

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

held at

The Council Chamber

Symington Building, Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG

on 24th March 2022

Commencing at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillor Nunn, Chairman

Councillors: Ackerley, Dr Bremner, Critchley, James, Mrs Page (ex officio), Mrs Robinson and Mrs Simpson

Apologies: Councillors Fosker and Hollick

Officers: T. Day, J. Evans, S. Green, S. Hamilton and D. Wright

Officers remote: S. Taylor

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Fosker, who was substituted by Councillor James, and from Councillor Hollick who was substituted by Councillor Dr Bremner.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

In relation to item 6: Market Harborough Town Centre Masterplan, Councillor James declared that he is a social member of the Chamber of Trade.

MINUTES

It was NOTED that at the previous meeting, the Chairman and the Scrutiny Commission would review the Workplan to discuss whether the S106 Planning Agreement Contributions, regarding Health and the Police, be considered at a future meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, and it had been AGREED that this would be monitored by the Planning Committee.

It was also NOTED that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy be deferred to a future meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel on a date to be determined.

It was, therefore:

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 16th December 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

REVIEW OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR STRATEGY

Tom Day, the Service Manager, Community Partnerships presented the report covering the review of the Voluntary Sector Strategy.

The Chairman thanked Tom Day for his report and invited questions and comments from those present and the following were recorded:

Question / Comment	Response
<p><u>Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy: Expectations:</u> Expectations have to be managed, given that savings by the Council have to be made, against the increasing needs of the residents of the District going forwards, resulting in not all the needs of residents being able to be met.</p>	<p>The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that the Council targets all of its resources in the best way. During the pandemic, the Council provided extra funding to the voluntary sector, and where possible, passed on relevant grants and funding. e.g. working with the Lutterworth Community drivers to assist with foodbank deliveries.</p>
<p><u>Action Plan for 2015-20 Strategy:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Platinum Jubilee capital grant budget:</u> can details of the policy regarding this grant be provided ? 2. <u>Supporting Council staff to volunteer for Harborough:</u> request for more details. 3. <u>Supporting VCS to secure external funding – Annual ‘Dragons Den’ style event:</u> can more details be provided ? 4. <u>Sport England Pilot project:</u> what have been the outcomes of this project ? 5. <u>Harborough Lotto:</u> where is this promoted ? Given the rising fuel costs is too much reliance being placed on this ? 6. <u>Community Grants budget:</u> what has this reduced to for 2022/23 ? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details of the fund have been announced and the associated report, setting out the objectives and criteria, will be considered at the Cabinet meeting on the 4th April 2022. 2. There are two aspects to this:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staff volunteering their time, for which there is a policy. b. People volunteering for the Council. The example of litter picking was considered. Often village litter picking volunteers liaise with the Waste Service teams who provide all the litter picking equipment, bags and training if necessary and collect the bags of litter at the end. Based on this example, no policies were needed to improve the work being undertaken. 3. Dragon’s Den – this has been very successful, and has been part of Harborough’s enabling approach, so that a process is in place to encourage as much investment as possible into the District via a community grant. The Council’s Parish Liaison Officer has always had a close relationship with a number of funders such as the National Lottery and local funders such as the Bowden’s Charity. 4. The Council, the local branch of Homestart added value to a county-wide bid to apply to Sport England to help vulnerable families. The funding of £500k for three years does apply across Leicestershire, but HDC plays a key role in this. 5. The Harborough Lotto is promoted using social media, and mainly via Facebook, and regularly place Facebook advertisements, which enables the Council to select the demographics and location for a small charge. It is understood that the Lotto is also promoted in Parishes, via newsletters and Parish notice boards, and also in Resident’s newsletters. The Service Manager, Community Partnerships would welcome any other suggestions to promote the Lotto. The vast amount of money raised by the Lotto goes to support community causes. Both HDC and Community Groups can

