

Minutes of a Meeting held at Riverside, Lowestoft  
on **Tuesday, 1 November 2016 at 6.00 pm**

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillors N Webb (Vice Chairman, in the Chair), S Barker, M Cherry, G Elliott, T Goldson, L Gooch, P Light, J Murray, B Provan, C Rivett, L Smith and C Topping

Cabinet Member in attendance

Councillor M Rudd – Cabinet Member for Community Health & Safety

Officers present

N Rickard (Head of Communities) and A Stapleton (Democratic Services Officer)

---

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Cackett, N Brooks and T Gandy.

Councillor T Goldson attended as a substitute for Councillor N Brooks, and Councillor M Cherry attended as a substitute for Councillor T Gandy.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor S Barker declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in Item 5 on the Agenda – “Responding to Poverty, Deprivation, Disadvantage, Barriers to Social Mobility and Hidden Needs in East Suffolk” – as Vice Chairman of the Suffolk County Council Education and Children’s Services Committee.

Councillor T Goldson declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in Item 5 on the Agenda – “Responding to Poverty, Deprivation, Disadvantage, Barriers to Social Mobility and Hidden Needs in East Suffolk” – as Chairman of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board.

**3 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- a) the addition of Councillor N Webb to the list of those present.
- b) the re-wording of the first sentence of the paragraph commencing “Arising from the Minutes” on Page 1 to read: “Arising from the Minutes, Councillor Gooch, in her capacity as Chair of the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association of Pakefield High School, had followed up the lack of take-up of funding for pupils to take the peer mentoring qualification with Pakefield High pastoral staff, and had been advised that this was a communications issue and that the school had been unaware that the programme could be accredited”.
- c) the addition of a further bullet point following that concerning the categorisation of parks on Page 5 concerning the benefits of consistent categorisation of destination and community park play spaces, the exact wording to be agreed by the Vice Chairman of the Committee and Councillor Gooch; and

- d) the amendment of final bullet point in this section, on Page 6, to read “The catchment area for a particular park may not fall within just one District Ward”.

**4 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, RESPONSES OF THE CABINET TO ANY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OR REPORTS OF ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET**

There were no announcements.

**5 RESPONDING TO POVERTY, DEPRIVATION, DISADVANTAGE, BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY AND HIDDEN NEEDS IN EAST SUFFOLK**

The Cabinet Member for Community Health & Safety introduced the report which provided a summary of key issues in East Suffolk in relation to poverty, hidden needs, social mobility, deprivation, disadvantage and rural services. The report drew upon recently published documents, and identified key issues for both Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Districts arising from them. The individual reports also identified specific groups which were likely to or may experience disadvantage, and some of the reports identified geographical target areas, a number of which were in Waveney.

A significant amount of work was underway to tackle some of the issues identified, and whilst there was more work to be done, there were opportunities to build upon existing initiatives, including those led through the Council, Lowestoft Rising and the East Suffolk Partnership. Additional work would be commissioned by the East Suffolk Partnership to identify where interventions were likely to have most impact, and would identify both target geographical areas and target groups/communities of interest.

The Head of Communities gave a demonstration of use of the maps accessible via the Hidden Needs Report 2016 produced by the University of Suffolk on behalf of the Suffolk Community Foundation. These maps provided information at neighbourhood level on a number of statistics including the most and least deprived neighbourhoods (a neighbourhood in Kirkley was rated the 10<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 32,844), people living in income deprivation, people in receipt of means tested benefits and people aged over 65 years of age (for example, 8% of people living in Carlton Colville were aged over 65, but 50% of those in Southwold and Reydon were over this age). Work was being carried out by the County Council to layer further statistics onto these maps.

Some of the statistics were not current, whilst others were more up to date, and they were informing projects to tackle the issues raised. Examples of this were the social prescribing pilot at Kirkley Mill, whereby GPs could refer patients to voluntary organisations for their non-medical problems, the creation of mens' sheds to tackle social isolation, and the work of the emerging Lowestoft Dementia Action Alliance. There was also work to be done in understanding what interventions would have the greatest impact.

The following questions and issues were raised during the discussion of this report:

- The Social Mobility Index undertaken by the Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission looked at how well the poorest children did at school, university and in the job and housing market. The latest report showed Waveney at 318 out of the 324 local authority district areas in England, and Norwich City at 324. However, £6m had been obtained to spend in Norwich on raising the social mobility of young people, and a Member asked how Waveney could attract some targeted funding from national sources. Various potential funding sources had been identified for local issues, including Big Lottery funding (they had identified Lowestoft and Peterborough as priority areas in the East), and the Council's Funding Team was working on a bid for some work on reducing inequalities and improving access to services in deprived areas of Lowestoft through a new 'Community Capacity Project', which was linked into other work on raising aspirations.

