

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 2021

COUNCILLOR V GAY - CABINET MEMBER FOR WELLBEING

For the period January 2021 – February 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Business as usual activity

Grants

Arts & Culture Fund – Despite ongoing promotion, there has been a reduction in grant applications as a result of Covid 19. The closing date for the next grant round is 26th February. Monitoring of existing projects has identified that due to Covid 19, some have had to be cancelled, postponed or delivered virtually.

Community Transport Fund –The closing date for the next grant round is 26th February. Organisations that provide community transport have been proactively contacted and encouraged to apply for a grant. It was identified that the majority of Community Transport schemes have currently suspended or reduced service due to Covid 19 and still have funding available from previous grant awards.

North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) - The Panel met on 7th December 2020 to consider twelve applications. The Panel recommended that seven projects totalling £52,377.94 were approved, two were deferred and three refused.

Existing projects and new applications are being asked to complete an additional document identifying the impact of Covid 19 on the organisation, community and project.

The closing date for the next round is Monday 15th February, eligible applications will be presented to the Panel on 15th March.

Social Prescribing

The Council has contracts to deliver Social Prescribing services in North Norfolk on behalf of Norfolk County Council (NCC) and two Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in North Norfolk. Norfolk County Council are ceasing to fund Social Prescribing services across Norfolk as of 31st March 2021.

The five Social Prescribing Officers, three funded by NCC and two funded by PCN's supports adults to deal with or manage complex or significant issues which are impacting on their health and wellbeing. Many of the people referred are vulnerable and have long term health conditions, physical or learning disabilities, dependency issues or poor mental health. Social

Prescribing involves more than just the provision of basic information and advice. People referred to the service often need considerable support and may lead chaotic lives which results in them experiencing multiple and complex issues. Social Prescribers are able to undertake face to face visits to those who are housebound due to illness, disability or other circumstances. Organisations such as health, social care, police, housing associations and internal NNDC services refer vulnerable people to the service. During 2020 a total of 634 referrals were received. So far this year, 74 referrals have been received. The impact of Covid 19 is becoming evident in terms of increased debt, benefit, financial difficulties and mental health issues.

NNDC recognise the value and benefit of Social Prescribing and have allocated funding in the budget to contribute towards the continuation of the service when once NCC funding ends. As a result of this investment the service will be reviewed to ensure it meets objectives in the Corporate Plan and community needs.

The Social Prescribing service are currently managing referrals from members of the public that contact NNDC customer services and NCC who are in need as a result of the pandemic. In addition to offering immediate support, a triage assessment is being carried out which is resulting in referrals being made to the Social Prescribing service.

Currently the Social Prescribing service is not generally open for public referrals however this will change once the NCC contract ends.

Information, Advice & Guidance

The Council has historically awarded a grant to Norfolk Citizens Advice (Norfolk CA) towards the provision of an Information, Advice & Advocacy (IAA) service in North Norfolk. The contract with Norfolk CA ended in March 2020. Concerns regarding the delivery of the contract and the use of the allocated budget resulted in a review of the IAA service delivered by Norfolk Citizens Advice being carried out in December 2020.

For a significant part of last year face to face, Norfolk CA closed offices and suspended face to face services due to Covid 19. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of people accessing services via phone or digital means.

The review which was carried out in December 2020, predominantly focussed on the last year of normal service delivery (2019/2020), the cost of service delivery in North Norfolk, the need and demand for face to face services in current dedicated offices and outreach locations and how Norfolk CA planned to revise services going forward as a result of the increase in people accessing services remotely.

Whilst Norfolk CA were advised the contract with NNDC had ended, they had budgeted for the full grant for the year 2020 /2021 and advised that they had funded services on the expectation of a full grant award. Whilst there are still

concerns re the budget and low demand for face to face services in some areas, it was agreed that the full award should be offered for the year 2020 /2021.

NNDC have allocated ongoing funding for the provision of IAA in the budget. A decision has yet to be made as to whether it is appropriate to allocate all of this funding to Norfolk CA. There are a number of outstanding issues which need to be resolved. There are other organisations that provide IAA services to young people or those with specific illness or health conditions that do not receive NNDC funding. A response from Norfolk CA is outstanding in relation to a number of queries regarding the budget and service delivery. This will inform the allocation of any future grant.

Covid 19 related activity

The Council is working with Norfolk County Council to provide a local Contact Tracing service in North Norfolk. This is for people who have tested positive for Covid 19 but where national or NCC contact tracers have been unable to reach them by phone. A team of Covid Support Workers are available to visit people to request that they register details of people they have been in contact with. Support is also offered to people who have tested positive for Covid 19 to enable them to self-isolate.

NNDC have also recently started to deliver an Enhanced Contact Tracing service. This service is for the contacts of people who have tested positive for Covid 19 and as a result should be self isolating. Daily data reports are received from Public Health. Covid Support officers initially try to contact people by phone to check if they need food, medication or other support to enable them to self-isolate. Face to face visits are carried out if a person cannot be contacted. Requests for emergency food or medication support are fulfilled by NNDC. Referrals for financial or long term support are referred to Social Prescribing or other services including the Norfolk Assistance Scheme as appropriate.

NNDC continues to work with NCC and Third Sector organisations to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents and those experiencing financial hardship or requiring other support due to the impact of Covid 19.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board – District Council Members group

