

KNOX ACTIVE AGEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday 28 July 2022

Time: 6pm to 8pm

Meeting held via Zoom

As this Advisory Committee has been established by Council and includes at least one Councillor and a staff member it is an Assembly of Councillors in accordance with the Local Government Act.

Councillors and staff are required to declare any conflict of interest that they may have in regards to any item discussed that is intended or likely to be the subject of a report to Council or a decision of an officer under delegation. In declaring a conflict of interest the Councillor or staff member must leave the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed. A definition of conflict of interest in accordance with the Local Government Act is provided in the Active Ageing Advisory Committee Folder.

Community representatives on the Committee are not subject to these provisions; however they are required under their terms of appointment to declare any conflicts of interest that may arise for them from time to time. It will be a matter for the Chair to determine if the community representative is required to leave the meeting whilst a particular matter that is subject to a conflict of interest is being discussed.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Attendees: Anne Sherrard; Diana Bossio; Eddie Atacador; Gary Cantwell; Linda Black; Lyn Maestri; Marilyn Beyer; Cr Nicole Seymour; Cr Meagan Baker; Stuart Ireland; Linda Keenahan; Sally Clark; Kylie Wilmot; Helen Wositzky

Apologies: Judith Mercieca; Marlene Franke; Rachel Bast; Judy Chalkley

2. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflict of interest declared.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Taken as read and accepted by all.

4. Items for Discussion

4.1 Knox Connection Access Respect Equality Safety (CARES) Plan (30 minutes)

Facilitator: Kylie Wilmot, Social Policy and Projects Lead, Knox CC

- Kylie Wilmot provided an overview of Knox CARES: Our Social Justice Strategy (2022-27) which outlines the critical role that Council can play in upholding equality, safety and freedom from discrimination as fundamental human rights.

- This strategy supports the delivery of the Knox Council Plan 2021-25, and the Knox Community Plan 2021-31. It builds on the successes of Council’s previous Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan (2017-22) through applying a social justice lens and liveability framework, to build a healthy, safe and inclusive community. For further details, refer to the attached presentation – Knox Connection Access Respect Equality Safety (CARES) Plan.
- Input was sought from the Committee, primarily on the Plan’s Commitments and Themes, and a summary of member feedback is captured below:
 - It will be important to develop a communications strategy to ensure all Departments across Knox are informed.
 - The Actions are currently being developed and they will include the outputs that need to be achieved.
 - The simplicity of the Commitments and Themes ensures those parts of the Plan are easy to understand. There was a suggestion to translate the broader Plan into different languages, following the recent Census data revealed there is a growth in cultural diversity across Knox.
 - There were a couple of queries asking who the target audience for the Commitments and Themes was?
 - There was a question concerning where does Communication and Consultation sit in the Themes section? Communication and consultation is a part of everything we do, but is generally thought of with respect to ‘Knox leads and advocates for inclusion’ theme.
 - The following wording changes were suggested:
 - “we commit to partnering with community” to “we will partner with community”. By using “We will” statements, it will ensure the language moves from a theoretic statement to a practical commitment.
 - “Knox strives to be a liveable community” to “Knox continues to be a liveable community”. Suggestion to remove the word ‘strive’, because it suggests that Knox currently isn’t liveable.
 - There was a suggestion to provide some further context on and clarification around how partnerships are engaged.
 - Results will be monitored through customer surveys and satisfaction performance reporting. There was a suggestion to add a statement about being transparent around sharing our results, to ensure accountability.
 - Cr Seymour noted that it was a great step to see Council moving from a narrow access and equity focus to one of a social justice focus.

4.2 Improving Safety in Knox (30 minutes)

Facilitator: Helen Wositzky, Empowering Communities Project Manager, Knox CC

Helen Wositzky, provided a presentation on Empowering Communities – Improving Safety in Knox (refer attached). Knox City Council has received approximately \$700K from the State Government to improve safety in our community. The Empowering Communities grant from the Department of Justice and Community Safety will fund community based projects until

June 2024. The funding will specifically tackle the underlying causes of crime and safety issues impacting Knox and your input will help us determine where the funding should be focused and what types of local projects could be considered.

An Action Group has been appointed, following an Expression of Interest process, and is comprised of representatives from Victoria Police, community groups and sector organisations, and Council Officers.

- How the project will be assessed was discussed with a suggestion to partner with a tertiary institution. While this is still being reviewed, the Department of Justice will be involved in the evaluation process.
- An Evaluator will be recruited shortly who will perform a review on what is happening in the Community Safety space and assess which projects could add value to and identify where the gaps are.
- Where possible, it was suggested Community Safety might be considered across the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Councils to share information, resources and funding.
- Of the \$700K funding, just under \$500K has been allocated to invest in community projects.
- Helen acknowledged that the current project timeline is tight and that the deadlines may need to be extended to ensure adequate time is spent on the planning and decision making processes.
- Unfortunately, non-enforceable perceptions of crime that cause people to feel unsafe aren't currently being captured.
- It was suggested an addendum be added to the statistic 'More young people are staying at school' stating that this data was 'pre-pandemic', because anecdotally, data and insights are showing that post-pandemic, there has been an increase in people not regularly attending/ dropping out of both schools and universities.
- In addition, that there has been an exacerbation of anti-social behaviour within Knox and that this will require a range of responses.
- Input was sought from the Committee on the following discussion points. A summary of member feedback is captured below:

i) Top Safety and Crime issues that are of most concern

Family Violence	7
Public disorderly, offensive, nuisance behavior	6
Drugs & alcohol	4
Sexual offences, stalking, harassment	4
Other - Vaping	3
Theft	1
Other - Elder Abuse	1
Other – Gambling addiction	1
Other - Graffiti	1

