

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 PARTNERSHIPS, REGENERATION, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT

19 April 2010

### PRESENT:

Councillor John Yates (Chair); Councillors John Caswell, Jenny Conroy, Mel de Cruz, Brendan Glynane, Judith Lill, David Palethorpe and Keith Davies

Councillor Portia Wilson		Item 6(a)
Julie Seddon	Director of Environment and Culture	(Items 7&8)
Thomas Hall	Head of Policy and Community Engagement	(Item 6(a))
Lindsey Ambrose	Community Engagement and Equalities Officer	(Item 5)
Tracy Tiff	Scrutiny Officer	

### Observing

Councillor Tess Scott  
Richard Powell, Neighbourhood Coordinator, Northamptonshire County Council  
Mr and Mrs Birch Alliston Gardens Community Centre  
Steven Richards – Alliston Gardens Community Centre

### 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ifty Choudary (Councillor Keith Davies substituted) and Councillor Andrew Simpson.

### 2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2010, and subject to the inclusion of Councillor John Caswell to the list of attendees, the minutes of the Call In Hearing of 18 March 2010 were signed by the Chair as a true record.

### 3 DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Steven Richards, Alliston Gardens addressed the Committee on agenda item 6(a) Community Centres Task and Finish Group.

Richard Powell, Neighbourhood Coordinator, Northamptonshire County Council, addressed the Committee on agenda item 6(a) Community Centres Task and Finish Group.

### 4 DECLARATIONS (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

### 5 SINGLE EQUALITIES SCHEME ACTION PLAN

Lindsey Ambrose, Community Engagement and Equalities Officer, addressed the Committee advising of the new Single Equalities Scheme Action Plan. The Equality Act 2010 is due to

come into force in October 2010 and the Public Sector Duty early in 2011. She advised that there is limited information available regarding the Public Sector Duty at present.

It was noted that the Single Equalities Scheme Action Plan might change in its status. The Council will still need to have a Single Equalities Scheme Action Plan that can be accessed by the public. The Committee was referred to an online tool, which comprises 88 criteria that enables the Council to input information to identify risks.

Guidance of how the Act will impact upon the Council will not be available until June 2010. Lindsey Ambrose added that there would be a need to update Council Policies in accordance with the Act.

The Committee commented that it would be useful for a progress report to be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny at the appropriate stage.

AGREED: That Overview and Scrutiny monitors progress of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Duty.

## **6 TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES**

### **6(A) COMMUNITY CENTRES TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Steven Richards, of Alliston Gardens Community Centre, addressed the Committee. He welcomed the report of the Task and Finish Group and he hoped that the report and its recommendations would be adopted by Cabinet.

Mr Richards was thanked for his address.

Richard Powell, Northamptonshire County Council, addressed the Committee. Mr Powell echoed with Mr Richards' comments adding that he felt that the report of the Task and Finish Group would be a useful tool. He also hoped that Cabinet would accept the recommendations but felt that implementing the recommendations could create a lot of work. He commented on the need for youth provision within the town. Mr Powell advised that he had been working with Need to Know that is based at Kingsheath and he emphasised the need for partnership working. In response to a query, Mr Powell advised that Need to Know is a very busy organisation and the nearby doctor's surgery had commented that it would be beneficial for Need to Know and the doctor's surgery to be based in the same premise. There is a real sense of community in the area.

Mr Powell was thanked for his address.

Councillor Portia Wilson, Chair of the Community Centres Task and Finish Group, addressed the Committee apprising that the Task and Finish Group had concluded its Review and presented the report for the Committee's consideration. Councillor Wilson explained the reason why the Task and Finish Group was set up and that a Policy for Community Centres was not in existence. It became evident from the information gathered that there was no structure for Community Centres, for example standard length of lease. The Committee was provided with further details of the evidence gathering process, which included desktop research, collation of witness evidence and site visits.

Councillor Wilson went on to highlight that there was some slight wording to the following conclusion and recommendation but this did not change the meaning of either section: -

***Conclusion - Page 35 of the report***

*5.14 On its tour of the Community Centres, the Task and Finish Group was provided with examples that some bookings had been turned away. The Community often sees the Community Centre Coordinator as the contact for bookings but the Task and Finish Group realises that it is not within their' job description to take bookings. The need for the clear display of contact and booking arrangements was noted.*

**Recommendation - Page 37 of the report**

*6.1.5 Suitable Community Groups are given the opportunity to submit an application for the management of a Community Centre(s). Existing Management Committees are given first opportunity to submit proposals for community centre(s) that they currently manage.*

Councillor Davies, member of the Task and Finish Group, added that a lot of work had been put into this Review and that the recommendations could lead to a sound Policy for Community Centres and other recommendations could lead to potential savings. There is a need to ensure that access to the Community Centre is available at all other times should one specific group use the Centre for the majority of the time. He also emphasised the need for Community Centres to be available seven days a week for hire.