	<p>promote sales. The Council is also looking to run training events and sharing best practice to assist Community Groups to market and promote the Lotto.</p> <p>6. The Community Grant Fund was set up in order to give funds back to communities via the New Homes Bonus. The budget for 2022 is £20k, however there is some underspend from 2021 which is being carried forward, giving a total of circa £35k. This is being used to support the Jubilee Small Grant fund, which community group and parishes can apply for.</p>
<p><u>Draft Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2022-2027</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Consultation</u> Has the voluntary and community sector been consulted on the draft strategy and are they aware of the implications ? 2. <u>Organisations by Ward Table:</u> Could information be provided covering groups by Ward ? 3. <u>Action Plan:</u> What are the timescales for developing the Action Plan, and is the intention to involve the Communities Scrutiny Panel as part of the on-going review of the strategy going forward ? 4. <u>Priority 1:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Growing the Lotto as an income source to local good causes:</u> Suggestion that a report is considered by Scrutiny on the marketing aspects. b. <u>Review HDC staff volunteering policy:</u> based on earlier comments, should this point should be removed ?. 5. <u>Priority 2:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Maintaining relationships with foodbanks and community networks to ensure district wide support:</u> The following wording should be added 'with other stakeholders or partners'. 6. <u>Priority 3:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Work with VCS to promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthy life choices.</u> Consider the inclusion of a reference to promote the importance of 'mental health', as well as general health. As the District has a significant ageing population, resources should be allocated accordingly. Consideration to be given to incorporate the wording :- 'To promote mental health, to foster social interaction and to combat social isolation' within the strategy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A number of voluntary and community sector groups have been attending Community Scrutiny Panel meetings on an annual basis and therefore would be aware of the funding changes. All the organisations affected by the core grant funding reductions were involved in discussions from the summer of 2021 onwards. An implementation date of September 2022 was set, which allowed a notice period of one year in order to plan accordingly, and all associated information was extensively communicated. The Community Grant fund has also been winding down for the past few years. 2. Yes information can be provided on groups registered by Ward. ACTION 3. The Action Plan will be prepared later in 2022 once the strategy, priorities and key areas have been confirmed. The Panel can have a role in the on-going review of the strategy. 4. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A report and marketing information can be provided to Members. b. The policy for staff volunteering should be reviewed as this has not been undertaken for a number of years. 5. Yes this wording can be added. 6. The Panel agreed that the wording should not be amended as it covers the various strands of health and social inclusion. The Panel NOTED that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy would cover this aspect in greater detail. 7. Will be amended. 8. Core grants are currently being reviewed and the Council will be moving towards to a different form and approach to community grants. 9. It is proposed that the VCS Accommodation policy is reviewed, as the last review was in 2015 and more flexibility may now be required.

<p>7. <u>Principles</u></p> <p>a. The first principle should read : a) If there is evidence of the delivery of a local need – linked to a Council priority.</p> <p>8. Clarification of a core grant: can information be provided as to what a core grant can be used for ?</p> <p>9. Is there spare capacity within the Symington Building and can community groups be helped with accommodation ?</p>	
<p><u>Review of Core Grants by VAL:</u></p> <p>1. <u>Impact on report due to energy and fuel price increases;</u> recent dramatic increases in the cost of energy and fuel may have a considerable impact on the costs for organisations which may not be reflected in the report.</p> <p>2. <u>Population demographic:</u> it was noted that information from a data set within that section indicated that the proportion of older people supported over 60 was 23%.</p> <p>3. <u>Consideration by the Cabinet:</u> is the full report going to the Cabinet ?</p> <p>4. <u>The role of the Council as an enabler to charitable organisations:</u> the review includes an appendix with a substantial list of charities and the Council needs to consider it's messaging very carefully.</p> <p>5. <u>Unhealthy families:</u> within the table detailing supported Harborough residents and the impact on the local community reference is made to unhealthy families – what is meant by this ?</p> <p>6. <u>List of charities:</u> it would be useful to have more detail in relation to the list of charities.</p> <p>7. <u>More investigation required in relation to areas such as funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB):</u> concerns that the CAB is receiving funding nationally, from the Leicestershire County Council and HDC.</p> <p>8. <u>Evaluation of four service providers:</u> Proposed RECOMMENDATION to the Cabinet that the four service providers should be evaluated in relation to the services provided within the District, and which meet the Council's priorities.</p> <p>9. <u>Distribution of services across the District:</u> it would be helpful to know how service provision etc for the various charities was spread across the District.</p>	<p>1. As the grant scheme is changing and consideration needs to be given as to what the grant scheme will look like. The various economic and other pressures will be taken into account. The report is to inform the decision making process as no decisions have been taken yet.</p> <p>2. NOTED.</p> <p>3. The review by VAL is for information purposes, and will be considered by Officers in preparing the report for the Cabinet, with the final Officer recommendations.</p> <p>4. The Council doesn't aim to support all the charities listed, and a number would not need the support of HDC. Sixty of the charities are listed with the Harborough Lotto. It was NOTED that the appendix be treated as context and that this be clearly stated. It was suggested that the new grant fund be opened up, in order that any charity can apply.</p> <p>5. The wording of 'unhealthy families' was terminology used by the consultant putting together the report.</p> <p>6. NOTED.</p> <p>7. NOTED</p> <p>8. NOTED and will be taken on board.</p> <p>9. This information will be provided to the Panel ACTION.</p>

The Panel thanked the Service Manager, Community Partnerships, for a comprehensive presentation of the strategy.

The Panel REVIEWED and INPUTTED into the refresh of the Voluntary Sector Strategy.

UPDATE ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING TEAM

Tom Day, the Service Manager, Community Partnerships presented the report covering an update of the Health and Wellbeing Team, with input from Steve Taylor, Health and Wellbeing Manager.

