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Minutes of a Meeting of the **Community Partnership Board** held at Obis Energy, Lowestoft

On Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 2pm

Community Partnership Board Members Present:

Councillor Caroline Topping - Chair of the Community Partnership Board and Leader of East Suffolk Council

Lisa Perkins - Current CPB Vice-Chair 2023/24 Adastral Park & Research Realisation Director for BT

Hannah Reid - Community Action Suffolk

Lesley Beevor – SALC representative

Roger Wright - Chief Executive of Britten Pears Arts, Snape Maltings

Councillor John Fisher - Chair of the Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and Villages Community Partnership

Councillor Katie Graham – ESC Cabinet Support Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

Councillor Alan Green - Chair of the Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and Villages Community Partnership

Councillor Sarah Whitelock- Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

Councillor Sheryl Rumble – Vice Chair of the Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and Villages Community Partnership

Councillor Rosie Smithson - Chair of the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership

Danny Steele Vice Chair of the Lowestoft and Northern Villages Community Partnership

Councillor Ed Thompson - Chair of the Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley Community Partnership

Councillor Sally Noble - Chair of the Framlingham, Wickham Market and Villages Community Partnership

Councillor Dan Clery – Chair of the Transport and Travel Task Group

Others present:

Luke Bennett (Partnerships Manager, East Suffolk Council),

Nick Khan (Strategic Director, East Suffolk Council),

Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities, East Suffolk Council)

Lorraine Fitch (Deputy Democratic Services Manager, East Suffolk Council)

Steve Gray (Place Programme Lead (East Suffolk), Suffolk Public Health & Communities)

Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer, East Suffolk Council)

Julia Catterwell (Communities Officer for MWDPCP)

Sam Kenward (Communities Officer for FWMKYCP)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Steven Molyneux, Councillor Bobby Bennett and Melanie Craig

2. Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Caroline Topping welcomed everyone to Orbis Energy.

3. Workshop: Rural Proofing Revisited Facilitated by Hannah Reid (CAS)

Hannah Reid led the workshop regarding Rural Proofing and outlined the importance of reviewing policies through a rural lens, to make them fit for purpose for those living and working in rural communities.

CAS completed a rural survey in 2022 which identified the key areas of concern:

Communications Technology and Broadband

Strengthening Communities and Community Life

Environment (including concerns around climate change)

Health and Wellbeing

Economy

Community Cohesion, Local Welfare Support and Cost of Living

Hannah Reid facilitated a table discussion which considered:

- Are the Board and 8 Community Partnerships actively Rural Proofing?
- What more could you do?
- Can you share any good practice examples?

Feedback from workshop discussions:

Transport came up as a big factor and connecting issue for rurality.

Discussion concerning bringing services in rural areas if communities cannot access towns / more urban areas. Examples such as creation of hubs, mobile provisions or use of the Rural Coffee Caravan or similar projects were some examples highlighted.

There was highlight of the Felixstowe Community Partnership, where there are lots of surrounding villages and how to engage more community members in working with partnerships, volunteering and accessing services.

Access to rural locations of employment was also discussed.

Some hamlets have more active groups who make things happen themselves, or smaller more independent groups may form on ad hoc basis. The Board discussed challenges in providing support to people who may not identify as being vulnerable or needing support.

The importance of volunteering was discussed. Increasing numbers, mapping current provision, and reviewing any gaps was considered. The Board discussed opportunities for employees to engage in volunteering supported by employers.

The discussion progressed to considering mentoring and challenges youth services have in finding mentors.

Further feedback was given from CP representatives regarding the attempts made to reach people and engage members. The healthy habits booklet has been rolled more widely in schools and leaflets regarding signposting to mental health support and services available to support people with the cost-of-living crisis. The group discussed the importance of providing information in a way people can understand.

Transportation access and rural premiums for travel were highlighted, which impacts on community members abilities to access urban areas, an example of young people needing to travel to educational settings was discussed.

