

ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 18th December, 2014

Present:-

Councillor Slack (Chair)

Councillors Dyke Gibson
Flood
M Stone+
Miles

Mick Blythe, Sports and Leisure Manager ++
Anita Cunningham, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Donna Cairns, Committee and Scrutiny Coordinator
Julie McGrogan, Housing Service Manager, Customer Division +

+ Attended for Minutes No. 44, 45 and 46

++ Attended for Minutes No. 47 – 52.

44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Callan and Hawksworth.

45 EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING - REPORT ON HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Assistant Executive Member for Housing and the Housing Service Manager, Customer Division presented a report on the Housing Allocations Policy.

The report outlined the proposals that were to be put forward for consultation following Cabinet approval. Consultation would be carried out with existing tenants and with other relevant stakeholders, including community groups, other local authorities and housing agencies.

These proposals had been developed following a review of the impact of welfare reform since 2013 and in response to changes in government

guidance and Derbyshire County Council's housing related support programme.

The proposals included the introduction of a one year residency requirement, increasing the use of direct matching with priority band applicants, re-establishing children in flats points, and removing lodging points.

Concerns were discussed about the number of tenancy breakdowns there were within 12 months for young people. Members raised questions about whether there were more young people affected who were unemployed and on welfare benefits.

The Housing Service Manager, Customer Division advised that a higher proportion of failed tenancies for young people were those in receipt of benefits. Changes in the benefit system saw an increase in the numbers and length of sanctions, making incomes much more variable. Members also commented that zero hours contracts can have similar impacts through erratic incomes and the issue of affordability was significant for young people sustaining a tenancy.

The Housing Service Manager, Customer Division advised that the introduction of risk assessments for tenancy breakdown was also proposed to identify where tenancies would be unaffordable and unsuitable, and whether additional support could be beneficial. The support offered to vulnerable tenants was agreed as an important factor.

The Assistant Executive Member for Housing advised that housing policy could not be expected to mitigate all of the impacts of welfare reform and budget cuts.

Members were pleased to note that there was a proposal to re-introduce children in flats points.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Executive Member for Housing, and the Housing Service Manager, Customer Division for presenting the report and answering the Committee's questions.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Cabinet be recommended to support the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy as detailed in the report.

- (2) That a progress report with the results on the consultation following its completion be provided to the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

46 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING - REPORT ON SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE TENANTS**

The Assistant Executive Member for Housing and the Housing Service Manager, Customer Division presented a report on a review of the arrangements to support vulnerable tenants.

The report outlined the review that was on-going into the current caseloads, service demands and emerging issues in tenancy support such as the high incidence of tenancy breakdown, welfare reform and possible budget cuts by Derbyshire County Council.

The Housing Service Manager, Customer Division advised of the proposals for improving tenancy support for young people, such as tenancy training, literature for schools, and a mediation service to encourage parents to keep their children living at home.

A 'supported' housing project for young people and a furnished accommodation pilot scheme were also being explored.

It was also reported that additional funding was being sought in partnership with North East Derbyshire and Bolsover District Councils to provide specialist housing advice for young people in receipt of benefits.

Concerns were discussed about the number of young people suffering from mental health issues who could not cope with the demands of maintaining a tenancy on their own. Members commented that schemes to promote parental responsibility should be encouraged.

Members were also pleased to note the possibility of a scheme to provide furnished accommodation as acquiring furniture and white goods was often an issue for new tenants on low incomes. It was commented that a council run scheme could offer a good alternative to high cost loans or hire-purchase options.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Executive Member for Housing, and the Housing Service Manager, Customer Division for presenting the report and answering the Committee's questions.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Cabinet be recommended to support the proposals for the support of vulnerable tenants as detailed in the report.

47 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUPS (PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY - SCOPE)

The scoping document for the Project Group on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was considered for approval by the committee. This Project Group was a sub-group of the Project Group on Leisure, Sport and Culture Activities.

RESOLVED –

That the Scrutiny Project Group's scope on Parks and Open Spaces Strategy be approved.

48 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP REPORT ON PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The Scrutiny Project Group Report and Recommendations on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy were presented by the group leader Councillor Miles.

The Project Group had been carrying out a review of the revised Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. The review was co-ordinated alongside a review of the sport and leisure strategy and demands on the timeframe from planning policy requirements. The Project Group investigated and reported only on the key issues to enable the early implementation of the revised strategy.

