

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Wednesday, 6th July, 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillors C Sampson (Chairman), Miss L Bambridge, Mrs C Bower, A Bubb, Mrs S Collop, Mrs S Fraser and A Tyler

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health.

Councillor R Blunt – Portfolio Holder for Development.

Officers:

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director

Sheila Farley – Housing Services Operations Manager

John Greenhalgh – Environmental Health Manager

Ray Harding – Chief Executive

By Invitation:

Dr Ian Mack – Vice Chairman of the Alive Leisure Trust

Nina McKenna – Director of Culture & Communications – Alive Leisure

Simon McKenna – Chief Executive – Alive Leisure

EC14: **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hipperson, Hopkins, Long, Moriarty, Rochford and Mrs Wright.

EC15: **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The minutes from the meeting held on 25th May 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EC16: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

EC17: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC18: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There was none.

EC19: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman explained that he had received correspondence from two Parish Councils who were interested in taking over grass cutting. He explained that he would put the Parish Councils in touch with the Executive Director to discuss the various options available. He informed the Panel that if they were aware of any Parish Councils who were interested in taking over grass cutting that they should make contact with the Council.

EC20: LEISURE TRUST UPDATE

Nina McKenna, Director of Culture and Communications, Simon McKenna, Chief Executive and Dr Ian Mack, Vice Chairman of the Board, were present at the Meeting to provide the Panel with an update on the work of Alive Leisure.

A copy of their presentation is attached.

The Chairman thanked the Leisure Trust for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel. The representatives from the Leisure Trust and the Executive Director from the Borough Council responded to questions and comments from Members as summarised below.

It was clarified that Alive Leisure was responsible for the day to day running of the facilities included within the Trust. Separate to this Alive Management was a council controlled company. The two boards were separate and Councillor Nockolds, who had previously sat as a Board Member on the Trust was now a Member of the Management Board as her Portfolio Responsibilities had changed and she would have had a conflict of interest if she remained on the Trust.

The Director of Culture and Communications explained that Arts Development was very important to the Trust and was one of its Charitable Objects and priorities. She explained that work would be carried out to produce a two years Arts Development Plan and this would include looking to set up new amateur groups and work with existing groups to make them sustainable. She encouraged anyone who was aware of any semi-professional or amateur groups who may be interested in working with the Trust to contact her.

With regards to the Oasis at Hunstanton, the Panel was informed that significant investment had been put into this facility, including the recent replacement of the air handling units which had improved the

indoor environment and the refurbishment and reopening of the summer entrance along the Promenade. The Borough Council had also invested Capital Funds into the facility.

Reference was made to a recent cancellation of one of the classes at Lynnsport and complaints that this had not been publicised had been received. The Chief Executive of Alive Leisure apologised for any inconvenience this had caused and informed Members that there was a process in place for informing customers of cancellations, but unfortunately on this occasion it had not been followed.

The Director of Culture and Communications responded to questions regarding the scheduling of acts at the Corn Exchange. She explained that due to the small capacity it was difficult to entice bigger artists into the venue as their return on ticket sales would not be high enough. The Panel was informed that work had been carried out to ensure that only high quality tribute acts and comedians were brought in and the Director of Culture and Communications commented that she felt that the programme had improved dramatically over the past few years.

The Panel was informed that the toning tables which had been located in the main gym at Lynnsport had now been relocated. This was because they took up 25% of the gym area, however were not used on a frequent basis. The toning tables were still accessible and people had feedback mixed views on the location. New equipment had been installed in the gym at Lynnsport.

The Executive Director explained that the Council and the Trust worked closely together and he felt that the arrangements had been successful. He commented that both parties were looking at extending what could be provided, including the Guildhall project which was a great opportunity for the Council, with the Trust as a key partner.

RESOLVED: (i) The update was noted.

(ii) The Trust continues to provide updates to the Environment and Community Panel on a regular basis.

EC21: **JOINT WORKING WITH NORFOLK CONSTABULARY**

Representatives from Norfolk Constabulary and John Greenhalgh, Environmental Health Manager (Community Safety) were present at the meeting to answer questions from the Panel on joint working between the Council and the Police.

The Chairman invited questions and comments from the Panel and responses and comments were provided as summarised below.

With regard to dog fouling, the Borough Council had taken on this area of work. If an incident was witnessed, it could be reported to the Council and a witness statement could be taken. Warning notices

could be issued, or the individual could be prosecuted. Incidents could also be reported to the Police, who would pass the information on to the Council. The Panel was informed that work was carried out in the community and in schools to try and encourage people to clean up after their dogs. Walkabouts in high problem areas could be arranged.

