

COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 17th December 2019

Time: 2:00pm – 4:10pm

Venue: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall

Present: Councillors M Goldsack (Vice-Chairman),
D Ambrose Smith, L Every, J French, J Gowing, L Nieto, C Richards,
A Taylor and S Taylor

Apologies: Councillors S Criswell (Chairman, substituted by Councillor Ambrose Smith), B Ashwood and A Costello (substituted by J Gowing)

218. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillors Barbara Ashwood, Adela Costello (substituted by John Gowing) and Steve Criswell (substituted by David Ambrose Smith).

No declarations of interest were made.

219. MINUTES – 21ST NOVEMBER 2019

It was resolved unanimously to:

Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2019 as a correct record and to note the action log.

220. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No petitions or public questions were received.

221. LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Committee received a report on the progress of the Future Libraries Initiative, which included a proposed vision and model as well as a request to consider renaming the service as 'Libraries and Communities'. Introducing the report, the new Interim Head of Service noted that the vision and model were strongly aligned to the Think Communities approach, as laid out in section 2.1.1 of the report. Attention was drawn to the fact that two thirds of library buildings' capacity was currently underused due to current opening hours and Members were informed that this capacity would be unlocked by the extended hours made possible by open access technology. Such factors would be considered when measuring the success of libraries in the future, with more of a focus on how well they connected and supported communities. It was also noted that the Future Libraries Initiative project had successfully obtained funding and was now progressing to a stage that engaged the communities where the seven prototype libraries were located.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Suggested that charities and other community organisations could use library spaces outside normal opening hours to provide activities for young people. Acknowledging the suggestion, Members were assured that young people would be involved throughout the design process in order to develop ownership.
- Considered how businesses might also be able to use library spaces, either for events, meeting rooms or IT facilities. Members were informed that although some multinational companies had expressed an interest in using them to extend their presence to smaller communities, the main objective was to promote local business, although it was acknowledged that the Council should not be seen to be favouring certain businesses. The New Economics Foundation was working with the Council on this issue.
- Sought clarification on whether the Library Plus Open Access Project would involve an individual plan for each library. The Interim Head of Service confirmed that a model would be developed and introduced across the network, although technical solutions would be adapted to fit the requirements of each individual library building. A report detailing the technological aspects of the project was due to be presented to the Committee on 12th March 2020.
- Queried whether the new partners involved in the process included the County's universities, colleges and schools. Members were informed that the University of Cambridge was particularly interested in the role of democracy and a partnership was being developed along such grounds. Anglia Ruskin University was also involved, largely in the area of employability of its students, and would be carrying out a customer perception survey across different parts of the network in early 2020.
- Expressed concern over library provision in smaller towns and villages across the County, where transport issues further complicated access to facilities in nearby towns or villages. The Interim Head of Service informed Members that two mobile libraries were being built to replace those currently in use, which were expected to come in to use in spring 2020. It was also noted that Cambridgeshire had been chosen as an ideal location to develop the service precisely due to its largely rural population. Members discussed ideal locations for popup libraries, such as community halls or private businesses, as was successfully carried out in Lincolnshire, and it was confirmed that the Council would support such efforts.
- Observed that libraries were popular with children and adults but that there was a deficit with the age group in between. One Member suggested that extending the hours via open access technology would address the problem somewhat, although it was acknowledged that different offers were required for the specific age groups.
- Noted that the vision stated that the service would be a catalyst for business without providing further information on which businesses would be attracted and what the offer was. An example given was for people working at home to be able to make use of the IT facilities, and it was suggested that further information should be included on what offers could be made and who might be able to benefit from them.

- Remarked that there was a universal concept of a library and while there was support for expanding and developing the service, renaming it to “Libraries and Communities” might confuse users. It was noted that other places also considered themselves to be at the heart of the community and it would not be practical for each institution to adopt the term into their name. Members were informed that work was currently ongoing on the branding of the service and it was agreed to defer the renaming of the service until further consideration had been given to the issue.
- Enquired what level of library provision the new communities across the County would receive. The Interim Head of Service commented on the high level of success that the library service had experienced in obtaining Section 106 funding compared to other local authorities, which provided opportunities to develop and sustain projects in new communities. It was noted that the library in Northstowe, one of the seven prototype libraries, was being developed as the civic centre of the community.
- Clarified that Council workers would be able to work from libraries in the same way as anybody else, but that the facilities were not being developed as specific places of work for Council workers.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Defer the renaming of the Cambridgeshire Libraries service; and
- b) Agree the new vision and model for the future service.

