

## **COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Thursday 2nd July 2020

**Time:** 10:00am – 11:50am

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting

**Present:** Councillors: S Criswell (Chairman), L Nieto (Vice-Chairwoman), H Batchelor, A Costello, L Every, J French, E Meschini, M Smith and A Taylor.

### **279. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No apologies for absence were received.

Councillor French declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Communities Capital Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations (July 2020)) as the local Member for March North and Waldersey (recommendation (i): March Town Rugby Club).

Councillor Every declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Communities Capital Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations (July 2020)) as the East Cambridgeshire Community Champion (recommendation (ii): Swaffham Prior Village Hall).

Councillor Costello declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Communities Capital Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations (July 2020)) as the local Member for Ramsey and Bury (recommendation (iii): Ramsey Neighbourhood Trust).

### **280. a) MINUTES – 18TH JUNE 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2020 were approved as a correct record and it was agreed that they would be signed by the Chairman when the Council returned to its offices.

### **b) COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES ACTION LOG**

Referring to Minute 275 on the Committee's Action Log, the Service Director of Communities and Partnerships informed Members that a briefing note would be circulated to the Committee regarding current support provision for victims of hate crime, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Committee agreed to note the Minutes Action Log.

### **281. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No petitions or public questions were received.

## 282. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Chairman reminded the Committee that officers had been asked to bring a report on the Covid-19 response to date for those services for which the Committee was responsible. Due to the rapidly changing situation and the need to provide the committee and the public with the most up to date information possible, the Chairman reported that he had accepted this as a late report.

Drawing attention to guidance published by the governance on marriage and civil partnerships, as set out in section 2.5.3 of the report, the Service Director of Communities and Partnerships informed Members that couples who had previously registered for marriage or a civil partnership would be given priority for the remainder of 2020 and in to 2021. While new bookings could now be made for ceremonies in 2022, those wishing to arrange a ceremony in 2021 would have to wait until the priority group's dates had been resolved.

While emphasising that the change in Government guidance on advice for shielding residents had specifically been called a pause due to the fact that there may be revisions due to future lockdowns, the Service Director assured Members that the Countywide Covid-10 Coordination and Response Hub would continue to provide support to residents in their transition out of shielding. The Hub was also prepared to reactivate its full support program if it became necessary, and it was noted that the Government's shielding list would continue to be updated in order to assist in this endeavour.

Members' attention was drawn to the Local Outbreak Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and the Service Director noted that it was based on current knowledge and would therefore change as the situation evolved. He observed that over 30 different sets of data were being submitted to the Council on a wide variety of subjects, such as health, traffic, schools and testing, and that this information was being analysed in real time to establish trends and identify geographical areas of concern.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Paid tribute to the work carried out by officers in ensuring that services continued to function during the pandemic.
- Sought clarification on whether couples who had already paid for their banns of marriage would have to pay again due to their expiration as a result of ceremonies being postponed during the lockdown. The Service Director noted that the national office had stated that the issue was a matter of local discretion and that some other local authorities had waived the fees. While this was the intention, a business case would need to be established.
- Observed the clear and user-friendly presentation of the Local Outbreak Plan and confirmed that it had been shared widely with local authorities and other stakeholders across the County, and that future updates would also be circulated.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the progress made to date in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus;

- b) Note the approach being taken to local outbreak management and control, including the NHS Test and Trace programme; and
- c) Note and endorse the approach being taken to ensure that outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are not impacted by their race or background.

## **283. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR – INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AGREEMENT**

The Committee received an update on the recommissioning and procurement of voluntary and community sector support services across Cambridgeshire, which included a request for a 6 month extension to the current contract with Support Cambridgeshire. Members were informed that although Covid-19 had delayed the development of a new agreement, it had also led to a reconsideration of how the Council might provide support, as well as the kind of support that the voluntary and community sector might require. The Strengthening Communities Service Manager clarified that the extension being sought would continue the contract until October 2021, which represented a total extension of 13 months at a value of £135,560, including the previous extension agreed by the Committee on 10th October 2019.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Paid tribute to the community and voluntary support that had emerged in response to Covid-19, noting how vital it had proven to be for many people. One Member observed that the recipients of the support would like to see it continue, while many of those providing support had indicated that they would like to continue providing it as well. The arrangement under discussion was the Council's connection to the bodies that could make that happen.
- Expressed concern about the level of engagement between Councillors and Support Cambridgeshire, especially during the period of the extension when the voluntary and community sector would continue to play a fundamental role in society, with one Member noting that in her district there had been little engagement. The Strengthening Communities Service Manager acknowledged the concerns but argued that Support Cambridgeshire responded differently according to the needs across the County, and that some districts chose to have more local arrangements with already-established local groups and organisations. It was observed that Support Cambridgeshire needed to compliment and support such efforts, as well as continuing to support new and emerging volunteer groups. She also recognised that Support Cambridgeshire had consistently provided voice and representation in strategic groups.
- Confirmed that the £135,560 value of the total extension would be financed by the service's core budget and did not represent an additional cost.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve the proposed approach to tender for voluntary and community sector Infrastructure Support Services jointly with Peterborough City Council;

