

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 10TH JUNE 2024

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10TH JUNE 2024 AT 6PM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM, LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Birch, Holland-Delamere, Evans, Hallam, Hibbert, Marriott, Lane and Soan

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs J Thorneycroft (Asst. Town Clerk), Mr C Osborn (Community Engagement Officer) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer).

OTHERS PRESENT: Mrs Sally Burns (Director of Public Health & Regulatory Services, West Northamptonshire Council) and Emily Wu (Public Health, West Northamptonshire Council).

10. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Alwahabi, Miah and Russell.

11. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

12. TO RECEIVE PRESENTATION FROM SALLY BURNS, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH FOR WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

The Chair welcomed the attendance of Sally Burns (Director for Public Health & Director of Regulatory Services) from West Northamptonshire Council.

- Mrs Burns explained Public Health required a multi-agency approach with different stakeholder and to ensure health and wellbeing were prioritised. She added the relationship between West Northants and Northampton Town Council was very important in improving the lives of Northampton residents.
- She explained that the Public Health team in West Northamptonshire Council was relatively new, having previously been hosted within North Northamptonshire Council which served the entirety of Northamptonshire.
- Public Health's strategy focuses on prevention and integrating health priorities into various council services and strategies. Mrs. Burns noted that Northampton Town Council's grant schemes align well with this strategy.
- There are significant health inequalities in Northampton. The Public Health team is working with the community to better understand and address these issues.
- Public Health is developing a strategic document to guide services and create an interactive tool for assessing local needs, which could benefit the Town Council.

Councillors raised concerns about fly-tipping and waste from HMOs affecting residents' wellbeing. Mrs. Burns acknowledged these environmental issues and mentioned a Wellbeing Team within the Communities team. There were also concerns about reduced Neighbourhood Warden presence and high levels of anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping in Regent Square.

Mrs. Burns indicated that the Town Council could contribute to the Strategic Needs Assessment and that Danny Moody would report back on its progress.

Regarding funding opportunities, Mrs. Burns mentioned there are many funding sources available for public health initiatives and expressed willingness to explore these in partnership.

To prevent duplication of efforts, she highlighted the importance of the Local Area Partnership in identifying key focus areas. Emily noted that the larger parish forum is a valuable platform for the Town Clerk to stay engaged.

The Assistant Town Clerk mentioned that initiatives like Northampton in Bloom, which includes mental health walks, contribute to residents' health and wellbeing.

13. TO RECEIVE PRESENTATION FROM PROFESSOR CLAIRE PATERSON-YOUNG FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON ON THE COMMUNITY NEEDS ANALYSIS

Professor Claire Paterson-Young presented the Community Needs Analysis, explaining its purpose to guide the Town Council's work by identifying and prioritizing community needs. She added, the analysis aims to highlight key impact areas such as health and wellbeing, and community engagement and this framework would assist in decision-making for grant applications and the Council's broader initiatives.

The Chair noted that this work could help reformat the Grants Sub-Committee, ensuring that funded groups and projects provide a greater benefit. Professor Paterson-Young confirmed that the University would conduct the research and develop a research-backed framework.

In response to a question, she clarified that many grant providers now require a Community Needs Analysis to quantify the impact of their funding on the community. The Town Clerk inquired about including the events programme and Northampton in Bloom in the research. Professor Paterson-Young responded that the framework would guide the Town Council on how to conduct such research in the future.

DSO's Note: It was quoted £ £9,880 + VAT would be paid to The University Of Northampton and Officer time to coproduce the research once completed.

14. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7th MAY 2024

RESOLVED: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th May 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

15. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5TH JUNE 2024

The Chair referred to the minutes of the Grant Sub-Committee enclosed within the agenda and provided an overview. The Community Engagement Officer explained that there was a high volume of applications during this round of funding and the total amount requested if all of the applications were to be approved would deplete the entirety of the budget.

The Chair noted that grant application CGF106 submitted by the NAYC (Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs) had frequently applied for various Northampton Town Council grant schemes and questioned whether they had explored other funding sources hence the application was deferred for further information.

In discussion of grant application CGF113, the Community Engagement Officer explained Prospects were funding their core costs however they requested additional funding for hiring a practitioner and covering room hire costs. In response to a question he confirmed that the rooms they intend to hire were within the Northampton

Town Council area. A Councillor mentioned that Prospects were part of the Shaw Trust, that had significant reserves and suggested that funding should be prioritized for smaller organizations.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Grants sub-Committee be approved and adopted.

Clerk's Note: It was agreed that further information be sought in relation General Community Grant application CGF113 and once received the decision to approve or decline be delegated to the Community Engagement Officer in conjunction with the Chair.

16. EVENTS AND PROJECTS UPDATE

The Full Events and Projects Report circulated with the meeting agenda was discussed and noted.

NOTED

17. TO REVIEW PROPOSAL ON UPDATING THE GRANT PROCESS – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS REPORT

The Chair discussed the time-consuming nature of processing grant applications, noting that some Councillors felt the process was too slow to benefit the community effectively. She highlighted that processing a grant application takes over 2 hours of an officer's time, which can be disproportionate to the outcome.

To address this, the Chair proposed forming a Grants Committee consisting of a maximum of 10 Councillors to review and decide on applications, leveraging their expertise and scrutiny. A Councillor suggested that meetings should be held in the evening to improve attendance.

Another Councillor expressed support for the idea in principle but recommended waiting for the outcome of the University of Northampton's research to guide the Grants Committee's decisions and enhance scrutiny. The Chair suggested inviting Professor Paterson to assist with developing the Grants Policy.

RESOLVED: That a Grants Committee be formed to review and decision grant application once the Community Needs Analysis has been completed.

18. COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER'S SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The Communications Officer's Social Media Engagement Report was circulated and noted. A Councillor inquired about the goals for the Town Council's social media platforms and the strategy to achieve them. Another Councillor responded the press releases circulated to all councillors from the Communications Officers have been beneficial. Additionally, a Councillor commented that she was unaware of the Town Council's Instagram and LinkedIn accounts and suggested these be publicized to Councillors so they can share and promote through their channels.

MEETING CONCLUDED: 7:33PM

X

Councillor J.Birch
Chair of Community Services Committee