

Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee Minutes

Date: 17 October 2024

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Venue: Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall

Present: Councillors Tom Sanderson (Chair), Alex Bulat (Vice-Chair), David Ambrose Smith, Henry Batchelor, Adela Costello, Steve Criswell, Claire Daunton, Ian Gardener, Bryony Goodliffe, Ros Hathorn, Geoff Seeff and Philippa Slatter

175. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lucy Nethsingha.

176. Minutes – 11 July 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

While discussing the Minutes Action Log, clarification was sought on whether the £30k grant in respect of allergens, referenced in Minute 171 (Finance Monitoring Report – Outturn 2023/24), would also include allergen information on non-packaged food, such as food in restaurants, which was already required by Natasha's Law. **Action required**

The Committee noted the Minutes Action Log.

177. Public Questions and Petitions

No public questions or petitions were received.

178. Cambridgeshire Skills Annual Report

The Committee received an annual report on the performance of Cambridgeshire Skills over the 2023/24 academic year.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Clarified that lower achievement rates for maths functional skills at level 2, as referenced in Paragraph 3.19 of the report, were broadly reflected across the county, rather than a specific area, and that it was also an issue across the wider country. Nonetheless, the Council had arranged for specialists to work with maths tutors and improvements were expected in the following academic year.

- Requested further information on the Ready Steady Cook course and whether it could be replicated on other areas or scenarios. Members were informed that following its success, further Ready Steady Cook courses had been held, with the intention for them to be adopted in other scenarios as well.
- Queried how a future Ofsted inspection of Cambridgeshire Skills would be carried out given the services disparate structure and suggested that it could be helpful for people who had benefited from the service to provide feedback and testimony. Members were informed that an inspection would be carried out over five days, with a team of inspectors observing lessons, including remote lessons, and speaking with officers, Members and individual learners.
- Welcomed that the Council delivered and commissioned a range of courses to help improve residents carbon literacy, green skills, biodiversity and to help people gain the skills to work in new green industries, and queried how the Council monitored people's progression in such industries and whether it could be identified whether subsequent jobs were local to the region. Members were informed that learners were tracked when they completed courses, but it was emphasised that courses related to green skills were usually level one skills, with learners then progressing to colleges and other vocational centres to undertake a technical qualification. Notwithstanding, such progression was tracked and would become available in future years.
- Queried whether Cambridgeshire Skills anticipated demand to increase or decrease in the future, particularly for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and whether potential additional sources of funding were available beyond the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). Members were informed that demand was increasing, while during procurement for delivery partners in March and April 2024, the service received bids totalling six times the available funding for commission, demonstrating the rich level of delivery that was also available.
- Welcomed the additional £170k in-year funding that had been received from the CPCA during the 2023/24 academic year and queried whether such an uplift was expected for the 2024/25 academic year. It was clarified that the funding had only become available due to under-delivery by other partners in the area resulting in the funding becoming available. Therefore, any additional in-year funding would only become available if there was similar under delivery this year or if there was a change to the level of funding provided to the CPCA by the Department of Education.
- Expressed concern that despite the targeting of learners who were resident in the most deprived areas of the county, only 22% of learners came from the top 30% most deprived wards. It was acknowledged that further work needed to be carried out to increase such numbers, but Members were assured that both Cambridgeshire Skills and the CPCA were identifying skills gaps and where there were particular needs, to ensure that appropriate courses were available where they were needed most.

- Noted that there were Guidance Hubs in all the districts within Cambridgeshire except South Cambridgeshire, although Members were informed that discussions had been held with South Cambridgeshire District Council about using South Cambridgeshire Hall in Cambourne as a guidance hub.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the contents of the report.

179. Road Closures for Remembrance Events

The Committee received a report which detailed the potential costs of road closures for remembrance events and the support available from the Council to reduce any financial burden to town and parish councils, as a result of a motion agreed by Full Council on 16 July 2024.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Paid tribute to officers for the support provided to town and parish councils when organising remembrance events. The proposal to produce a toolkit to support this process was welcomed, and it was confirmed that the proposed toolkit would include a clear timetable to ensure that plans for such events were initiated with sufficient time beforehand.
- Clarified that a draft toolkit would be circulated to town and parish councils in November 2024 to seek feedback before its final publication and circulation to town and parish in January 2025. It was requested that the toolkit also be provided to Members upon publication. **Action required**
- Queried whether volunteers at previous remembrance events had reported aggravation or abuse from members of the public because of related road closures, and it was agreed to provide Members with a briefing. **Action required**
- Queried whether the Council had capacity to provide additional Traffic Management for Community Events training places. Members were informed that the Council's Social Value Fund could potentially support an expansion from 36 places to 60 places.
- Noted that it was the responsibility of the Committee's Spokes to inform other Members of their group if they thought they may be interested in the content of a report.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Agree that the Communities service produces a toolkit to raise awareness of the support available from the Council to assist with organising Remembrance events.

180. Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 1 2024/25

The Committee received a report providing an update on the performance of services within its remit over Quarter 1 of the 2024/25 financial year, with two key performance indicators (KPIs) rated as red, three KPIs rated as amber, two KPIs rated as green, and three KPIs rated as blue.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Established there was a comprehensive, national, easy to use, online grant directory which provided subscribed organisations from the voluntary and community sector with information on available grants, and it was confirmed that the Council signposted organisations to the directory.
- Sought clarification on whether the Coroner service advised widows or widowers on how to resolve potential problems with joint bank accounts following their partner's death. **Action required**
- Requested an update on the various actions listed in the Pathway to Green section of KPI 198 (the percentage of clients engaging with Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service). **Action required**
- Welcomed the information provided in KPI 255 (impact of seed funding on youth and community organisations after 12 months), and requested further information on how the success and achievement of such organisations' objectives were measured. Members were informed that while some objectives could be easily measured, others were more abstract and could only be measured through collaboration and discussion with officers. Currently, there was limited information available as it was a new KPI, but once the seed funding came through and officers were trained in how to manage the KPI, additional information would be included in performance reports to the committee.
- Requested further information in relation to KPI 219 (all births registered within 42 days of birth) and KPI 220 (all deaths registered within 5 days), including on when improvements could be expected following the training of new staff, and whether additional staffing capacity was required. **Action required**
- Noted that by expanding the range of internal and external services provided from library buildings, libraries themselves could extend their operating hours to accommodate such services.
- Requested an update on the status of projects that had received funding from the Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note performance information and act as necessary.

181. Finance Monitoring Report – August 2024

The Committee received the Finance Monitoring Report to the end of August 2024 for the services within its remit, with a forecast revenue overspend of £125k and no significant capital variances.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the contents of the report.

182. Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee Agenda Plan

While discussing the Committee's agenda plan, individual Members requested that the committee receive future reports on community safety and the Council's progress towards achieving Council of Sanctuary status. It was also suggested that the committee receive a report on the Council's role in overcome digital exclusion and its impacts, although it was noted that such matters were within the remit of the Environment and Green Investment Committee.

The Committee noted its agenda plan.

Chair
5 December 2024