SCUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on 21 May 2014 at 9.30 am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors M Dewsbury (Chairman), L Hornby, T Lewis, B McClenning, A Pond, S Thomson, K Tilcock, and J Wilby

Apologies: Councillors G Watt, K Weeks and M Windridge

Substitutes: Councillors M Gray (for G Watt) and, from item 1114, J Herbert (for K Weeks)

Cabinet Members in Attendance: Councillors Y Bendle, D Bills and M Wilby

Officers in Attendance: The Deputy Chief Executive (A Radford), the Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole), the Communities and Active Life Manager (I Lambert) and the Scrutiny Officer (E Goddard)

1112 URGENT ITEMS

A query was raised by a member regarding the future arrangements after the Deputy Chief Executive left the employment of the Council. This query was not accepted as an urgent item but the Chairman confirmed that members would be advised, by the Chief Executive, of future arrangements in due course.

1113 MINUTES

Cllr McClenning requested that his comments during the previous meeting, giving recognition of the work undertaken by officers in relation to “Your Neighbourhood, Your Choice”, be added to Minute Number 1108. With this addition, the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held 17 April 2014, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
1114 REVIEW OF SOUTH NORFOLK JOB CLUBS

The Director of Growth and Localism introduced the report of the Communities and Active Life Manager, which requested that members assessed the effectiveness of the Jobs Clubs to date and discussed the development of a more targeted jobs service as part of the early help approach once the current Service Level Agreements for Jobs Club expired in September 2014. He explained the relationship between the Jobs Clubs and the early-help initiative, looking to assist people at an early stage, through a multi-agency approach, to avoid more costly intervention later, which would benefit all those concerned.

The Communities and Active Life Manager summarised the salient points contained in his report, drawing members’ attention to the attendance figures at the Jobs Clubs and also indicating the success rate of those who had attended being placed into education, employment or training. Members questioned the attendance figures and agreed that, in order to gauge the cost and value of the Clubs, it would be helpful to know the ‘cost per head’ of its users. It was suggested and agreed that more detail be obtained in the future from the Jobs Clubs regarding the number of repeat attendees, and that targets be put in place to more accurately assess the success of the Clubs.

Members discussed the need to give the Jobs Clubs an identity and to raise local awareness through advertising, marketing and through promoting the service within schools. The Committee also considered whether the Clubs should continue to focus on providing a service to enable young people to become ‘work-ready’ or whether to expand this to a more mature audience of people looking to get back into work, and also whether it should offer services such as CV writing and interview skills or instead act as a signpost to direct attendees to those organisations and websites who already offered those services.

The Communities and Active Life Manager advised members that a different approach was being tried at the Loddon and Poringland Jobs Clubs of running an appointments system for young people to ensure they attend the Clubs. However, concerns were raised that, by young people attending an appointment rather than a group session, the character and interactive nature of the Clubs might be lost. It was also agreed that staff working in Jobs Clubs should be approachable and able to focus on and identify with young people. Members considered that, by other agencies and local businesses attending Jobs Clubs as part of the Early Help Hubs currently under development, a comprehensive and effective jobs service could be provided.

In response to a member’s concern regarding the continuation of the Jobs Clubs once the current contract ended in September 2014, the Director of Growth and Localism reassured the Committee that he did not intend for there to be a gap in the service and thanked members for their comments which would help officers to evaluate and decide how best to continue the scheme.

After discussion, it was agreed that officers would take the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and, after consideration, bring back a more detailed report to a future meeting.
The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. endorse the report;

2. support the approach of developing a more targeted ‘jobs service’ as part of the early-help integrated approach;

3. recommend that officers consider:
   
   i. establishing targets and ensuring these are monitored;
   
   ii. requesting that the provider collect information regarding repeat attendees so reporting can be standardised;
   
   iii. improving advertising and creating an identity;
   
   iv. evaluating the focus of the Jobs Clubs and developing them to become more interactive;
   
   v. attending schools to promote the service at an early stage;
   
   vi. exploring the possibility of developing two schemes – one for young people and another to cater for more mature adults.

**1115 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND THE CABINET CORE AGENDA**

Members noted the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

The subject of the political balance of the Council’s Committees was raised as a potential item for future consideration by the Scrutiny Committee. However, it was noted that this would be reviewed, following the election in 2015, in consultation with Group Leaders.

A member raised the issue of revisions made to the policing budget and the potential resulting implications to PCSOs. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would consult with Cllr Christopher Kemp in his capacity as the Council’s representative on the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel.

(The meeting concluded at 11.13 am)

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Chairman