

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON  
TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2015**

**Present:** Councillors: Forbes (Chairman), Ash (Vice Chairman) Iqbal, Faustino, Bisby, Martin, and J R Fox

**Officers in Attendance:**

Adrian Chapman	Service Director for Adult Services and Communities
Lisa Roberts	Client Manager, Culture and Leisure
Gary Goose	Head of Community Services
Belinda Child	Head of Housing and Health Improvement
Joanne Bezzant	Senior Housing Enforcement Officer
Philippa Turvey	Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present:**

Councillor Serluca	Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism
Ed Saunders	Athene Communications
Shakeela Abid	Live Healthy Practitioner Advance (Lifestyles Lead)
Denisa Luptakove	Community Connector
Armins Morozs	Community Connector
Asta Kavaliauskaite	Community Connector

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

**Item 7 – Community Connectors**

Councillor Ash declared that he was a trustee for the Citizens Advice Bureau.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 16 September 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2015 were approved as an accurate record.

**4. Call in of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions**

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

**5. Portfolio Progress Report: Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism**

The Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism apologised to the Committee, as the report before them did not contain information relating to the City Centre Management aspect of her portfolio. The Committee was asked to request a performing review report of commercial operations to be presented to this Committee in March 2016.

The Client Manager, Culture and Leisure introduced the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism. The report provided members with an update on the progress

made in relation to matters relevant to the Committee. The following key points were highlighted within the report:

- Sports Strategy
- Libraries Update
- Vivacity contract

The Committee was asked to scrutinise the progress made on those aspects of the of the Cabinet Member's portfolio relevant to the Committee, by providing challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support the continued delivery of priorities within that portfolio.

Questions and comments were raised around the following areas:

- Members questioned whether the local Gazette had been utilised as a communication tool regarding the proposed change to the Saturday Cardea Mobile Library service. *The Client Manager, Culture and Leisure clarified that work had been undertaken with local groups, who had been instrumental in deciding the new Mobile Library stopping locations. This information would be included within the Gazette and other notices.*
- Members questioned whether the Disability Forum had been liaised with in relation to the Sports Strategy and improved access. *The Client Manager, Culture and Leisure advised that Inspire Sports was a programme which was run in conjunction with Vivacity. Inspire Sports and the Disability Forum had informed a lot of the decision in relation to disability access.*
- Members queried the high cost of the gym membership and sought clarification on what steps were taken to encourage membership from all members of the community. *The Client Manager, Culture and Leisure explained that the pricing policy of the gym was set by the Vivacity Board. The comments of the Committee would be highlighted to the Board and any potential for subsidising would be raised.*
- The Committee were in agreement with the proposed alterations to the Saturday Mobile Library service.

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee agreed that a performing review report of commercial operations would be presented to this Committee in March 2016.

## **6. Selective Licensing Consultation**

The Head of Community Services introduced the report, which outlined the key issues and proposed Selective Licensing schemes and asked the Committee to provide a formal response to the public consultation into proposed schemes.

Questions and comments were raised around the following areas:

- Members questioned how the introduction of Selective Licensing would affect anti-social behaviour. *The Head of Community Services accepted that not all issues were within the gift of landlords to resolve. The scheme would ensure that tenancy agreements outlined the various responsibilities of the tenants and landlords. It was advised that such an operation would work best alongside various other schemes, such as the cumulative impact area.*
- Members queried how and why the specific areas proposed were singled out for Selective Licensing. *The Head of Community Services advised that a blind test had been undertaken, where the area statistic were examined without reference to name. This identified areas based on the evidence provided and whether the criteria was met. The representative from Athene Communications advised that areas adjacent to those identified were also included in the consultation in order to take into account any displacement activity.*
- Members raised concerns in relation to other areas of the City suffering as a result of the targeted Selective Licensing operation. *The Head of Community Services advised that all existing powers*

would remain in place throughout the city. It had been identified that additional staff would be required to maintain the current level of services and implement the Selective Licensing scheme..

- Members questioned whether the Council would charge for any training for landlords, or if this would be included within the licences. *The Head of Housing and Health Improvement explained that either would be possible. A chance to bid for a Government rogue landlord fund had recently been identified which would provide an opening for training.*
- Members queried how the consultation had been received so far. *The Athene Communications representative advised that the response had been reasonably good. 40,000 individuals had been contacted and six exhibitions were taking place around the city. Information was available online as well as 800 requests for paper copies. Of these 200 paper copies had been returned so far and 793 e-questionnaires had been returned.*

The Committee believed that the new proposals had taken into consideration the previous comments of the Committee and benefited from cross-party support. The proposals were well-written and evidence based. Although the Committee did not believe the scheme to be perfect, they were pleased with the proposals and had no further recommendations.

## 7. Community Connectors

The Head of Housing and Health Improvement introduced the report, which provided an overview of the work the Community Connectors have been involved in since they commenced employment in June 2015.

The Committee were asked to scrutinise the progress made by the Community Connectors and to comment on any aspect that they felt could be improved or enhanced. The Committee were also asked to receive a further report in 6 months, with a particular focus on how the issues identified in section 5.3 and 5.4 of the report were being addressed.

Questions and comments were raised around the following areas:

- Members commented that more focus should be placed on education and directing people to key organisations that could assist, including trade unions, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, through a signposting leaflet. *The Head of Housing and Health Improvement agreed and advised that Community Connectors had been doing so, though no specific leaflet had been used. A market place for employment advice was planned to educate people on their rights in the workplace.*
- Members queried whether there were plans to extend the programme to others areas, for example, Eastfield or Parnwell. *The Head of Housing and Health Improvement advised that the programme was currently in a trial period and that if successful, expansion to other areas was a possibility.*
- Members commended the work of the Community Connectors and queried how well their work had been received with the community. *The Community Connectors advised that progress so far had been positive. It had taken some time for community members to accept them and was work in process. Good links had been made with community leaders and links were growing.*
- Members asked whether a strong focus could be made on the environmental aspects of education for the community. *The Live Healthy Practitioner Advance (Lifestyles Lead) clarified that work had started in this regard and that door knocking had been undertaken with a message about bins and waste management projects.*
- Members commented that it would be useful to create a signposting pamphlet and questioned if funding was available for this. *The Community Connectors advised that they were currently working on a project with City College to design pocket guides to signpost to relevant agencies and where to seek help. The Service Director for Adult Services and Communities advised that the Community Connectors' contracts would be extended and that the programme would be fully funded. It was believed that the Community Connectors would ensure Council savings in the long term.*

## ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested a further report in six months with a particular focus on how the issues identified in section 5.3 and 5.4 of the report were being addressed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee recommended to the Head of Housing and Health Improvement:

- 1) That the Community Connectors broaden their remit to include environmental issues such as bin usage, littering, fly tipping, and spitting; and
- 2) That a pamphlet be created to sign post communities to key services.

### **8. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme

#### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions.

### **9. Work Programme**

Members considered the Commission's Work Programme for 2015/16 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

#### **ACTION AGREED**

Members noted the work programme for 2015/2016, subject to the addition of a 'Selective Licensing – Outcome of Consultation' item at the meeting to be held on 20 January 2016.

### **11. Date of the Next Meeting**

The Chair advised the Committee that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 20 January 2016.

*The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 7.50pm*

CHAIRMAN