There is a potential for the Box Up project to be piloted in more rural areas. This was piloted in Lowestoft and consists of boxes of kits, including a variety of equipment from litter picking to sports.

There was a lot of good projects and work on going in the community which can be built on, however always more that could be done.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023 we agreed as an accurate record of what took place.

5. Tackling Inequalities Task and Finish Group Report Caroline Topping and Nicole Rickard

Councillor Whitelock and the Head of Communities and Leisure introduced the agenda item and highlighted that Tackling Inequalities was an ongoing priority area for the board. As a response to the cost-of-living crisis the board reiterated its commitment to that priority at the previous meeting. Following the workshop held at the September meeting a task and finish group was formed. The group met in November, reviewed a programme of projects and considered the top 5 areas highlighted from the workshop.

It was noted in respect of mental health scoping a leaflet could be explored and reference was made to the Cost of Living leaflet already in circulation as highlighted by Councillor Graham.

The Suffolk Mind emotional needs audit was discussed which highlighted sleep as being the biggest unmet need in East Suffolk and Suffolk. The Head of Communities and Leisure outlined some initiatives to support sleep, including a pillow swap programme, mattress toppers and the use of SAD daylight lamps to promote sleep.

The discussion concluded with a request for £25,000 (from the total requested below), plus £18,000 that was not allocated to date through the previous Well Minds programme of activity.

Regarding the Tackling Poverty priority, the urgent need for support was clear, including demand for bedding and underwear as examples of basic items people are struggling to provide for themselves or their families.

Current work is ongoing with the Emmaus Norfolk and Waveney furniture project to address some of the need for furniture and household items.

There was a desire to work continue to with schools to develop solutions to challenges identified through the Poverty Proofing the School Day programme, looking at uniform banks, food education.

The Head of Communities and Leisure commented on the need for access to infant formula. There was a project from Suffolk County Council to provide vouchers for infant formula up to 1 year of age. Included in the outcome proposal was a request to provide top up funding for this in East Suffolk

Regarding the final young people's health outcome. There was recognition that there needed to be additional engagement with more schools to enable us to better understand their needs and priorities. There was a potential to explore funding options for both counselling and mentoring in schools.

The Healthy Habits booklet was highlighted and the plan to reproduce for all primary schools in East Suffolk.

The Head of Communities and Leisure confirmed that work has been ongoing with Phil Aves, Lowestoft Rising on tackling specific inequalities issues in Lowestoft.

Councillor Smithson queried if there was scope to support the smaller group of young people who are not in school. The Head of Communities and Leisure confirmed that it could be looked at to see if there were any opportunities available.

The Strategic Director suggested that impact days in schools be explored along the lines of Crucial Crew and Crucial Crew Plus which focus on all aspects of safety.

There was discussion regarding around children's access to food and getting free school meals, or funded fruit snack within a school setting.

Lots of things around food via wider Ease the Squeeze programme. One project that was funded over the Christmas period was free Christmas dinners from Morrisons – with organisations like the food bank and Citizens Advice able to make referrals.

It was agreed that the Board:

1) Approve the outcome proposal attached as Appendix 1 to this report which requests the allocation of £146,000 from the CP Board 2023/24 budget to the emerging Tackling Inequalities (including Mental Health and Wellbeing) programme

2) Would receive a report on progress at the meeting to be held in March 2024

6. Transport and Travel Task Group Dan Clery, Chair of the Task Group

Councillor Clery presented to the board regarding the Transport and Travel Task Group. His presentation was in three parts:

- Brief recap of what the programme is designed to do
- Update on the progress made by the Transport and Travel Task Group

Explain the groups thinking on “what next” – including a proposal on how to spend the remainder of the unspent funding that has already been allocated to this priority by the Board