Reference was made to street bail and it was explained by the Police that this was where the individual was not arrested immediately, instead would be instructed to report to the Station at a particular time. This was used if there were serious issues apparent such as mental health issues or injuries. It also depended on the nature of the incident and would not be considered if there was a risk of danger to the public.

The representatives from the Police outlined the new arrangements for the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel Meetings. A review had been conducted and the Meetings were now being trial run as surgeries, held during the day. It was hoped that the new arrangements would enable more frequent sessions to be run and access to the sessions would be easier. It was explained that Police Connect was being rebranded and work on improving the service would be carried out by the Community Engagement Officer. Work was also ongoing to rebrand the website, making it easier to report incidents, and improve the flow of information available via social media.

Members of the Panel asked if the Police were able to attend Parish Council Meetings. It was explained that it would be difficult for the Police to attend all meetings, but if there was a specific issue to be discussed they possibly could attend on an infrequent basis. Representatives from the Police encouraged Parish Councils to report any issues or incidents to them straight away, rather than waiting for the next scheduled Parish Council meeting as they would be able to investigate them in real time.

The Panel was informed that the Borough was a relatively low crime area, although there had been an increase nationally in hidden harm crimes, which included child exploitation and domestic violence. The Panel was informed that hidden harm crimes were the Polices main focus at present.

The Police also undertook Offender Management, working with repeat offenders and trying to ascertain why they kept offending and work to change their patterns.

The Panel was informed that the amount of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour had reduced, however it could be as more anti-social behaviour was happening online.

Issues regarding vehicles parking on pavements and blocking access to wheelchair users or people with push chairs were raised. The Panel was informed that this was a difficult issue to control and the Police could not take any action unless it was considered to be dangerous.

The Panel agreed that Parking Arrangements be added to the Work Programme and the Business Manager from the Borough Council be invited to a future meeting of the Panel for a Question and Answer Session.

In response to a question as to whether the closure of the Discovery Centre had made a difference to the amount of anti-social behaviour, it was confirmed that there had been a marginal increase, but the real test would be during the summer.

RESOLVED: (i) Parking Question and Answer Session be added to the Work Programme.

(ii) Representatives from the Police be invited back to the Environment and Community Panel in a years' time.

EC22: **HOMELESSNESS UPDATE**

Sheila Farley, Housing Services Operations Manager presented the Homelessness Review to the Panel. A copy of her presentation is attached.

The Chairman thanked the Housing Services Operations Manager for her report and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

The Housing Services Operations Manager explained that an Insecure Accommodation Award was a method of giving a person high priority on bidding for available properties. It was awarded if there was a high likelihood of the person becoming homeless. The Housing Services Operations Manager explained that the team worked to try and prevent homelessness before it became an issue. She agreed to provide information to the Panel on the amount of Insecure Accommodation Awards issued.

The Housing Services Operations Manager informed the Panel that the Council had a duty to investigate any homelessness issues which were brought to their attention. The Panel was informed that the Council carried out a 'rough sleeper' assessment on an annual basis as part of their statutory duty. With regard to people begging on the street, the Housing Services Operations Manager explained that these people were not always homeless and she referred to a recent campaign which had been run, which encouraged members of the public to donate to charities to help homeless people, rather than directly to people begging on the street.

The Panel was informed that the Council had a statutory duty to provide advice to individuals, but not necessarily a duty to provide housing. The Council worked closely with different organisations and referred individuals if required. She explained that if someone on the housing register was likely to become homeless, they would be

referred to the homelessness team to try and prevent it before it was an issue. She explained that the Council also had emergency beds available if required. The timescale to get someone off the street varied, the Council always tried to act early, however there were times when the individual did not want to engage.

The Housing Services Operations Manager explained that if members of the public came across someone who they thought was street homeless they could refer them to the Council through the Borough Council's website using the Street Link system.

The Housing Services Operations Manager referred to the future concerns as included within her presentation and the opportunities and solutions which would be investigated to address the impact of any concerns.

RESOLVED: That the Panel be kept updated on progress.

EC23: **WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: (i) The Work Programme was noted.
(ii) Items identified for consideration during the meeting would be added to the Work Programme as appropriate.

EC24: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on Wednesday 31st August 2016 at 6.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm