

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4th May 2004

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Harrington (Chair), Councillor Bambrick (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Lane.

Conservative Group

Councillor Hood.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Lemmon and Martin (Conservative Group) and Mrs. R. Marcer (TACT).

CYS/51. MINUTES

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd March 2004 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CYS/52. ANNUAL REPORT

The Policy and Best Value Manager circulated a draft version of the Annual Report for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This report was to be finalised at the Overview Committee before being submitted to the Annual Council Meeting. Comments on the report were sought prior to Monday, 10th May 2004, to be directed to the Chair, Vice-Chair of the Committee or the Policy and Best Value Manager.

The report had been divided into 4 parts, namely:-

- Background to the Overview and Scrutiny function
- Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- Community Scrutiny Committee
- Overview Committee

The Committee considered the draft report for the Community Scrutiny Committee in detail, noting the Best Value Reviews and CPA Assessments that had been scrutinised, together with policy framework and community issues.

It was noted that present working arrangements were expected to continue to evolve with:-

- (1) Greater involvement by external stakeholders in the scrutiny of decisions and the development of policy; included co-option of representatives of outside bodies onto the Committee for specific issues.
- (2) More use of site visits to gain a first hand perspective of service delivery issues or to observe best practice by other councils or service providers.

- (3) Increased reporting to Policy Committees of issues being progressed by the Committee for more consideration of cross-cutting issues identified as important by local people.

The suggested main priorities for the Committee over the next year comprised:-

- ❑ Scrutinising poorly performing services and/or those which were important to the local community.
- ❑ Supporting improvement planning (in line with the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment).
- ❑ Helping the Council to develop and implement the South Derbyshire Community Strategy.
- ❑ Promoting equality of opportunity in employment and service provision.

A suggested outline work programme was also included in the draft report for comments.

CYS/53. CAR PARKING STUDY – UDATE

Under Minute No. CYS/42 of 16th February 2004 the Committee had considered an initial scoping report on car parking in the District with a view to setting the terms of reference for the Study. At that Meeting it had been noted that it would be useful to undertake a survey on the usage of the urban core car parks as the last survey was carried out in 1999 and the County Council had offered the use of their Survey Numerator staff. It was also agreed that an audit of the levels of security and safety of the urban core car parks would be useful. It was agreed to write to other councils in Derbyshire to establish what action, if any, they were undertaking with regard to their councils and to invite private sector car parking operators in the Town Centre to attend the next Meeting to take part in the review. Parish Councils and Area Meetings were also to be included in the consultation process for this review.

The Committee was advised that information from some local councils and private sector operatives was awaited but a table circulated outlined the information received to date. It was noted that all adjoining authorities now had car parking charging and enforcement regimes in place. Most of the Derbyshire authorities (with the exception of Bolsover and North East Derbyshire) also charged and the CIPFA returns for 2002/03 indicated that their budgets showed an operational surplus. The Committee was asked to note that those authorities who continued to operate free parking did employ enforcement staff. The Committee was advised that further information was awaited from Erewash Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council and that to date no response had been received from private sector car parking operators.

The Committee was advised that East Staffordshire Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council had recently undertaken reviews of car parking in their respected Districts. East Staffordshire Borough Council's Scrutiny Panel's wide ranging review encompassed the Council's policy role, administration of charges and fines, enforcement, quality and appearance, costs and concluded with a series of recommendations to improve the service. North West Leicestershire District Council, following a

feasibility study undertaken by District Audit, had since introduced charging regimes in Coalville.

A range of comments had been received from several Parish Councils (including Ticknall, Etwall and Melbourne) highlighting particular problems relating to their own localities. The general concerns expressed by parish councils related to the shortage of off-street spaces, indiscriminate on-street parking, policing of disabled spaces and the fact that parish councils were generally not in favour of imposing charging regimes. Ticknall Parish Council had specifically requested an addition/extension to the existing Village Hall car park to cater for the increasing numbers of weekend visitors to the Village which was exacerbating existing on-street parking problems.

Members were advised that the Crime and Disorder Partnerships Liaison Officer had carried out a safety audit of the main Town Centre car parks and the conclusions were circulated. A general discussion took place regarding the conclusions reached by the Liaison Officer and it was agreed to submit these conclusions to the Environmental and Development Services Committee for consideration.

It was reported that the responsibility for the Council's car parks fell within the remit of the Environmental and Development Services Committee. Maintenance responsibility was divided between the Direct Services Manager and the Facilities and Development Manager, acting under the Deputy Chief Executive. The Planning Services Manager dealt with planning policies relating to new developments. However, there was no particular officer within the Council who had overall responsibility for strategic car parking issues. This could change under the proposed restructuring with the merging of the cleansing and enforcement functions in the Environmental Services Directorate which provided the opportunity for a more direct link between operational and strategic matters. The Chair queried what impact the senior management restructure would have on the car parking review. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that this would not have a particular impact but suggested that a particular officer with overall responsibility for strategic car parking matters could be addressed as part of this Review.

Councillor Lane queried whether officers had written to the police and ambulance services regarding access problems to particular streets within the District. As this had not been undertaken it was suggested and agreed that the Council write to the police and ambulance services asking whether they had any areas which they were not able to access due to on-street parking problems.

The Deputy Chief Executive again commented on the need for a lead officer to be identified to take the Car Parking Review forward and agreed to negotiate what resources could be identified for such a review with the Chair of the Committee. Councillor Lane referred to the imminent review of the Committee responsibilities and suggested that this review take into account the need for an overall responsibility for strategic car parking matters.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Community Scrutiny Committee should ensure that the car parking issue was high on the Policy Committees' list of priorities.

CYS/54. SOUTH DERBYSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

The Committee was advised that the Board had now agreed a Vision for the South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership which would be "Working

together for a better South Derbyshire”. It had also agreed the main themes for the Strategy together with a lead Board Member. These were outlined as follows:-

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| Safer Communities | - Tony Hurrell (Derbyshire Constabulary) |
| Healthier Communities | - Nina Ennis (Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire PCT) |
| A Vibrant Economy | - Sharon Forton (Derbyshire Chamber and Business Link) |
| A Sustainable Environment | - Susan Bell (The National Forest Company) |
| Lifelong Learning and Culture | - Paul McGregor (Derbyshire Learning Partnership) |
| Creating Opportunities for All | - Jo Smith (South Derbyshire CVS) |

A programme for the preparation of the Community Strategy which had been endorsed by the Board was circulated. A series of thematic meetings was presently underway to determine base-line positions, the emergent issues and suggestions for action which would form the basis for the draft Strategy. The draft Strategy was programmed to be launched at the Forum event in June 2004. The Committee was advised that the “opportunities for all” meeting had taken place that day where it had been agreed to focus on community and consultation issues in addition to opportunities for all. It was agreed to circulate the dates and venues for the above thematic meetings to Members of the Committee.

Councillor Lane referred to the expressions of interest by members of the public submitted at the original Forum meeting, and queried what action had been taken with regard to such expressions. He was advised that all of the members of public who had expressed interest in particular topics had been contacted by e-mail wherever possible. Councillor Lane also queried whether parish councils had been contacted regarding the thematic meetings and was advised that the parish councils were represented by an overall Derbyshire Association of Local Councils representative.

K. HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 4.45 p.m.