Growth & Localism Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Growth & Localism Committee of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Tuesday 16 July 2013 at 2.00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors F Ellis (Chairman), P Allen (for Items 1-8), D Bills, M Edney, B Riches and B Spratt

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors Y Bendle, B McClenning, L Neal and (for Items 1-8) K Weeks and M Wilby

Also in Attendance: Mr J Pennell - Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC)

Officers in Attendance: The Communities & Active Life Manager (I Lambert), the Communities Officer – Sport and Wellbeing (M Heazle) and the Housing and Public Health Manager (M Swann). For parts of the meeting; the Funding Manager (N Cunningham) and the Communities Officer – Place (N Norman)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared ‘other’ interests in the matters listed below.

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<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Reason for Declaration</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>P Allen</td>
<td>Chair on SNYA Executive Board</td>
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<td>B Spratt</td>
<td>Church Warden - Tacolneston</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>L Neal</td>
<td>Club Secretary - Poringland Football Club</td>
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<td>B Riches</td>
<td>Director - Bordahoppa</td>
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2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Localism Committee held on 19 March 2013 were agreed, subject to a minor amendment, as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from minute number 10, the Communities & Active Life Manager confirmed that the quorum for Neighbourhood Board meetings had changed from five to three.
In response to queries, Cllr Wilby stated that a joint meeting of all Neighbourhood Boards had taken place the previous year; a further joint meeting would take place at some time in the future.

Arising from minute number 12 regarding Neighbourhood Board Community Representatives, the Communities & Active Life Manager advised the Committee that the selection process to recruit Community Representatives had not been as successful as hoped. He recommended that instead of using the selection process in the future, a register of suitable individuals should be drawn up and a more personal approach be taken to gain their interest by demonstrating the benefits of the role. Concerns were raised that by not opening the application process to a wider audience, opportunities might be missed to recruit the most suitable people, and it was agreed that the process should be kept as open as possible and that appropriate potential applicants be sought through personal contact at board meetings and neighbourhood groups. Cllr Wilby added that he, Cllr Allen and the Neighbourhood Chairmen would be interviewing shortlisted applicants in the following week.

3 HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD UPDATE

Cllr Yvonne Bendle presented members with an update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board. She gave an outline of the history and membership of the Board and advised the Committee of the long and short term objectives.

Some concerns were raised that the Health and Wellbeing Board’s aims might be too ambitious but Cllr Bendle assured members that it was there to provide a strategic direction to discuss ideas and to direct and develop projects to enhance and deliver health and wellbeing services.

The Housing and Public Health Manager suggested that the Committee might consider how South Norfolk Council could support the established and emerging priorities around health and wellbeing, and outlined some good practice to inform the discussion.

It was suggested that there might be some overlap in services already being provided and it was agreed that care should be taken not to duplicate work.

4 COMMUNITY ASSETS REGISTER

The Communities Officer (Place) gave a presentation to members on the Community Right to Bid Scheme, detailing the process and procedure for community groups wishing to bid for assets to be used for social interest.

It was discussed and agreed that community groups, Neighbourhood Boards, and parish councils should be made fully aware of the processes to prevent misunderstandings where time and money could be lost.

In response to a query, the Communities Officer (Place) suggested that neighbourhood boards worked with the team to develop a Community Group Toolkit to assist prospective bidders in providing advice, support and assistance with business plans. She further added that she had developed a guidance manual that would inform and assist owners or community groups of the Community Right to Bid as well as marketing on the website.
YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD, YOUR CHOICE

Members considered a presentation by the Communities Officer (Place) which detailed the Your Neighbourhood, Your Choice (YNYC) scheme. The Committee was advised that feedback received from the 2012 YNYC scheme had identified several action points to be considered when designing the YNYC scheme for 2013. These were that:

- suggested themes should be more specific
- results might be skewed by a larger percentage of younger people taking part in the survey giving an unfair representation
- some projects might take a long time to implement
- confusion might exist around the terms ‘social action projects’ and ‘service enhancements’
- a comparison should be available for performance management
- community involvement should take place from the beginning of projects.

The Communities Officer (Place) advised members that YNYC 2013 would take these points into consideration and the scheme would embed localism further into the community. She stated that there would be a more quality focus and more demographical representation. The Committee was informed of the successes already achieved by the scheme which included the engagement of strategic partners, and the recognition of YNYC as a brand through marketing and advertisement at road-shows, workshops, briefings and public events.

Members suggested that the success of projects through YNYC should be widely advertised on the Council’s website and through Neighbourhood Boards to demonstrate South Norfolk Council’s commitment to the scheme and to encourage new ideas for projects in the area. It was suggested and agreed that a brochure be produced to publicise successes already achieved through the scheme. The Committee agreed that publicity and the marketing of the scheme was of vital importance to its success.