222. THINK COMMUNITIES

The Committee received a report on the progress being made towards delivery of the Council’s Think Communities approach. It was observed that the inaugural Think Communities Partnership Board meeting had been held on 2nd December 2019 and that it had been well attended by members of the public and voluntary sector, including local authorities and the health, fire and police services. Attention was drawn to the three main themes currently being focussed on: communications and community engagement; data and intelligence; and workforce reform. The Service Director of Community and Safety informed Members that the next stage of establishing the borders of Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) would involve discussions with each individual local Member, given their knowledge of their area and ability to identify potential issues. Such consultations would begin in January with members of the Communities and Partnership Committee before extending to the whole Council, although it was noted that the borders would be constantly evolving once implemented, in order to serve their purpose effectively.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Noted inconsistencies between the SDA maps and ward divisions. The Service Director of Community and Safety acknowledged the discrepancies and informed Members that they were originally based on Primary Care Networks, so as to lock in health partners, and represented initial suggestions produced by officers. The consultations with Local Members were intended to identify and overcome such boundary issues.

- Observed that Fenland involved many communities beyond Wisbech and that attention should not be too focused on one location. The Service Director of Community and Safety acknowledged the concerns and noted that discussions were ongoing with Fenland District Council regarding different areas.
- Suggested greater efforts should be made to engage with community champions and district, parish and town councillors throughout the process, as much of the work was already being carried out by them, as well as other organisations and groups, such as community safety partnerships.
- Noted that a number of venues listed in appendix 7 of the report had vague and misleading titles, although it was acknowledged that such concerns would be addressed during the forthcoming consultations with Local Members.
- Sought clarification over who was on the Think Communities Delivery Board in Huntingdonshire. The Service Director of Community and Safety undertook to establish the membership and inform Members. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note and comment on the progress of the Think Communities approach; and
- b) Make initial comments about the draft service delivery areas.

223. CAMBRIDGESHIRE SKILLS

The Committee received a report on progress made by Cambridgeshire Skills in the delivery plan for the 2019/20 academic year. Noting the earlier discussion on extending the use of library provisions, the Head of Service informed Members that a memorandum of understanding had been established to operate in a further fifteen libraries to the five currently in use, with the intention to eventually use them all. Further to the information laid out in section 2.7 of the report, it was noted that the number of venues in Fenland and Huntingdonshire had increased from 3 to 21, while those in East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City had increased from 2 to 18. Members were also informed that the number of enrolments had increased from 820 to 1053 since the report had been written. The Head of Service noted that the Communications team had assisted in developing a social media presence which enabled the service to proactively target areas where places remained open on courses. Preparations were underway for an Ofsted inspection likely to be carried out prior to May 2020, which was being carried out earlier than usual due to the widespread changes across the service.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Observed that the curriculum only covered level one and sought clarification on how people who wished to continue to higher levels were assisted. The Head of Service informed Members that courses had been extended to level two in some areas and that the hope was to extend them further to level three. For those courses where such an advance was not possible, the service signposted learners to organisations where they would be able to continue.

- Clarified that there was a wide range of courses available in Cambridge City, with English as a second language being particularly popular.
- Established that particular attention had been given to extend involvement with traveller communities through working with smaller local authorities and public health. It was noted that the majority of those coming from traveller communities were male and Members asked whether the reasons for this could be established.

Action required

- Expressed concern that some courses that were not specifically employment orientated had been removed, noting that there was demand for such courses and that they linked in to the Think Communities approach. Members were informed that the core budget was for education and any further funding secured could be used for additional courses, while there was a suggestion that courses for social purposes should attain alternative funding from the relevant Council department.
- Considered whether people living in more affluent areas had a greater ability to pay for courses, and it was suggested that the ideal situation would be to have a mixture of learners who paid and did not pay. Members were informed that when a real need was identified for a particular course in a certain area, it was introduced.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the progress of the newly designed service operating as Cambridgeshire Skills.

224. INNOVATE & CULTIVATE FUND – ENDORSEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee received a report which contained five recommended applications for funding from the Innovate funding stream of the Innovate and Cultivate Fund. Members were informed that four of the applications had conditions attached in order to cover risk considerations, as laid out in section 2.3 of the report.