The Project Group's report outlined the methodology for carrying out the review, including site visits. Councillor Miles also expressed the group's thanks to the Public Health Department at Derbyshire County Council who had provided a lot of supporting materials.

Concerns had been identified with the level of public use of parks and open spaces and also that investment in facilities needed to be focused in areas of health inequality and deprivation. It was noted that the revised strategy proposed priority areas that were identified as having a deficiency in quality parks and open spaces and were areas of multiple deprivation.

The promotion of the use of parks and open spaces to improve the health and well-being of the community was the focus of the group's recommendations.

It was hoped that the recommendations would lead to parks and open spaces being adapted to the needs of the local community, with a focus on increasing access for users with disabilities and widening public awareness of the facilities and spaces local to them.

In addition to the group's recommendations, it was discussed that an increase in signs to local parks would be beneficial alongside the use of new forms of communication, such as the council website.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the members of the Project Group for their work and to the Leisure and Amenities Manager and the Committee and Scrutiny Co-ordinator for assisting the Project Group in their review.

RESOLVED –

That the following recommendations be presented to Cabinet for consideration:

- (1) That consultation is carried out with local residents and community groups when proposals are put forward for investment in a park or open space, in conjunction with promoting awareness of the health benefits. Such consultation should be in line with the Council's Community Engagement Strategy and regard should be given to the community engagement model produced by students from University of Nottingham's masters in public health course in partnership with Derbyshire County Council's Public Health Department.
- (2) That disability access should be prioritised when proposals are developed for investment in parks and open spaces.

- (3) That the Play Strategy be reviewed within the next 12 months in order to rationalise the provision of equipped play areas, taking into account the age profiles of the surrounding areas.
- (4) That the Council's website should be used more effectively to promote parks and open spaces with maps and details of community events and activities.
- (5) That signs and notices be used more effectively to promote the use of parks and open spaces.

49 **SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUPS, PROGRESS REPORTS**

The Committee considered progress with its Scrutiny Project Groups.

Dog Fouling

The lead member for the group, Councillor Innes provided an update on the progress of the Scrutiny Project Group on Dog Fouling. A report was to be ready for the next meeting of the Committee and would focus on the promotion of the successful activities the council already undertakes and some suggestions to improve these.

Leisure, Sport and Culture Activities

The lead member for the group, Councillor Flood, gave an update on the group's progress. The sub-groups on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and the Sports Facilities Strategy had completed their reviews. The main group had continued to review the new sport and leisure facilities project at Queen's Park.

The Sports and Facilities Manager gave an update on the building work so far of the new Queen's Park Sports Centre and reported that no complaints had been received from local residents about the building work or the proposed changes to the roads and traffic control around the site. The work was progressing on schedule.

Councillor Flood advised the group had attended a site visit with the contractors and were impressed with the health and safety arrangements. The group was also pleased to note that level of local businesses and

workforce being used, including an impressive number of apprentices. The plans for education activities with local schools and colleges to be carried out on site were also noted as a positive aspect of the development.

It was anticipated that a written report on the group's work would be provided at the Committee's meeting in April 2015.

50 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND TOURISM - SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY**

The Sports and Facilities Manager presented the draft "Chesterfield Borough Council Sports Facilities Strategy 2014 – 2028". It was advised that this strategy was required to progress the current sports and leisure projects and initiatives and to underpin the Council's Local Plan, Core Strategy.

This strategy complemented the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, which was approved at Full Council on 17 December 2014, and also supported Sport England Strategic Facilities Funding for Queen's Park Sports Centre.

The draft Sports Facilities Strategy covered the protection, enhancement and future development of sports facilities including swimming pools, sports halls and artificial grass pitches.

The Sports and Facilities Manager advised that the draft strategy was developed using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model to analyse the demand for and supply of sports facilities across the Borough and to identify key issues and priorities.

Members raised concerns about whether council ownership of sports facilities may be more beneficial to the community than if new facilities were owned by schools or other organisations as access may be more restricted. The Sports and Facilities Manager outlined the plans for building partnerships with schools and other sports facilities providers to improve community access as this was a key priority. Any council funding for sports facilities would be tied to carefully defined conditions about community access.