Active travel: Rather than delivering a specific project the task group has supported East Suffolk Council to engage with our communities to develop an excellent cycling and walking strategy. This strategy has been adopted by our planners and is now at the centre of an emerging programme of work being steered by a newly formed multiagency working group. The Board has previously allocated £20k for the Transport and Travel Task Group to identify a suitable active travel project to deliver. It now makes much more sense to wait for the cycling and walking group to identify where this funding would best be spent

Demand Responsive Travel (DRT): East Suffolk has seen a dramatic loss of commercial bus services over the past 25 years and this trend is unlikely to be reversed anytime soon. What is clear is that for transport to be effective going forward it will increasingly need to be owned and championed by the communities it serves. The task group had developed two pilot DRT projects to test more sustainable operating models. Buzzabout Serves communities around Lound, Blundeston, Somerleyton, Gunton St Peters and the north of Lowestoft. and Katch Serves residents and visitors in Framlingham, Wickham Market, Campsea Ashe, Snape and surrounding Areas.

Adjustments to the operating days / operating areas / fare prices and sliding subsidy scale during both DRT pilot phase gives us a realistic confidence that they can continue longer term if allowed more time to grow.

We are therefore submitting proposals to Suffolk County Council for BSIP+ (Bus service Improvement Plans) funding to extend both pilots until 31 March 2026.

This will offer potential learning and wider application across Suffolk so we would be pleased to share the lessons we are learning along the way with other communities thinking of developing their own schemes.

Mobile App: ESC have used the CP Board funding to procure the service of a tried and tested provider (Flexi Route) for 12 months at low cost, whilst simultaneously seeking external partnerships to develop an application for longer term use at a cost that makes it sustainable for DRT operators, dependent on success of pilots. We are currently exploring other options to have an app and have submitted an application (with other districts) to fund the development of a bespoke app for Suffolk

The importance of effective travel was highlighted including social benefits, getting to education, employment, medical, reducing the number of cars. Mental health benefits. Transport deserts
Councillor Clery talked through the operational experience of both the KATCH and Buzzabout projects.

The group discussed the challenging and cost implications of developing an app and there was a further discussion on marketing for both Buzzabout and KATCH.

Recommendations:

- 1) The Board has previously allocated £20k for the Transport and Travel Task Group to identify a suitable active travel project to deliver. It now makes much more sense to wait for the cycling and walking group to identify where this funding would best be spent**
- 2) The Board has previously allocated 50k for a third DRT Pilot. It now makes more sense to use this as match funding for the BSIP+ funding applications we are submitting to further extend Buzzabout and Katch.**

7. Community Partnership Update

- i) Presentation: MWDPCP Stephen Molyneux / Julia Catterwell**
- ii) Presentation: FWMKYCP Sally Noble / Sam Kenward**

i) Julia Catterwell provided an update for the MWDPCP outlining the previous priorities which remain in place. The board were presented with details of each initiative and cost as listed below.

LGBTQ+ Support: Cost: £3000
Compass Mentoring: Cost: £5000
Arts and Craft Lunch Club: Cost: £3000
Creative Sessions: Cost: £3000
Counselling: Cost: £6000

ii) Sally Noble and Sam Kenway provided an update for FWMKYCP the outlining the previous priorities remain in place.

A 'ward get together' was held in each ward of the community partnership area to bring together local stakeholders and raise awareness of the community partnership, the partnership gained 3 new members and a total of 53 people attended the event.

A 'youth opportunity fund' was created for organisations working with young people to hold to support young people and families to access opportunities they otherwise wouldn't be able to afford.

Funding was allocated for each ward to support with the effects of the October 2023 floods.

Biodiversity project being developed as a way to promote and join up opportunities for local people to access and engage with nature to support mental health.

Youth outreach was continuing to run in Wickham Market and Yoxford – engaging with young people and providing activities.

There was a youth event held in Wickham Market to engage with young people about their local area and particularly around their mental health. Further events are due to take place in the other areas during the Spring of 2024.

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Chair