

**COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Thursday, 24th August 2017

**Time:** 11.00 a.m. to 12.17 p.m.

**Present:** Councillors: D Ambrose Smith (substituting for Councillor Tierney), S Criswell (Chairman), K Cuffley (Vice-Chairman), L Dupre, L Every, J Gowing (substituting for Councillor Joseph), E Meschini and D Wells

**Apologies:** Councillors: L Joseph, I Manning, S Taylor and S Tierney

**13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**14. MINUTES 6TH JULY 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The following oral updates were noted in response to actions identified at the meeting:

- the future role of the Committee had been covered by Agenda Item No. 3.
- a Members' Seminar on domestic abuse and sexual violence had been scheduled for 17 November 2017.
- the revised Joint Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy had been scheduled for 26 October 2017 meeting.
- the Director of Corporate and Customer Services had followed up Councillor Dupre's online query, and a query relating to bus pass renewals. She had passed on further queries on bus passes to the relevant officers for a response. **Action Required.**
- the Improvement Plan would now be considered at 26 October 2017 meeting to allow more time for consultation with parishes.
- the training session in August for Area Community Champions had been cancelled, as two Champions had not been available. It would be re-arranged for a later date. **Action Required.**
- the Head of Public Health Business Programmes had been consulting Councillor Meschini regarding her request for a member seminar to help Members obtain a better understanding of mental health issues. Health Committee members had also been consulted in order to avoid duplication.

- the Strengthening Communities Service Manager had informed Councillor Tierney of Lithuanian language classes.
- the September meeting to be held at the Boathouse in Wisbech would now be workshop.

## **15. SCOPE AND REMIT OF COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE AND ROLE OF AREA CHAMPION**

The Committee received a report detailing the future scope of the Communities and Partnership Committee and the role and remit of the Area Champion role. In introducing the report, the Assistant Director Housing, Communities and Youth, raised the need to include an additional recommendation at d) as follows:

- d) To approve the appointment of the Members, as set out in paragraph 2.6, as the Area Champions.

Attention was drawn to the scope of business for the Committee, which covered community resilience, community safety, and the Innovate and Cultivate Fund. It was noted that the Committee would have responsibility in the business planning process in relation to budgets for Youth and Community Engagement Services, the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Team, including the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service. In noting the role of the Member Area Champions, the Committee was informed that each Area Champion would focus on one priority area (subject to need in each District/City).

Members raised the following issues in response to the report:

- the need to amend “member” to members in the bullet under “Innovate and Cultivate Fund”.
- the need to amend “agreed” in paragraph 2.4 to proposed.
- highlighted the fact that the aim of Area Champions was to address the issues in Districts which were not currently being dealt with. It was expected that each District would have different issues, which would be locally nuanced.
- queried why Area Champions were being asked to focus on one priority area when a number of areas might be relevant to a District/City area. Members were informed that the proposal for each District/City area to focus on one priority area related to the Committee’s demand management role. Five priority areas had been identified where the Committee could make an impact. One Member commented that she would not want to arbitrarily choose a priority area before talking to the relevant people. With the agreement of the Committee, she proposed that “one of” at paragraph 2.5 should be deleted in the report.

Councillor Dupre proposed an amendment to delete recommendations a) and c) and refer them back to Constitution and Ethics Committee for consideration. She was concerned that there had been insufficient debate at full Council when the Committee and the Area Champion role had been agreed. She also highlighted the fact that these two recommendations raised significant constitutional issues to the way the Council

operated. In relation to the additional recommendation d), she proposed that this recommendation be delayed pending the outcome of the Constitution and Ethics Committee meeting. The proposed amendment was not seconded.

Councillor Dupre proposed a further amendment, seconded by Councillor Meschini, to add a recommendation requiring each of the Area Champions to submit a written report to every meeting of the Committee to provide an opportunity for the other Members to fulfil their scrutiny role. Councillor Meschini in seconding the proposal felt that there was a need for Area Champions to report; this view was supported by the Chairman. However, she did not feel it was the role of the Committee to scrutinise the Area Champions. On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

Other Members acknowledged the need to manage how regular reports would be considered by the Committee. One Member reported that personally she would be writing monthly reports. It was agreed that feedback from Area Champions should be added as a regular item on Communities and Partnership agendas. **Action Required.**

It was resolved:

- a) To consider and agree the proposed scope of the Communities and Partnership Committee.
- b) To note the future responsibilities of the Committee in relation to business planning.
- c) To consider and agree the proposed purpose and brief for the Area Champion role.
- d) To approve the appointment of the Members, as set out in paragraph 2.6, as the Area Champions.

## **16. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL APPROACH TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee considered a report setting out some options regarding the approach to the consultation to inform the Council's Business Plan. It was noted that Option 1 would maintain a continuity of approach with 2016/17 with a paid household survey, digital/on-line consultation, and accompanying programme of public facing community engagement. Option 2 would involve focus groups to take a deeper look at residents' priorities and a household/representative/web survey on the draft proposals considered by Committees in November. Attention was drawn to Appendix 3 detailing the timetable, which was tight for Option 1 and only a little better for Option 2. It was noted that Option 1 would provide an opportunity to compare results to last year, and Option 2 would provide a richer source of information. The Committee would need to recommend an option to General Purposes Committee for final approval.

Members were also asked to consider a new statement of the Council's approach to consultation and engagement which was intended to provide a solid basis for that work to take place. This was based on the bringing together of two separate statements

about the Council's approach to consultation, the 'Working Together Commitment' and the Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2016.