- Availability of broadband was key to accessing services for both young and old, and this was often poor in rural areas. Access to broadband was an important factor in tackling inequality, and was an action in the East Suffolk Business Plan.
- The number of income deprived children in Suffolk (4,505 lived in income deprivation in Waveney) was something which could not be tackled by one organisation or council, but was a significant problem to be flagged up nationally.
- Demands on the voluntary sector were increasing, and even some local branches of national charities were struggling to cope, such as the Samaritans and Age UK Suffolk. The District Council had continued to provide funding for the North East Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).
- The East Suffolk response to the Suffolk “Working Together to Tackle Poverty” Strategy had prioritised two of the five strategic aims identified in the Strategy. These were “extend financial inclusion and improve people’s financial skills”, and “reduce levels of food and fuel poverty”, as it was felt that these were two issues which district councils could do something about on their own, whereas the other three priorities were being dealt with in partnership. The other East Suffolk priority was digital inclusion.
- Through their Sustainable Town and Village Economies project, the Council’s Economic Development Team had asked communities to identify issues which they wished to tackle around the local economy, and support was being provided by the Team, including opportunities to access funding. This also involved town councils and business associations.
- A Member asked where the definition of poverty set out in the report had come from, and was advised that this was a national definition.
- Whilst the County Council’s Raising the Bar initiative had seen educational attainment in Lowestoft rise, with GCSE and A Level passes increased this year, the Social Mobility Index showed that Waveney was in the bottom 10% overall for school specific indicators, but in the 60-70% band for early years. This meant that children in early years had good prospects, but by the time they went to school this dropped to the lowest 10% band. There was, however, a lag in statistics, so it could be that an improvement would be seen in the latest results. A Member added that it was difficult to attract teaching staff to an area of deprivation, where they knew the job would be particularly challenging. Another Member felt that Ofsted had too much power to cause damage to schools, and by giving poor ratings had caused an exodus from Lowestoft schools to Beccles, which in turn had led to problems at the Beccles school involved. Young carers being unable to get to school would also affect the figures.
- A Member asked what Waveney had specifically done to tackle issues of deprivation in the District in the 5 years since the first Hidden Needs Report. A lot of activity was being carried out in specific targeted areas, and whilst funding was a challenge, with the continuing cuts to public services, there had been a lot of successes. Examples of this included a drop in the number of homeless people in Lowestoft from the 40s to less than 10, and a reduction in the number of street drinkers and teenage pregnancies. Work was being done with complex individuals through the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) worker, but the capacity of the health system was an issue which made this more difficult. However, there was now more local control of GP practices as they were commissioned through Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG.
- It was not always easy to measure the impact of projects, and the Council was working with Community Action Suffolk to look at how voluntary and community organisations could better measure their impact. Another challenge was the time lag, whereby results were not seen immediately. Case studies were a particularly helpful way of showing the real impact of a project on people’s lives.
- Deprivation, the lack of money and family breakdown often led to mental health problems which could not be solved by prescribing anti-depressants. A number of local VCS organisations were involved in the social prescribing pilot, and was also looking into

funding a mental health nurse to work with the police at weekends and evenings, to avoid people with mental health issues being arrested, and instead to provide them with appropriate help as early as possible.