The Chair commented that this was a comprehensive Review and that it was envisaged that the report would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 28 June 2010.

In response to a query regarding the pricing for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schools, Councillor Wilson advised that pricings for the hire of venues at PFI schools were set by the organisation Amey.

The Committee conveyed its thanks to the Task and Finish Group for carrying out this thorough Scrutiny Review.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Community Centres Task and Finish Group be received and presented to Cabinet for its consideration.

## **7 NEIGHBOURHOOD MODEL**

Julie Seddon, Director for Environment and Culture, addressed the Committee advising of draft Neighbourhood Model. Copies of the draft model were circulated for the Committee's information. The Neighbourhood Model was approved by Cabinet in March 2010 – the implementation process has now commenced. There are key elements that are needed to be put in place but there is also a need to understand what will and will not work and that the model that is introduced is the best possible model.

The main focus of model is at community level. Partners will then meet with the community to hear issues of concern. The responsible officer will take these issues to the Officer Board for consideration.

Julie Seddon advised that the public meetings are currently being populated. In every ward it is intended that there will be two meetings per year.

In response to a query regarding the practicalities of hosting the proposed number of meetings per year with the new model. Julie Seddon advised that the intention is to build upon good practice and to make any appropriate amendments as the model evolves. It was noted that Councillors would only required to attend two meetings per year within their wards.

The Committee further commented that there was a need to programme in relevant training and that communication was key. In response to a comment that there needs to be ongoing dialogue between Coordinators and ward Councillors, Julie Seddon confirmed that this would take place. Environmental wardens would work very closely with the coordinators. A big part of the model is to get the community involved. The new model would go live imminently. Commitment had been given that representatives of the relevant Partner Agencies would sit on the officer board and respond to messages from the coordinator. Northamptonshire County Council's coordinators would also sit on the Board.

At this point the Chair informed the Committee that he had another commitment to attend and would need to leave the meeting at 6.45pm. It was noted that the Vice-Chair had also sent his apologies. Councillor Caswell then proposed that Councillor Keith Davies takes over as Chair at the point. It was seconded by Councillor Conroy and upon a vote it was: -

RESOLVED that Councillor Keith Davies be appointed as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

## **8 LEISURE STRATEGIC BUSINESS REVIEW**

Julie Seddon, Director for Environment and Culture, addressed the Committee advising that Cabinet at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 had agreed to the start of the implementation process of a Leisure Trust. It was proposed that the consultants that produced the options appraisal would be engaged. Members of the Project Board had been identified and meeting dates set. The first meeting was imminent. Julie Seddon confirmed that the process was at the right stage to be scrutinised.

An Appreciative Inquiry would be set up comprising Councillor Keith Davies, Councillor Judith Lill and Councillor Jenny Conroy. Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer would contact the Committee to ascertain whether further members wanted take part in this scrutiny activity. It was suggested that examples of other Trusts that currently manage Leisure Centres, together with relevant site visits would be part of the evidence gathering.

In response to a query whether there are organisations that manage a number of Leisure Centres, Julie Seddon advised that there are others that have been outsourced. The Council is looking to transfer its own services to a Trust that is dedicated to Northampton.

RESOLVED: (1) That an Appreciative Inquiry be set up comprising Councillor Keith Davies, Councillor Judith Lill and Councillor Jenny Conroy.  
(2) That the Committee be contacted to ascertain whether further members wanted take part in this scrutiny activity.

## **9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011**

The Chair reminded the Committee that following the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming Workshop that was held on 11 March 2010 where Councillors present at the workshop, had in Groups, supported by a Director and Head of Service, put forward suggested issues for inclusion on next year's Overview and Scrutiny work programme. Cabinet Members also sat with the Groups to provide points of clarity, as requested, on their priorities and objectives for 2010/11.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered the issues suggested for inclusion and would produce the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/2011, to be ratified by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting in June 2010.

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/2011 was noted.

## **10 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Committee noted the Best Value Performance Indicators for the period February 2010.

## **11 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee suggested that there was a need for pre-decision scrutiny of the Delapre Abbey Options Appraisal and it was suggested that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 be asked to consider this request.

The current Forward Plan was noted.

**RESOLVED:** That the Chair would contact Councillor Lane, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3, asking him to consider the request for pre-decision scrutiny of Delapre Abbey Options Appraisal.

## **12 URGENT ITEMS**

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7.09 pm