Members raised the following issues in response to the report:

- queried whether the Council had a statutory obligation to undertake a representative household survey. The Service Director: Community and Safety explained that a targeted or open survey would be needed to satisfy legislative requirements. It was noted that the risk of challenge was limited if the Council opted for a web survey but it would need to promote it.
- queried whether Option 2 required a representative household survey. It was noted that the survey could be conducted via the web and/or a representative household survey could be commissioned if the Committee so wished.
- highlighted the need for the focus groups to be equally representative. Members were informed that there would be a loss of precision as the groups would not be able to reflect the percentage difference. However, action would be taken to mitigate against this. There would be five focus groups, one for each District/City, to ensure the quality of information was richer and nuanced.
- queried how the Market Research Team would ensure proportionality as demography could change. The Head of Business Intelligence explained that the tender would ask for the focus groups to be sufficiently representative of demography at a County/District level.
- highlighted the need for a timeline diagram detailing deadlines and overlaps between the two options. It was noted that, for Option 1, there was no time for Stage 2 to take into account the results of Stage 1. For Option 2, the evaluation of the focus groups would reduce the time for general proposals. One Member was concerned that both options would not be evaluated properly.
- highlighted the need to ensure that people were not disenfranchised from taking part in the focus groups e.g. paying taxi fares. One Member was concerned that people might not have the spare time to travel to focus groups. It was noted that the Market Research Company commissioned to carry out the focus groups would use a bank of people. Appropriate arrangements would be made to enable people to attend.
- expressed concern regarding how the focus group discussion would be relayed back to the Committee, as it was relying on someone else's story. It was noted that at least one Member would sit in on each session. The Committee was informed that it would receive a full report from the focus groups written by the Market Research Company in time for its meeting in November.
- queried whether Option 2 had been used successfully elsewhere. It was noted that the Council's Head of Communications and Information had used this process at Norfolk County Council where it had been very successful in obtaining useful information.

- questioned the timescale risk associated with Option 2, which would prevent meaningful consultation and thorough analysis. The Head of Business Intelligence explained that four weeks would normally be needed to allow for the data to be checked and cleaned before the analysis and then quality assurance checks. The analysis would take some time. It was therefore proposed to shorten the time for quality assurance. It was noted that this would need to be discussed as part of the tender negotiations.
- expressed concern regarding the phrasing of the “Quality of Life” question, as it could be affected by significant issues occurring in a respondent’s life. It was suggested that respondents should be asked how secure they felt both financially and in general. The Chairman queried whether the question could reflect living in Cambridgeshire and the local community. The Head of Business Intelligence explained that the question would provide some useful comparative data. There were two possible options for this question. The first option was to use the Adult Social Care User Experience Survey, which allowed comparison between the general public and social care service users. The second option was from the Office for National Statistics’ work to measure quality of life and personal well-being, which would allow comparison to UK analysis of well-being by age and other demographics factors. This information was provided by local authority area so it was therefore important to ask this question in the same way as other authorities. He also explained that the question would be put to a randomised sample of sufficient size to mitigate against the impact of individual respondents skewing the results because of particular personal circumstances.
- queried whether 1,300 answer sheets would be returned from 1,300 people. It was noted that the Market Research Company would be commissioned to collect 1,300 answer sheets.
- queried the engagement with partners throughout the process. The Service Director: Community and Safety reported that there would be cross partner consultation with the Communities Network which would involve representatives from the voluntary sector, District/City Councils, Police, Fire, Health and GP surgeries.

Councillor Ambrose Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Gowing, option 2 (including representative household and web surveys). One Member cautioned against Option 2 as there was insufficient time for the public to comment on specifics.

It was resolved:

- a) to agree option 2 (including representative household and web surveys) for consultation on the Business Plan, in order to provide a recommendation to General Purposes Committee.
- b) to endorse the proposed Council strategy on consultation and engagement.

## **17. UPDATE ON THE INNOVATE AND CULTIVATE FUND**

The Committee received an update on plans for the Innovate and Cultivate Fund. Members were reminded that the Committee, at its last meeting, had appointed the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to the Bid Assessment Panel, and agreed that recommendations on grants from the Panel should be reported to the Committee for final decision.

Concern had been expressed at the meeting regarding the lack of Member involvement in the panel process. It was proposed to replace the previously named Committee representation of Chair and Vice-Chair, with representation of up to five County Councillors allocated on a politically proportionate basis; three Conservatives, one Liberal Democrat and one Labour from the committee membership including substitutes. All members of the Panel would have equal scoring 'rights', and the Panel's recommendations would be presented to Committee for final decision.

During discussion, one Member queried whether the Committee could receive a list of applications which had not been recommended by the Panel. The Strengthening Communities Service Manager reported that this information would not normally be put in the public domain. She would therefore need to seek advice from procurement. It was noted that applications which had not been recommended for funding could be offered alternative support. It was acknowledged that there was a need to avoid reopening the Panel debate on the applications at Committee. However, it would be useful for members in the local communities to know what had not been approved. The Chairman proposed that the Committee should receive a confidential e-mail detailing the unsuccessful bids. **Action Required.**

The Committee discussed the need for monitoring the successful applications. It was suggested that six monthly updates should be provided to allow projects time to come to fruition. **Action Required.** In considering the quorum of the Panel, it was proposed that it should be a minimum of three members.

It was resolved unanimously:

to comment on and agree the recommended process for awarding funds from the Innovate and Cultivate Fund as set out in paragraph 2.3 of this report with the addition of a Member quorum of three.

## **18. COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee considered its agenda plan, and noted the following changes:

- the September meeting would now be a workshop focussing on deprivation, which would include some site visits;
- the Community Safety Partnerships item in October would not be an update;
- the October meeting would include an item on business planning; and
- the November meeting would be a workshop on Community Safety Self-Assessment

It was resolved unanimously to review its Agenda Plan.

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that there would be a workshop on 28th September 2017. The next meeting would take place on 26th October 2017.

Chairman