Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on 21 December 2016 at 9.30am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: L Neal (Chairman), B Duffin, C Gould, K Kiddie, T Lewis, G Minshull and J Wilby

Apologies: Councillor: B Bernard

Substitute Member: Councillor: V Bell

Cabinet Member in Attendance: Councillor: Y Bendle

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors: D Bills and N Legg

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), The Director of Business Development (D Lorimer), The Independent Living Team Leader (S Cayford), and the Senior Governance Officer (E Goddard)
MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Relating to Resolution 1d of Minute 1183, officers agreed to investigate and advise members on how the Council intended to enforce the condition that building should commence within a set time where developers were granted planning permission because of the Council’s current lack of a five-year Housing Land Supply.

UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL’S REPRESENTATIVE ON NORFOLK HEALTH AND OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cllr Legg provided members with an update on the work of the Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC) during 2016.

Members were advised that the first draft of the Norfolk and Waveney Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) had been considered by the NHOSC at their December meeting and it was anticipated that the Plan would be deliberated extensively as it further developed during 2017. The Committee noted that the objectives of the Plan were focussed around putting more emphasis onto community working and early help to avoid costly issues such as ‘bed blocking’ in acute hospitals, which was reportedly at a high level.

Cllr Legg was pleased to report that the Head of Stroke Services had noted and accepted several recommendations from the NHOSC. He advised there were still many issues and priorities that were difficult to resolve, such as whether ambulance response teams should deal with medical emergencies themselves to ease pressure on hospitals or whether this might adversely affect their response times to other calls.

Members thanked Cllr Legg for his update and noted that he would report again to the Scrutiny Committee in June 2017.
COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITH SOUTH NORFOLK CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

Cllr Bendle provided the Committee with a brief introduction to the collaborative working between the Council and the South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group (SNCCG), advising members that the health agenda had progressed quickly since it was last discussed by the Scrutiny Committee in April 2016. The Committee was pleased to note that the Clinical Commissioning Groups were now working in tandem and that they had utilised the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that their future commissioning intentions for 17/18 were in alignment with the wider health and wellbeing agenda across Norfolk. It was noted that although full integration of the health services had not yet been achieved, there was a notable improvement due to the collaboration.

The Chief Executive commended Cllr Bendle for her commitment and ability to shape and influence decisions in her role as Vice-Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board. She advised members of past issues that had arisen due to a shortfall in funding combined with various health providers working in silos rather than looking at health as a whole. Members were informed that many different services had contributed to the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) to allow a more comprehensive vision of health issues and how it was intended that these could be handled in a more collaborative, cost effective and efficient manner. The intentions of the STP included the provision of help at an earlier stage so that problems did not escalate and reach severe levels. It also considered solutions such as providing residents with aids and adaptations to enable them to stay in their own homes to reduce the demand on costly acute hospital and care solutions, helping to ensure that hospital beds were available to those people whose needs were the greatest. It was noted that mental health was one of the largest challenges and a key service which should be recognised and addressed in the STP.

The Independent Living Team Leader advised the Committee that, although the STP incorporated many clinical professionals, the Council was offering alternative non-medical solutions through various means including the work of the Community Connectors, the FIRST (Financial, Independence, Resilience, Skills and Training) approach and through SNC’s role as a statutory housing authority. She explained that a resident who might visit their doctor with stress or depression may also have non-medical issues, and could be steered by medical staff to community connectors or to the help hub. She advised that work was being undertaken in GP surgeries to raise the profile of community connectors to provide non-medical assistance, ranging from issues such as debt, employment and loneliness. Members noted that the Council was working with the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital to ensure that people were given help when discharged from hospital through various means, such as home improvements via the Handyperson Scheme, housing issues, disabled facilities grants, and “forget-me-not” grants for those living with dementia. It was also noted that officers were already considering ways to provide assistance as soon as people were admitted to hospital, in order to assist when they were due to be discharged.
Members were pleased to note the ongoing collaborative working, and that the importance of mental health had been recognised. In response to a query about the role members could take, Cllr Bendle stressed the importance of the preventative agenda and the need for district, town and parish councillors to raise the profile of the hub where issues such as bereavement and stress were known. It was also suggested that parish newsletters should regularly include articles to further raise the awareness of the hub as many residents were unaware of the help which was available for them. Members were also encouraged to share the services offered by the Council to enable partners, particularly in the voluntary sector, to see how these services could best be utilised to avoid duplication.

The Committee discussed the role of the community connectors and concerns were raised that they were not receiving updates and feedback on the work of the connectors. Members were advised that most of the work carried out by connectors was on a one-to-one basis and that they would not therefore need to be made aware of such individual cases. However, it was noted that Community Capacity Builders worked with local community groups, and officers agreed to look into how they could strengthen their relationship with members in order to provide relevant and regular feedback. It was suggested that leaflets giving contact information for connectors should be distributed at local youth centres and town/parish council offices etc.

After a brief discussion, the Committee noted and commended the work of members and officers for their ongoing commitment to working collaboratively with the SNCCG.

1188 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND TRACKER, AND CABINET CORE AGENDA

The Committee noted the Work Programme, Tracker and Cabinet Core Agenda.

The Chairman advised that she had been asked to consider the advertisement of the Council’s out-of-hours service, but that she did not consider this a matter for the Scrutiny Committee. Members noted that officers would investigate the concerns of the Police and Crime Commissioner outside of the meeting.

(The meeting concluded at 11:00 am)