- b) Approve the key features proposed for the specification, as described at sections 2.2.3 and 2.3; and
- c) Note the requirement for, and endorse, an extension to the current grant agreement with Support Cambridgeshire, to allow for adherence to procurement regulations, as described in section 2.6.

## **284. REOPENING LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES SERVICES**

The Committee received a report on the role of the library and archives services during the Covid-19 pandemic and the proposed first steps for their reopening. The report also sought the Committee's endorsement of a new library service distribution centre that had been approved on 23rd June 2020 by the Commercial and Investment Committee, and asked Members to consider proposed changes to the capital programme budgets from the Business Plan.

The Head of Libraries and Community Services paid tribute to the dedicated work carried out by the library service during the lockdown, emphasising the digital innovations that had emerged and proven popular among old and new library users, while also noting efforts to deliver books where possible to those who were self-isolating. Drawing attention to the plans for starting to reopen library services that were laid out in section 2.2.1 of the report, he assured Members that all procedures would ensure the safety of customers and staff, with an example being given of books entering a 72 hour quarantine after being returned. He emphasised that the reopening would be carried out in two phases, with the first phase involving nine major library sites in Bar Hill, Cambourne, Cambridge Central, Ely, Huntingdon, March, St Ives, St Neots, and Wisbech, with all other libraries due to open on 3rd August.

Highlighting the need to relocate some libraries staff and services from the Roger Ascham site, the Assistant Director of Skills, Employment and Libraries indicated that the move was intended to create greater alignment with the Think Communities approach and was not simply a relocation and replication of the current setup. A search had been carried out to identify a site that would serve the whole County as a distribution centre, although only 50% of the staff would be relocated to the new site, with the remaining 50% operating from library buildings across the County in order to support the community network and infrastructure.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Established that the distribution centre would not be providing any frontline services to members of the public.
- Expressed concern over the accessibility of the proposed location for the new distribution centre, noting that it was not serviced by public transport and that some staff members did not have access to a car. One Member argued that the mobile service routes and stocking locations would be adversely affected, resulting in a reduction to the number of communities visited by the service, while the associated increased emissions and fuel costs would be in contravention of the Council's green agenda. The Assistant Director emphasised that over 20 properties had been considered, including 11 in Cambridge, but had been rejected variously for their high costs, unsuitable size or lack of access for the mobile libraries, while the proposed site had met all the criteria that had been set by the service.

- Suggested that staff who were due to be relocated had not been consulted properly on the proposed site, noting that they had also been unable to access confidential Committee reports. The Assistant Director informed Members that staff had been involved early on and throughout the planning stages, although the statutory consultation stage could not begin until the new site had been confirmed and following those consultations, appropriate support would be offered to affected staff in line with Council policy.
  - Observed that health professionals from the Health Information Service, librarians and other internal and external partners visited the Roger Ascham site, and that the relocation would affect such visits.
  - Suggested that the property market was currently volatile, with many businesses closing or moving, and therefore alternative potential locations becoming available. One Member proposed that the relocation be delayed until a wider search be carried out. The Assistant Director assured Members that the proposed location was considered to be suitable for all the functions required by the service.
  - Clarified that the mobile libraries would continue to be based in Cambridge, although the location had still not been established.
  - Queried how the annual Summer Reading Challenge, which was popular with young children, would be hosted given the restricted access to libraries. The Head of Libraries and Community Services informed Members that it would be taking place in a reduced, digital fashion and undertook to circulate information to Members.
- Action required**
- Endorsed the Council's overall approach to the library service.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the role of libraries and archives to continue culture and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- b) Note and comment on the proposed first steps to reopening libraries and archives services;
- c) Following the decision at Commercial and Investments Committee on 23 June 2020, approve the purchase of a new library service distribution centre, to endorse the location and function as suitable for ensuring effective delivery of the library service distribution centre and support services, and formally consult library staff accordingly;
- d) Note the ongoing work to develop the project described at section 2.3 of the report, to deliver services and opportunities at the most local level through the purchase of a vehicle; and
- e) Note and recommend the changes to the capital programme budgets from the Business Plan as shown in section 2.3.11, and recommend that General Purposes Committee approves those changes.