The Chairman thanked Tom for the report and invited questions and comments from those present and the following were recorded:

Question / Comment	Response
<u>KPI's, challenges and general outcomes:</u> these seem to be missing from the report, and how will these be addressed to achieve the outcomes ?	The report provided an overview and the comments have been noted. A final report will be sent to Public Health for the year end. ACTION to send the Panel a copy of the Public Health report.
<u>Long term aspirations:</u> what is the Council's long term target to increase attendance by residents on the various projects and services ?	The Health and Wellbeing Team works very closely with a wide range of community groups in a variety of ways to increase awareness of the various projects and services.
<u>Funding from Public Health and Active Together:</u> does the strategy align to the KPI's set by these organisations ? How long has the programme been running ?	These KPI's have to be met. Targets that are measured and a lot of information is collected for the year end.
<u>Attendances by residents on projects and services:</u> how many residents does the figure of 20,000 attendances refer to, and what type of activity is being undertaken ?	This will be detailed in the Public Health report to be sent to the Panel.
<u>Rural Coffee Connect Van:</u> what does this do ?	HDC is working with the RCC and local GP surgeries and the NHS on this project to encourage people to talk about their own health and wellbeing, with free coffee available. This service enables the NHS to talk about a range of topics with the public as well as the Health and Wellbeing team promoting new age curling and bocha. The van will be in Houghton on the Hill in May for six weeks.

The Panel thanked the Service Manager, Community Partnerships, and the Health and Wellbeing Manager for a comprehensive update.

The Panel NOTED the key achievements of the Health and Wellbeing Team in relation to the Sport and Physical Activity Commissioning Plan between April and September 2021.

MARKET HARBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

David Wright, the Economy and Business Service Manager presented the report on the Market Harborough Town Centre Masterplan.

The Chairman thanked David for the report and invited questions and comments from those present and the following were recorded:

Question / Comment	Response
<p><u>Cycling and pedestrianisation:</u> it is understood that substantial funding is allocated for this activity and would be available via the Market Harborough Strategic Development Area at a particular trigger point. What is the amount of money and what is the trigger point ? Cycle paths are not properly policed, and some are used as residential parking.</p>	<p>Officers will investigate the availability of funds from this source over the coming months. ACTION</p>
<p><u>Aesthetic improvements:</u> it is encouraging that the Railway Station entrance and signage to the town centre will be improved, however there are a number of areas which require improvement e.g dead trees on St Mary's Road, and the Naseby Battlefield notice board near the market which is in disrepair.</p>	<p>Areas of improvement have been identified and will be included within the Plan. HDC is already in partnership with the Naseby Battlefield Trust and new boards are in the process of being made during the forthcoming year.</p>
<p><u>Consultation with Market Harborough Ward Members and other interested parties</u></p>	<p>Some stakeholder consultation has already taken place, and more is planned.</p>
<p><u>Population growth:</u> can the independent shops be maintained, and also the town's character, with the population growth planned for the next 10 years ?</p>	<p>The Masterplan will be a policy document to guide future development and will influence the next Local Plan. The Masterplan will also act as a bidding document to attract funding.</p>
<p><u>Vision statement of 'Market Harborough - a very special Market Town':</u> the statement could be sharper, and the word 'special' could come across as pretentious. Need to use the word 'Market' once, not twice. Consideration of the wording 'Market Harborough – a town of distinction.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p><u>River Jordan:</u> there is no mention of this within the Masterplan ?</p>	<p>The river Jordan is outside of the development area. However talks are ongoing with the Environment Agency in relation to improvement to the river flow, and flooding issues which have occurred.</p>
<p><u>Population figures of Market Harborough:</u> the report uses 2011 figures and an update following the census would be useful.</p>	<p>The final Masterplan, (which was approved by Council on 20 June 2022), was updated with the 2020 estimated population for Market Harborough, of 25,143. Unfortunately, the 2021 census results were not available in time for this.</p>
<p><u>Street scenes:</u> an inexpensive approach would be to incorporate images of the town in street scenes.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p><u>Managing expectations and aspirations:</u> the Masterplan covers a lot of aspirations to which there are costs attached. A car free zones may cause problems unless there is sufficient car parking available, and would the zone help or hinder the town's economy ?</p>	<p>It was NOTED that expectations do need to be managed, and the Masterplan contains a number of smaller projects which can be delivered in their own right. The car free zone is an aspiration, covering perhaps certain parts of the town and the Plan covers a number of ideas which need to be progressed for more detailed consultation and planning.</p>

The Panel thanked the Economy and Business Service Manager for an excellent and comprehensive presentation.

The Panel REVIEWED and provided INPUT on the themes and proposals to be contained in the Market Harborough Town Centre Masterplan.

URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

The meeting finished at 9.03pm