While discussing the recommended applications, Members:

- Sought clarification over whether there was a time limit for Switch Now to obtain a premises in St Ives in order to meet the condition for their grant. The Strengthening Communities Service Manager confirmed that it was difficult for Switch Now to put a deadline until the grant and conditions of award had been agreed, whilst noting that their hope was to secure suitable vacant premises by the end of March, or as soon as possible.
- Considered the impact of the Innovate and Cultivate Fund and requested information on the types of target groups that received funding, what outcomes were anticipated, what the geographical spread was and a comparison of the success rates between large and small organisations that had submitted applications, in order to assess whether vulnerable people were unrepresented. The Assistant Director of Housing, Communities and Youth informed Members that such information would be included in the End of Year Evaluation Report which would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 12th March 2020.

- Welcomed the benefits that had been felt on commissioning as a result of the application process, thanks to the in-depth information that it provided.
- Suggested that a list of all the organisations that had applied, whether successful or not, would prove a valuable resource for Members when asked for signposting by residents, noting that many of the applicants came from relatively unknown organisations. The Strengthening Communities Service Manager informed Members that it would not be possible to provide information on unsuccessful applications, on one hand because of confidentiality reasons, but also because some of them would have ended up unable to provide the proposed services following their unsuccessful application. It was noted that the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation administered the fund and published successful applications and officers agreed to suggest the proposal of a geographically-based list of funded projects. Members were also informed that a directory of community services was currently being developed for the Council's website and that more information would be circulated. **Action required**
- Requested information on the next pre-application drop in session, including the date and location where it would be held. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Consider the recommendations of the panel;
- b) Confirm agreement to fund the following application through the Innovate funding stream:
 - Centre 33; and
- c) Confirm agreement to fund the following four applications through the Innovate funding stream, following fulfilment of the conditions listed in Section 2.2 of the report:
 - Switch Now CIC;
 - Red2Green;
 - Ormiston Families; and
 - People Potential Possibilities (P3).

225. PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 2 2019-20

The Committee received a performance report which provided information on the status of performance indicators the Committee had selected to monitor in order to understand the performance of services that it oversaw. It was noted that the report now adopted the standard format used by other committees, although the way in which it was produced was still being established, including ensuring suitable explanations for each indicator and setting targets.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Welcomed the adoption of a uniform format across committees.
- Sought clarification over the increase in reported hate crimes. The Assistant Director of Public Protection suggested that it was positive that the number of

reports was going up, although alarming, as it represented an improvement in the reporting process.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note and comment on performance information and take remedial action as necessary.

226. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT – OCTOBER 2019

The Committee received the October 2019 Finance Monitoring Report for People and Communities. It was noted that the Coroners Service was slightly worse than expected, while the Registration & Citizenship Service was slightly better, due to pressures and changes in fees. The Service Director of Community and Safety informed Members that a formal review of the Coroners Service was being undertaken in order to mitigate and manage demand differently.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Considered the extreme cases that the Coroners Service received, including two examples that would cost a total of £1.5m, indicating the vulnerability of the service to overspending. Members established that the responsibility for the costs had been transferred to local authorities and that the Council was also required to fund increasing body storage costs.
- Established that the review was being carried out by a working group of experts, including the Senior Coroner. It was noted that the national Chief Coroner was looking at the national model and funding approach, as there was a recognition that areas suffered from local complexities did not receive higher levels of funding under the current funding formula.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review and comment on the report.

227. COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS ORAL UPDATES

It was resolved unanimously to:

Defer the Community Champions oral updates to the Committee meeting on 23rd January 2020.

228. COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE REVIEW OF DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 2020-21 TO 2024-25

The Committee received a report which contained an overview of the draft Business Plan revenue and capital proposals for services within the remit of the Committee. It was noted that the report was very similar to the previous version seen by the Committee in October 2019, although it brought the position up to date. Attention was drawn to the one saving relevant to the Committee, which was related to the Cambridgeshire Skills service.

It was resolved by majority to:

- a) Note the overview and context provided for the 2020/21 to 2024/25 Business Plan revenue proposals for the Service, updated since the last report to the Committee in October;
- b) Comment on the draft budget and savings proposals that are within the remit of the Communities & Partnership Committee for 2020/21 to 2024/25, and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan; and
- c) Comment on the changes to the capital programme that are within the remit of the Communities & Partnership Committee and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan.

229. COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the Committee's agenda plan.

Chairman
23rd January 2020