- In addition to physical safety, committee members are hearing that people are concerned about their health in terms of catching viruses from unclean transport, public toilets etc.

ii) **Ways to improve the Crime and Safety concerns**

Other / Specific ideas – see below	11
Mental health	3
Neighbourhood/community connection	3
Affordable Housing	2
Financial stress/disadvantage	2
Improving mental health	2
Reducing drug and alcohol abuse	2
Respectful relationships	2
Increase respect, tolerance and understanding for diversity	1
Support Services	1

Other / Specific ideas

- Better passive surveillance can improve neighbourhood spaces
- Developing community spaces can reduce isolation
- Free mental health services for vulnerable and low income community members
- Clean up train stations and improve the lighting. Because they are dark and often surrounded by bottle shops.
- Ban alcohol consumption in the street.
- Increase Police presence.
- Social connection and fostering intergenerational connection in ‘bumping spaces’ which can help increase the perception of safety. By creating the bumping spaces, it enables people to ‘bump’ into others in a way that fosters short and long term connections.
- Find ways to empower those who are most disenfranchised, to encourage them back to feeling supported and valued, to encourage a real sense of connection to community and less reason to act out against community.
- Consider which actions within the Mental Health Action Plan could contribute to improve safety.
- Education – to instill good manners and right conduct.
- Ban vaping at sporting events.

Action: Helen Wositzky to check with Local Laws to see if there is a Council position on vaping, particularly at sporting events and advise Linda for reporting back purposes.

iii) Ideas on initiatives/activities/projects/programs to help address these causes

Note: while some of the suggestions relate to younger people, it was the 25-45 year old demographic who were most represented as offenders.

- Parental education
- Music is a great way to engage people (especially with a demographic of 15-34 years), perhaps there is a way to investigate “creative” programs that might connect with some people/groups to encourage them to think differently/more respectfully/inclusively.
- Bring back Blue Light Discos.
- Swinburne is applying for funding for a new intergenerational/social connection project. Knox (and many of the EMR Councils) is supporting this application. There will be an opportunity to collaborate on a research event in September. Diana will keep the Committee informed.
- Investment is sport, music or art and work with people who are happy to encourage and support.
- More intergenerational community connection.
- An intervention that supports connection, but facilitates participation of vulnerable young community members (and involve all ages) in their passion and interest areas.
- Empower young people to create their own events, whether it is a blue light disco or art workshop – enabling community to drive the event is important.
- Stop the cycle of disadvantage – early intervention on family violence.
- There is a lack of coordination across the services. Often GPs are unequipped to assess people experiencing significant mental health.
- A Connected Community, is a safer community. This is one of the biggest protective things to consider.
- Neighbourhood Street parties. Simple things can make these connections.
- Neighbours put their street lights at night, to deter theft and enable the perception of increased safety.
- Don't lose sight that there is an undercurrent of things going on that are not reported out of fear eg school refusals, changing schools.
- There is an opportunity to Have Your Say on '[Improving community safety in Knox](#)'. Feedback is open until Sunday 7 August 2022. Helen Wositzky will share the feedback once available.

4.3 Community Access & Support Home Security Program

The Community Access & Support Department introduced a Home Security program in 2020 under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) funded Home Maintenance service for clients.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, it was progressively offered, as part of a large scale promotion, to all Home Maintenance clients across the Knox municipality. As at April 2022, a total of 621 clients have taken up the offer and had their selected security item installed at their home. The items offered included:

- Loud chime doorbell
- Night latch (door lock)
- Peephole
- Safety chain
- Sensor lights.

Additionally, a number of other safety issues have been attended to upon request, such as repairing floors and paths that have become trip hazards, as well as repairs to gates and doors. Over 200 requests to check and change smoke alarm batteries are fulfilled each year.

Refer to attached Home Security background paper for further details.

- There was a suggestion that Knox City Council could run a community safety session in conjunction with Victoria Police, targeted at all ages. This could include information on how to ensure your home is secure and highlight any upgrades that could be beneficial.

Action: Linda Keenahan to speak to Helen Wositzky to see if the Empowering Communities funding could cover a 'Home Security' event – similar to the recent Knox Housing Showcase - hosted by Victoria Police and Knox City Council.

5. Business Arising from Previous Meeting

No business arising from previous meeting.

6. Other Business

6.1 Terms of Reference: Knox Active Ageing Advisory Committee

The Terms of Reference for the Knox Active Ageing Advisory Committee have expired and were tabled for discussion. No further input was given and therefore the process to update the current version can commence. This will include the capturing of the 5 Key Directions in the Council Plan 2021-2025 (replacing the goals from the Council Plan 2017 -2021) and the tabling of the revised Terms of Reference at a future Council meeting.

Action: Recognising that some Committee members may be about to complete their two term period, Linda Keenahan to investigate whether they can remain on the Committee or whether they will need to retire at the end of the year.

7. Next meeting

Thursday 22 September 2022 – 6pm to 8pm – Eastgate North Conference Room
Thursday 17 November 2022 – 6pm to 8pm – Eastgate North Conference Room