## 285. INNOVATE AND CULTIVATE FUND – ENDORSEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS (JULY 2020)

The Committee received a report which contained two applications to the Innovate funding stream, which had been supported by the Recommendation Panel at its meeting on 30th June 2020. The first application was from a project that helped women who had had their children removed and placed in care, while the second project sought to improve the ability of health service workers to identify and support domestic abuse victims. Both projects were considered to represent a saving to the Council in resources and cost and had therefore been recommended for approval by the panel.

While discussing the applications, Members:

- Noted the importance of the projects under consideration, particularly given that an increased number of people had suffered from domestic abuse during the lockdown.
- Confirmed that the next deadline for bids was on 1st August 2020 and that the subsequent round, due to be held in November 2020, would be postponed so that an evaluation could be carried out on whether the Council could be more prescriptive on the type of projects it encouraged, as part of the recovery process from Covid-19.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Agree to fund the following two applications through the Innovate funding stream:

- Ormiston Families
- Refuge

## 286. COMMUNITIES CAPITAL FUND – ENDORSEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS (JUNE 2020)

The Committee received a report which detailed three applications to the Communities Capital Fund that had been recommended for funding by the Member Panel. The Chairman read out a note of endorsement that had been submitted by Councillor Schumann in support of the Swaffham Prior Village Hall bid.

While discussing the recommended applications, Members requested that the next iteration of the report contain more in depth information on the overall number of applications that had been received and funding that had been allocated. The Head of Communities and Partnerships Integration agreed to include such information in the subsequent report. **Action required**

It was resolved to:

Approve the following applications for funding:

- (i) March Town Rugby Club - £234,000;
- (ii) Swaffham Prior Village Hall - £62,000; and
- (iii) Ramsey Neighbourhood Trust - £350,000.

## 287. COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS ORAL UPDATES

The Committee noted brief oral updates provided by the following Community Champions:

- Councillor Costello (Huntingdonshire), who noted that she had joined a working party that was striving to increase awareness in St Neots on dementia, autism and disabilities. A written update was provided and attached as **Appendix 1** to the minutes.
- Councillor Every (East Cambridgeshire), who welcomed the participation of Community Safety Partnerships in the response to Covid-19. A written update was provided and attached as **Appendix 2** to the minutes.
- Councillor French (Fenland), who informed Members of plans to open two Timebanks in Fenland.
- Councillor Meschini (Cambridge), who expressed frustration that Cambridge local area committees were still not being convened during the lockdown, despite other public meetings being held.

## 288. COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN

The Service Director of Communities and Partnerships confirmed to Members that the reserve meeting date on 6th August 2020 would be used for a Committee meeting.

The Chairman noted that following the abolition of the Economy and Environment Committee, two appointments to outside bodies that had been made by that former Committee had been transferred to the Communities and Partnership Committee, and it was proposed to reappoint the previous appointees for the following municipal year.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the Committee's Agenda Plan;
- b) Appoint Councillor McDonald to the Duxford Neighbours Forum; and
- c) Appoint Councillor Shuter to the Visit Cambridge and Beyond Destination Management Company Board of Directors.

Chairman  
6th August 2020

**Community Champion of Community Activity update**

<b>Community Champion:</b>	Adela Costello
<b>Place:</b>	Huntingdonshire
<b>Date:</b>	2nd July 2020