- A Member asked whether there were still plans to develop a health hub similar to that at Kirkley Mill in the north of Lowestoft. This was related to the Out of Hospital Teams, which aimed to provide support to keep people in their own homes rather than admitting them to hospital. The Lowestoft model was being rolled out across the whole Gt Yarmouth and Waveney area, using Beccles Hospital as an intermediate care hub (bridging the gap between keeping people at home and hospital admission), and seeing hospital admission as a last resort. Another Member asked whether Kirkley Mill struggled to attract GPs, and was advised that there had been some problems across the board attracting GPs, teachers and care workers to the District.
- Community Action Suffolk was an organisation which had replaced 10 separate voluntary organisations a few years ago, and which had been provided with funding by Suffolk County Council (SCC) for a period of five years, of which it was part way through the fourth. SCC staff were working with the organisation to review its model of working, and it had been restructured, with a reduction in staff and a new Chief Executive. The organisation provided support for voluntary and community organisations, such as training, and advice on structures, business plans and funding. It was recognised as a partner which provided the voice of the voluntary and community sector, however it was also recognised that the organisation had limited numbers of staff and had struggled to provide some services. The new model would see it charging for some services.
- A Member asked whether the Community Development Team was working with the Kirkley Forum Group and the YMCA Shine Project, and was advised that it was working with the Kirkley Forum Group and would be asked to follow up the work of the YMCA project.
- Partners were aware of the difficulties health and social care staff faced with using the Lorenzo IT system, and this had been flagged up by staff to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and was a national issue.
- The timeline of the reports and projects was not limited to 5 years ahead, and it was acknowledged that the population was ageing and that the focus of projects would need to be continually reviewed.
- A Member referred to the sentence in the report which said that many of the recommendations from the 2008 Groups at Risk of Disadvantage (GAROD) study had not progressed adequately, and was advised that key issues had been identified around language, communication, and cultural awareness of frontline staff. The full report could be made available to Members on request.
- Referring to the long term vision at the end of the Hidden Needs Report, a Member stated that the problem of increasing inequality needed to be addressed long term, and that intensive research was required, for example in 3 or 4 targeted wards, in order to identify barriers and target resources on reducing them. This was exactly what was planned through the Building Community Capacity project under discussion with the Big Lottery. It would be necessary to analyse the statistics in order to identify exactly what was causing the deprivation, for example the age ranges of families in poverty and inter-generational issues. Issues identified Suffolk-wide included the use of community transport such as bus services to combat social isolation, access to wrap-around school care, school placement allocation, access to fruit and vegetables and education on healthy eating. A Member added that public transport across Suffolk was mostly provided commercially, not by the County Council.
- Some projects were underway specifically focused on healthy eating, including community allotment schemes, and some supermarkets were giving fruit to children visiting the store, and donating food close to its use by date to voluntary organisations and food banks.

- There was to be a workshop held at Lowestoft Library from 5pm to 7pm on Thursday 3 November 2016 to advise community groups on how to apply for funding for projects on five specific themes through the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Health and Wellbeing Community Call to Action Programme.
- GPs and other services made referrals to the Waveney Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum, but that organisation was short of funding. The Cabinet Member for Community Health & Safety advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner sponsored domestic violence funding County-wide. The Council's Funding Team could also be approached for advice on whether any project based funding might be available to the group.
- People in receipt of Universal Credit often had to wait up to a month before receiving their first payment; this had the effect of putting them in debt. People could also be penalised for missing appointments, thus setting them back further. The Head of Communities advised that the issue of sanctions had been raised with Job Centre Plus, as well as the fact that paying money direct to recipients through Universal Credit meant that they were responsible for budgeting in order to sort out rent and bill payments, and sometimes did not understand how to live within their means and budgets. Awareness raising was being undertaken, including in conjunction with partners including the CAB and Lloyds Bank, and particular cases followed up.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Communities for her helpful demonstration of the interactive maps available through the Hidden Needs Report, and for her comprehensive responses to Members' questions. It was clear that the issues under discussion could not be tackled overnight, or in isolation, and it was reassuring to hear how partners were working together to address the needs of communities in Suffolk.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the findings of the six reports considered in Report REP1445 and its Appendix be noted.
2. That it be noted that further work to identify the specific needs of geographical communities and communities of interest and to evaluate potential interventions to address these needs will be undertaken through the East Suffolk Partnership.
3. That a further report be brought back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the appropriate point.

NB: Councillor Rudd left the meeting at the end of this item, at 7.57pm.

## **6 CURRENT POSITION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman presented a report which reminded Members that the current position of the Committee's work programme was provided at each meeting, in order for it to be continually reviewed by the Committee.

At the June 2016 meeting, the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2016/17 and beyond had been approved, and changed to a "rolling" work programme with agendas planned 2-3 meetings in advance and leaving space to be reactive to changing needs. The work programme showed proposed timings for individual reports planned, but was a live document and subject to change.

The current position of the work programme was set out at Appendix A of the report for Members' review, and the Chairman advised that consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy would take place at the joint meeting of the Committee with the Audit & Governance Committee planned for 1 December 2016.

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 01/11/2016

Members referred to the question setting meeting which had taken place at the end of October 2016 to put together the lines of inquiry to be following during the Committee's annual scrutiny of Waveney Norse and Sentinel Leisure Trust. Members felt that a similar session to ascertain the information which would be required to assist the Committee's annual scrutiny of the Marina Theatre Trust should be arranged, and the Democratic Services Officer was asked to speak to the Chairman of the Committee in this regard.

NB: Councillor Elliott left the meeting at this point in the proceedings, at 8.01pm.

A Member asked the Democratic Services Officer to find out when the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups training would be arranged.

### **RESOLVED**

That the current position of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix A to Report REP1477, be noted.

The meeting was concluded at 8.03 pm

Chairman