in Parish newsletters. It was explained that this was something that could be looked at as part of the workshop sessions.

Councillor Kemp asked for information on the process once a risk had been identified. It was explained that all information and evidence would be collated and the Police would meet with the individual and their family. The case would also be presented to the Channel Panel so that a multiagency response could be provided.

In response to a question from Councillor Morley it was explained that there was a Prevent Strategy in place which came under the Community Safety Partnership and ways of raising awareness were continuing to be looked at. It was also explained that Home Office guidance was followed and there was currently limited comparative research available.

Mark Osbourne referred to the increase of individuals who were coming through the system who were on the autistic spectrum. Councillor Squire referred to the vulnerability of children with autism and asked if Norfolk County Council worked with autism charities and organisations. Mark Osbourne explained that work was ongoing to engage with different organisations and build resilience and he would welcome the opportunity to provide information and raise awareness with organisations.

RESOLVED: 1. Members with any further queries should contact John Greenhalgh, Environmental Health Manager at the Borough Council.
2. The Panel to receive further updates or training as necessary.

EC45: **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME - THEMED FUND**

The Partnerships and Funding Officer presented the report and reminded Members that in July 2019 they had received a report asking for their suggestions on the use of the Financial Assistance ‘themed’ Fund. The Panel had suggested some ideas which required further investigation and this was now presented to the Panel for consideration.

The Chair thanked the Partnerships and Funding Officer for her report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Bower suggested that the fund be used for musical teaching in schools and the purchase of instruments. The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health explained that there were already several outlets in West Norfolk which provided this such as Norfolk Music Hub, Creative Arts East, West Norfolk Girls Schools Trust and King’s Lynn Festival.

Councillor Kemp suggested that the fund be used for tree planting and made reference to Hardings Way. The Chair explained that the Woodland Trust could provide assistance with tree planting. The Partnerships and Funding Officer explained that there was also an open spaces fund available through the financial assistance scheme as a result of Government Funding being awarded. The fund was being administered by Norfolk Community Foundation and was open for bids until 31st October 2019. More information was available at <https://www.norfolkfoundation.com/funding-support/grants/groups/open-spaces-fund/?area=west-norfolk>

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health, Councillor Nockolds explained that Groundworks Gallery and other businesses in the town centre were also raising funds for “street trees”.

Councillor Bambridge asked for information on the funding being made available for VE and VJ day celebrations and it was explained that organisations could apply for grants of up to £100. More information was available on the Norfolk Community Foundation website.

Councillor Collop referred to a suggestion she had made at the previous meeting regarding a memorial bench for the late Ian Gourlay and it was explained that the best route to apply for funding for this would be through the open spaces fund, which was currently available for applications.

Councillor Squire suggested that the themed fund be used to improve the environment and the local community and be kept quite generic. Applications could then be considered on their merits.

Councillor Moriarty commented that he supported option one as set out in the report and that the fund should be publicised so that the local community were made aware of the opportunity available to them.

Councillor Bubb referred to the disabled toilet at RSPB Titchwell and was informed that organisations could apply for funding through Norfolk Community Foundation who administered the financial assistance scheme on behalf of the Borough Council.

Councillor Kemp made reference to community litter picks and explained that at a recent event there was a charge for taking the waste to the tip. She asked if funding could be made available to help with any disposal costs after community litter picks.

Councillor Squire commented that if the fund was allocated for the reduction of single use plastics this should not cover the purchase of any single use items, for instance wooden or bamboo cutlery. She stated that items should be reusable.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported that the £4,000 be allocated to promote environmentally friendly initiatives in local communities such as the reduction of the use of single use plastics and local community litter picks.

EC46: **QUARTER 1 2019-2020 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Senior Policy and Performance Officer presented the report. He explained that the amount of indicators which fell under the remit of the Environment and Community Panel had increased as it included new ways of measuring and homelessness.

It was also explained that because of the ongoing work on the refuse and recycling contract there was no data available for those indicators for quarter 1.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the four indicators which had not met target, as set out on page 19 of the agenda along with the Service Managers explanation of why the indicators had not met target.

The Chair thanked the Senior Policy and Performance Officer for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Chair referred to the indicators relating to the Careline service and commented that it was a very important service that the Borough provided.

Councillor Wilkinson highlighted specific issues that she was aware of in relation to the Careline Service and was advised to inform the Assistant Director of the issues.

Councillor Kemp referred to HS2 – Spend on Bed and Breakfast Accommodation (gross). She explained that the figure within the Corporate Performance Monitoring report was different to the figure in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy report that the Panel were considering later on in the meeting. The Housing Services Manager agreed to check the correct figure and inform Councillor Kemp.

RESOLVED: The Panel reviewed the performance monitoring report and agreed the actions outlined in the Action Report.

EC47: **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

The Housing Services Manager presented the report which sought the view of the Panel Members on the new draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

A presentation was provided to Members, as attached.

The Chair thanked the Housing Services Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Moriarty commented that debt often meant that people could not bid for properties on the register and asked how this was recognised and if assistance was provided. The Housing Services Manager explained that the Housing Allocations Policy was constructed in association with partner landlords and as part of the Action Plan this policy would be reviewed.

Councillor Bubb referred to Bed and Breakfast spend and it was explained that there was the new provision of seven units at Broad Street which had impacted the amount spent on Bed and Breakfast.

There was also a legal duty not to put families in Bed and Breakfast for longer than six weeks.

Councillor Bambridge referred to Freebridge Community Housing properties and explained that sometimes these could not be used for temporary housing due to structural issues or subsidence. She also explained that Freebridge were also looking further into what they could do to prevent rent arrears, which could ultimately result in someone becoming homeless. The Housing Services Manager explained that there had been a Government consultation last year which included Section 21 no fault notices to end tenancies.

Councillor Bhondi addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that tax issues and restrictions meant that some private landlords were moving out of the business which could have an impact on the amount of private rented housing stock available.

Councillor Kemp referred to rent relief, assistance with deposits and discretionary housing relief. The Housing Services Manager explained that costs had increased due to demand and requests for deposits and rent advances had increased. Assistance would be provided as required and discretionary housing payments could be made and there was not a cap on the amount which could be provided.

In response to a further question from Councillor Kemp, it was explained that the Council was looking at various different ways to increase the housing supply and this could include looking at the Policies within the Local Plan, which was currently under review.

Councillor Squire commented that social housing policies should be built into the Local Plan, along with incentives for developers.

Councillor Morley addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He commented that the links with Freebridge Community Housing should be included within the Strategy as they were a key partner.

Councillor Bhondi commented that proactive work carried out to prevent homelessness should also be highlighted in the report.

RESOLVED: 1. The comments made by the Panel regarding the draft Strategy would be considered.
2. The Panel supported the draft Strategy.

EC48: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

The following items were identified for consideration on the Work Programme:

- Campaign regarding keeping seals safe from flying rings and Frisbees.

- Alive West Norfolk update.
- Norfolk County Council Balloon and Lantern release charter.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC49: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held Tuesday 3rd December 2019 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm