



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16:30 to 18:10

19 March 2015

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Maxwell (vice chair), Barker, Bogelein, Carlo, Galvin, Haynes, Herries, Howard, Manning, Packer, Ryan and Woollard

Also present: Councillor Driver, cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety.

1. Declarations of interest

Councillor Haynes declared an other interest in item 7 as her husband owned a social enterprise.

2. Public questions/petitions

The chair reported that two questions had been received from members of the public and that the issues that they had raised would be addressed under item 6 (below) building social inclusion and capital in Norwich.

3. Minutes 15 January 2015

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January subject to the following amendments;

- 1) In recommendation 8, change 'earning' to 'learning'; and
- 2) Change references from 'the homeless' to 'homeless people'

4. Minutes 26 February 2015

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February subject to the following amendments;

- 1) In item 4, recommendation 2, change 'proceeding' to 'preceding'; and
- 2) In item 5, recommendation 2, add the word 'put' in front of 'pedestrians' to read ".....in order to continue to put pedestrians first..."

5. Current forward agenda

RESOLVED to note the forward agenda.

6. Building social inclusion and capital in Norwich

Councillor Galvin presented the report as chair of the task and finish group. She said that the group has taken an asset based approach to this piece of work to examine which assets could be built on.

Mr Monaghan, secretary of the King Street Neighbors, a group covering part of the Thorpe Hamlet area, spoke to the committee. His organisation was focused on bringing local people together through organised events. He said that although they had much help from the council, and wanted to express his thanks to council officers for their help with projects so far, he felt that the grants system was geared toward organisations with staff and premises already set up. It was very daunting to complete the paperwork needed to apply for grants and felt it would be helpful to have templates and materials available online for smaller organisations to use. Councillor Galvin thanked him for raising this point and said that this was covered by recommendation 13 but would welcome his input in designing such materials.

The chair read out the following question received from Lucy Hall:

I should like to ask the Scrutiny Committee why this valuable report is directed exclusively towards 'voluntary organisations and community groups' without mentioning social enterprises. The term normally used nowadays is 'VCSE sector' (voluntary, community and social enterprise sector).

Social enterprises deliver all the social benefits that are mentioned in this report, while at the same time aiming to stand on their own feet financially and generate income to continue their work. As well as their beneficiaries many social enterprises also involve volunteers, service users and the local community in which they work. Social enterprises are an increasing part of the VCSE sector, and support for them from Norwich City Council would have wide reaching benefits in terms of building social inclusion and capital in the city. "

Councillor Galvin said that this was a valid point and had been considered when writing the report, however, the task and finish group wanted to keep the use of acronyms to a minimum. On reflection, it was agreed to include a reference to social enterprises within the report.

The other members of the task and finish group also made comment on the report. Councillor Bogelein said that social capital and social inclusion were inextricably linked as social inclusion could be achieved using assets that were already available. Councillor Herries thanked all contributors to the report and said that it had been fantastic to have so much input from local organisations and businesses which meant that going forward; working together would be much more effective. Councillor Woollard said that there was still much work to be undertaken to empower citizens and encourage community groups.

The cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety congratulated the task and finish group on their report and a good cross party piece of work. He emphasised the need to prioritise the work in conjunction with officers. This was acknowledged but the task and finish group reminded members that all the recommendations made worked together. It was a wide ranging piece of work but if social capital was built, there will be benefits in the future.

Discussion ensued in which members of the task and finish group, along with the executive head of strategy, people and neighbourhoods, answered member's questions. It was explained that a more outward facing approach to promoting the report and its findings would be employed once the report had been formally agreed by cabinet and work streams arose out of it. In response to a member's question, Councillor Bogelein said that the reasons listed under 'other reasons' as to why people did not volunteer were such factors as the lack of pay and transport issues, however, the biggest obstacle was childcare.

Members discussed the restrictions put upon volunteering by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) with regards to payment of benefits, despite volunteering giving valuable experience for employment. Members considered that if any lobbying of the DWP was to take place, it would need to be at a national level. The executive head of strategy, people and neighbourhoods said that if the report was agreed at cabinet, a multi partner work programme would be put into place to be completed over a number of years.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) To include a reference to social enterprises in the report; and
- 2) To ask cabinet to consider the report of the task and finish group

(Councillor Driver left the meeting at this point.)

7. Norfolk health overview and scrutiny committee update

The representatives on the Norfolk health overview and scrutiny committee gave a verbal update on the matters discussed at the meeting of the committee on 26 February 2015. These included:

- Diabetes services
- The increase in calls to the ambulance service
- Dental health
- A recent visit to the control centre at Wymondham police station

RESOLVED to:

- 1) To note the update on the NHOSC meeting on 26 February; and
- 2) To agree that regular updates of the NHOSC are received by the scrutiny committee.

(Councillor Haynes left the meeting at this point.)

8. Annual scrutiny review 2014 - 2015

The chair introduced the report and thanked everyone who had been involved in scrutiny throughout the year.

Members discussed the addition of more detail around the discussion had on 15 January meeting covering rough sleeping and homelessness – challenges and response. Members considered linking a document reflecting this to the annual review.

In response to a member's question, the chair reminded members that the tracker was an evolving document and was only a snapshot of current progress. The scrutiny officer said that he continued to work on the tracker and it would be as fully updated as possible before going to full council in June for adoption.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Recommend the annual scrutiny review for approval at the next available meeting of full council,
- 2) ask the scrutiny officer to check on progress with officers on any work that may have been undertaken in preparing a report on best practice in other councils and organisations, with regard to tackling transphobia and transphobic hate crime; and
- 3) ask the scrutiny officer to provide a link to a document with more detail surrounding the discussion on rough sleeping and homelessness – challenges and responses.

CHAIR