The Communities Officer (Place) suggested that projects might be localised into neighbourhood areas to enable individual Boards to focus on their own specific needs, and thanked members for their support, guidance and assistance with the scheme to date.

FUNDING REVIEW UPDATE

The Funding Manager presented her report which provided an update on the Funding Review. The report detailed the work undertaken around Service Level Agreements (SLAs), Social Action Projects (SAPs), and described three potential projects identified for the Committee’s consideration for funding through the Capital Programme.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

The Committee considered proposed changes to the management of SLAs by the grouping of key services being delivered for the council into a number of generic themes. It was proposed that the number of SLAs being managed by SNC might be reduced from 45 to 18 by this method which could improve the current scheme to reflect a leaner and more proportionate approach. The Funding Manager stressed that her report did not suggest that any funding was to be cut from the existing 45 organisations and asked members for their feedback regarding the proposed generic themes.

Members discussed their thoughts regarding the possible impact of merging the SLAs for the area’s Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB). It was suggested and agreed that difficulties
might be encountered by grouping the SLA for North East Suffolk CAB (NESCAB) with other CABs as it was based in Suffolk but served some parishes in South Norfolk Council’s area. In response to a member’s query, the Communities & Active Life Manager advised that merging the CAB SLAs should have little impact on the day to day operation of CABs.

The Committee queried several SLAs, including the current position of the Norwich & Norfolk Race Equality Council, which the Funding Manager agreed to investigate further. It was also agreed that the Norfolk Fire Service should be referred to as ‘the Crucial Crew’ for the purposes of the report.

The Funding Manager thanked members for their feedback and agreed to review the list of SLAs, taking into account the comments of the Committee.

Social Action Projects (SAPs)
The Committee considered and approved the Funding Manager’s guidance paper which sought to clarify how SAPs could be differentiated from other SNC awards. It was suggested and agreed that a simplified version of the guidance paper be provided for members of the public.

Capital Grant Project Proposals
The Funding Manager invited members to comment on the proposal to shortlist projects to be funded through the Council’s Capital Grant Programme, advising that three such proposals had been identified in her report; South Norfolk Country Park, Pedal Up, and a sporting facility for Poringland.

Members discussed the proposal and agreed that flexibility was an important factor to consider when determining where to allocate Capital Grant funding. In response to a concern raised by a member, the Funding Manager agreed to circulate the criteria guidelines to members of the Committee. Cllr Wilby requested that a sporting facility in Harleston be included in the shortlisted projects. The Funding Manager agreed that, subject to adequate information being received, this could be added to the shortlisted projects to be presented to Cabinet where the final decision of which projects to be supported would be made.

It was:

RESOLVED: TO RECOMMEND THAT CABINET:

1. adopts a principal of procuring a core set of coordinated SLAs based on the provision of key services:

2. agrees that formal notice be given to relevant partners informing them that changes to existing arrangements are likely to begin from 14/15 when organisations will be invited to bid for tenders;

3. identifies and uses any good practice being used to manage the current set of SLAs to inform a review of the Partnership Framework and future management of SLAs;

4. agrees that all officers involved in procuring services for SNC funding schemes be kept up to date with SNC Procurement Policies and Procedures;
5. formalises the mechanism for members to play a role in monitoring and reviewing SLAs within the Neighbourhood Boards and the existing set of relevant Committees

6. accepts the guidance document on SAPs and that a simplified version of the document be provided for members of the public;

7. agrees that given the anticipated increase in the budget for 13/14 and 14/15 and the 'limited financial cost' element of a SAP, a greater level of flexibility is permitted regarding the number of SAPs which can be delivered within the 20% financial allocation in accordance with the Neighbourhood Board Ground rules;

8. agrees the prioritisation of the shortlisted capital projects to receive SNC funding from the Capital Grant fund with the addition of a sporting facility in Harleston if all adequate documentation is received, and subject to the criteria for Capital Grant Funding being forwarded to members of the Growth and Localism Policy Committee.

7 NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL

The Communities Officer (Sport and Wellbeing) presented members with a Needs Assessment Model which provided statistical information regarding the needs of residents in individual parishes of South Norfolk. He suggested that Neighbourhood Boards might utilise the model in order to identify local issues and to discuss ways in which these might be resolved or improved. It was suggested and agreed that the information be broken down into priorities for individual neighbourhood areas so that it could be presented at Neighbourhood Board meetings.

8 PROGRESS REPORTS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARDS

This item was postponed to be discussed at a future meeting of the Growth & Localism Committee.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

It was agreed that the future of the Growth & Localism Policy Committee’s Work Programme be discussed outside of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.22 pm