<b>UPDATE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is really nothing new to report since the last meeting which was just two weeks ago, however, still anticipating the opening of the libraries in July will mean that we can re-start the project 'Essentials by Sue' as most of items are donated and collected from libraries throughout the area.</li></ul>
<b>NEW CONTACTS, PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The continuing priority is to support local communities and organisations who are helping vulnerable people shielding during this crisis. I am still involved with the Ramsey Covid-19 Hub which supplies food parcels and contact for those isolated and continue to give support and advice.</li><li>• I persevere in my endeavour to help local village halls and groups who have lost vital income, to access the Business Grants provided by Huntingdonshire District Council. Ramsey Community Hall, Ramsey Rural Museum and the Gauntlet Project are just a few of the groups I have encouraged and have received the grant.</li><li>• I am still supporting Hamerton Wildlife Park which has now fortunately re-opened, however, there was a lot of confusion around during the previous weeks as to when it would happen, however, initial projections on visitors looks good. They opened on Monday to members only so that they could judge if their precautions were working and as from Thursday will be open to the general public but only through on-line booking.</li><li>• The initial two projects I have sponsored for the Community Capital Grant, Ramsey Community Hub and the Great Fen Project have been approved to continue to level 2 which requires further detail and a business plan. I continue to assist them in this. Also involved with a project from Upwood Cricket Club for a renewal of their premises plus supported a group from St. Neots in their expression of interest for an outdoor swimming area. I have not heard anything from two groups who contacted me earlier on when the funding stream became available and although I have continued to email them, there has been no response.</li><li>• I am working with VoiceAbility, an organisation for adults with learning disabilities who recently undertook a transport survey for those with High Special Needs which showed the need for much improvement in this area due to the lack of availability of suitable vehicles and even access to trains. This is again in abeyance due to Covid-19 although I have been in contact with the local member of Melpreth where there is an issue with wheelchair access at the train station and hopefully we will be able to work together on this.</li><li>• Keeping in contact with officers from CCC and HDC who have worked on my projects.</li><li>• Forwarding as much information as possible to local social media websites, HDC councillors and officers plus the parishes including the need for foster carers, contacts for Domestic Abuse sufferers in fact all the latest news regarding what is happening in our area.</li><li>• I have been asked to join a new working party in St. Neots, named D.A.D which stands for Dementia, Autism and Disability Working Group. The objectives are to promote St. Neots to be a Dementia, Autism and Disability Friendly community. I have already made links and given them</li></ul>



some of the initiatives that I was starting, in particular, in Ramsey but now hopefully spreading throughout Huntingdonshire.

#### **COMMUNITY GOOD PRACTICE**

- Joint working between Officers and Members of HDC and CCC plus local parishes and organisations during this difficult time.
- Ensuring that members of the public have access to all necessary and vital information.

**Community Champion of Community Activity update.**

<b>Community Champion:</b>	Lis Every
<b>Place:</b>	East Cambridgeshire
<b>Date:</b>	2nd July 2020

**NEW CONTACTS, PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES (during Coronavirus period)**

Working on the review of the Community Safety Partnership into the place based concept incorporating Post-Covid-19 working party with Operations Director, ECDC.  
 Appointed as part of ECDC’s Post Covid-19 cross party working group on forward planning.  
 Starting to work with organisations who have put bids into the Capital Fund whether successful or not on further funding opportunities or advice.  
 Part of Wendy Lansdowne’s local Parish forum;  
 Worked on the pop up cycling and walking scheme submitted to County for Combined Authority.  
 Networking and signposting activities linking local neighbourhood volunteering groups, the Ely community covid-19 mutual aid group, the City of Ely Council and the ECDC Community hub;  
 Working with all the business organisations, Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Commerce and Ely Cathedral Business Group helping with access to funds continues on a request basis;  
 Undertaking research and will be writing bids for a number of charities who are seeking funding to support sustainability, including the Volunteers Centre, Ely, Pos+ability, and others.

**UPDATE**

**All work on-going but on hold.**

- Monitoring local provision for Adult Skills in East Cambs. Now a member of the Combined Authority on their Skills Committee. Working with the organisations dealing with NEETs in East Cambs to upskill young people who need Maths and English qualifications. Concerns about quality of provision and duplication.
- Introduction of Youth Advisory Board which will work alongside the East Cambs Youth Strategy scheduled for April
- Training for Youth Ambassadors for the Eyes and Ears project.
- Better communications through a bi-monthly newsletter – supporting awareness of the Think communities approach. Edition 2 in 2 months. On hold for the moment.
- Working with Soham on funding for projects.
- Strategic plan for Littleport on social prescribing now in place
- Launch of the collaboration between CCC and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Chamber of Commerce visiting networking opportunities to recruit business mentors for the pilot for a Local offer plan for our care leavers in Cambridge City.
- Part of the multi-agency Mental Health Task Group for children in care researching the level of support provided by local universities.
- Working on widening Eyes and Ears project to include local schools
- Identifying business mentors for post-16 students and post-18 students leaving care.

- Discussions with VCAEC to extend car share scheme and attract volunteers outside Ely. Completely revamping provision and marketing strategy. Funding being sought.
- Continuing to work with City College, Peterborough to grow numbers on their Health and Social Care courses in East Cambridgeshire

#### **COMMUNITY GOOD PRACTICE**

- Initial research has been undertaken to identify the organisations in existence, what they currently offer; how these services could overlap and determining a network strategy;
- Working with parish and district councillors to create capacity and information base supporting their work in their Parishes/Wards as required;
- Building network of community providers and champions across the District.
- Improve communication with County, District and Parish Councillors, particularly embracing social media.