Members commented on the possibility to promote sports activities where there may not be suitable facilities through 'pop-up' games. The Sports

and Facilities Manager advised that a Sports and Physical Activity Strategy was also being developed that would look at these issues. Members also welcomed the possibility for a briefing session with Sport England to be arranged regarding encouraging participation in sports for young people.

Members asked about how the development of new sports facilities not currently in the town might be considered. The Sports and Facilities Manager advised the Sport England Facilities Planning Model would be followed to assess the demand, the sustainability of sports clubs and the distance to other facilities in the region.

The Sports and Facilities Manager also referred to the work of the Scrutiny Project Group on the Sports Facilities Strategy and confirmed that the findings of the group had been incorporated into the draft strategy for consideration by Cabinet.

The Committee thanked the Sports and Facilities Manager for presenting the report to the Committee and answering their questions.

RESOLVED –

That the draft Sports Facilities Strategy be noted and further considered with the Scrutiny Project Groups Report on the strategy at the next agenda items.

51 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUPS (SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY - SCOPE)

The scoping document for the Project Group on the Sports Facilities Strategy was considered for approval by the committee. This Project Group was a sub-group of the Project Group on Leisure, Sport and Culture Activities.

RESOLVED –

That the Scrutiny Project Group's scope on Sports Facilities Strategy be approved.

52 **SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP REPORT ON SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY**

The Scrutiny Project Group Report and Recommendations on the development of the Sports Facilities Strategy were presented by the group leader, Councillor Flood.

The Scrutiny Project Group supported the adoption of the draft strategy subject to additional priorities being included for community focus, positive health impacts and accessibility.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the members of the Project Group for their work and to the Sports and Facilities Manager and the Committee and Scrutiny Co-ordinator for assisting the Project Group in their review.

RESOLVED -

That the Draft Sports Facilities Strategy be supported subject to the inclusion of the findings of the Scrutiny Project Group regarding:

- (1) Priorities regarding facilities being community focused and aiming for positive health impacts, in particular for those with mental health issues and the elderly at risk of being isolated; and
- (2) Reference to accessibility – physical access to comply with Sport England access standards and encouraging participation through community based delivery.

53 **FORWARD PLAN AND NOTICES OR URGENT DECISIONS**

The Forward Plan was considered. Notices of Urgent Decisions were also presented to members of the Committee for information.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Forward Plan be noted.
- (2) That the Notices of Urgent Decisions be noted.

54 **SCRUTINY MONITORING**

The Committee considered an update on the implementation of approved Scrutiny recommendations.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the update be noted.
- (2) That a written update on the implementation of the recommendations on the Parking Policy be requested to be circulated to the Committee members.
- (3) That a written update on the Hackney Carriages License Limit be requested to be circulated to the Committee members.
- (4) That a written update on the implementation of the recommendations on the Water Rates Payment Policy be requested to be circulated to the Committee members.

55 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS**

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer advised that the corporate review of Overview and Scrutiny was progressing.

RESOLVED –

That the update be noted.

56 **WORK PROGRAMME FOR ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered a list of items raised to date for its Work Programme.

RESOLVED –

- (1) To confirm that items on the Work Programme be approved subject to agreed changes.

- (2) That the Housing Allocations Policy item be rescheduled on the Work Programme for an update to be received following the completion of the consultation period.
- (3) That the Street Scene Improvement Plan be added to the agenda for the next Committee meeting.
- (4) That the Allotments Strategy be added to the agenda for the next Committee meeting.
- (5) That the Scrutiny Project Group final report on dog fouling be added to the agenda of the next meeting.
- (6) That the Homeless Prevention Service Restructure be removed from the Work Programme.
- (7) That an update on the position regarding the Careline Consortium contract be requested to be circulated to the Committee members.
- (8) That an update in relation to the impact of Decent Homes improvement programme be requested to be circulated to the Committee members.
- (9) That the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy item and the Scrutiny Project Group 'Sub' Group on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy item be removed from the Work Programme and added to the monitoring schedule for a progress report in 12 months.
- (10) That the Scrutiny Project Group work on the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Facilities Strategy be concluded and added to the monitoring schedule for progress reports in 12 months.

57 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 2 AND 20 OCTOBER, 2014

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 2 and 20 October 2014 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.