

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12th September 2012

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith (Chairman), Councillor Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor Mrs. Patten,

Labour Group

Councillors Bambrick, Bell, Mrs. Mead and Pearson.

OS/5. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th June 2012, were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

OS/6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bell declared a personal interest in respect of the item on Leisure Service Reviews, as a member of Active Nation and user of the facilities.

OS/7. **LEISURE SERVICE REVIEWS**

The Head of Community and Planning Services introduced this item and a series of presentations was provided. The first was made by David Johns of Active Nation, which had taken over the contract for management of the Green Bank and Etwall Leisure Centres. A review was given on the first year of operation of the contract, with Mr. Johns explaining Active Nation's Mission and the wider structure of the group, which was a charity. Statistics were provided based on population and demographics. A Member commented that it would be useful to have a breakdown of the statistics, based on ages of users and this was available.

Statistics were provided for both of the Leisure Centres, showing the growth in the number of swimming lessons and gym memberships. This included statistics for the first quarter of 2012/13 and it was noted that the Etwall Leisure Centre had a higher usage overall. It was confirmed that the swimming lesson statistics included school usage.

Slides were then provided on the partnership arrangements and Active Nation's relationships with a range of people, particularly for the Etwall Leisure Centre. The Chairman reminded of an issue highlighted through a previous review, where school timetabling issues meant the facilities weren't always required, but there was a lack of sufficient notice to enable the Leisure Centre to arrange alternate usage of the facilities. An explanation was given of the

recent progress made, enabling more public use of the gymnasium through providing additional facilities for pupils in school premises.

Mr. Johns confirmed there was now a single payroll and leadership structure across both sites. Other areas covered in the presentation were the corporate support structure and soft contract aspects. There was recognition of the age and condition of the Green Bank Leisure Centre, it being clarified that the building remained the Council's responsibility. Reference was also made to funding bids for improvements and refurbishment of the Centre. A related issue was the likelihood of this facility being replaced and the estimated costs of providing a new leisure centre.

It was questioned whether as a charity Active Nation could claim gift aid. This had not yet been pursued, but reductions were provided for the National Non-Domestic Rates. Any funding growth was ring-fenced to stay within the local area.

With the tight timetable and limited space, It was questioned whether increased public participation could be achieved at Etwall. Examples were given of how this was being pursued. A further issue concerned access to facilities for residents in the North Eastern parishes of the District. The facilities available within the City of Derby and other adjacent areas were highlighted and new swimming facilities were being provided within Derby. Clarification was also sought about the funding bids, when these would be determined and if successful, when the improvements would be completed. Mr. Johns was thanked for the presentation.

A joint presentation was provided by Debbie Chesterman of Aurora Country Developments and officers, on the Rosliston Forestry Centre. The presentation covered the facilities and projects delivered from the Centre, provided key statistics on the number of visitors and usage of the log cabins, together with details of events and weddings held at Rosliston. Slides were also provided on the funding arrangements and business planning for the Centre. Questions were asked about cycling events and cycle hire, the catchment area for the Centre and marketing arrangements.

Next, Debbie Chesterman spoke about the 'Get Active in the Forest' partnership project and the wide range of activities provided. Again, a funding breakdown was given, together with key statistics on the number of participants and participations for the last two years and first quarter of 2012/13. This presentation concluded by explaining the key achievements of the project.

The next presentation on parks and woodlands initially focused on the Eureka Park at Swadlincote. A lottery application had been submitted to restore and repair the heritage features at the Park. Details were given of the scheme and the long-term objectives of this project. Updates were also provided in respect of the Swadlincote Woodlands, Newhall Park and proposals for Jubilee tree planting. Also covered under this presentation were proposals for the Maurice Lea Memorial Park, improvements to the Swadlincote Skate Park and the scheme being delivered at Cockshut Lane, Melbourne, in conjunction with the Melbourne Sporting Partnership.

The Committee then received a presentation on the Environmental Education Project. This confirmed the partners in the scheme, its aim and examples of the work undertaken. Financial information was submitted on the main areas of income and expenditure. Details were provided of the outputs and outcomes from the Environmental Education Project, how these aligned to the District Council's Corporate Plan, in terms of sustainable growth and opportunity and lifestyle choices. The presentation concluded with an overview of future plans. In response to a question, the Officer explained how Rolls Royce was involved in the Project.

The final presentation concerned the Melbourne Assembly Rooms. This former Victorian School had been bought by the District Council in 1977 for use as a community centre and until recently had been known as Melbourne Leisure Centre. The premises had been leased to Melbourne Community Centre Limited for a period of five years. The presentation explained the objectives of this organisation and the commitment of the Council, to give the group the confidence to invest time and energy into this facility. Substantial bids were planned for improvements and the new Manager had been very effective in increasing usage of the facility. Details were provided of the planned improvements, longer term proposals and how this Centre would complement the outdoor sports facilities being delivered at Cockshut Lane.

The Committee recorded its thanks for the presentations. It was suggested that an area of future leisure scrutiny activity could focus on the legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games.

The Committee agreed to receive the presentations.

OS/8. **FUNDED VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

Further to Minute No. OS/38 of 25th April 2012, a follow up report was submitted on the Funded Voluntary Organisation Review. The review report had been considered by the Housing and Community Services Committee. The review's findings highlighted that £100,000 had been set aside for support to the voluntary sector, which had not been distributed to date. This was a one-off sum, in addition to the Council's existing support of the sector. The Housing and Community Services Committee had taken up the offer for Scrutiny to investigate potential criteria and the method for distribution of these funds.

The report set out proposals for the criteria and size of grants to be considered in allocating this money. The aim was to develop a scheme that had enough detail to address Council aims and objectives, whilst remaining as open as possible to groups providing services within the District. With regard to the application process, it was proposed to adapt the mechanism used for applying to the Community Partnership Scheme Capital Fund. This would include the opportunity for people to speak informally with the Community Partnership Officer, to discuss and develop proposals. Applications would be reviewed by a panel of Members who would make recommendations in turn to the Housing and Community Services Committee.

Members recognised the advantage of adapting the well-established scheme. There was discussion about commencement of the bidding process and publicity arrangements. Members also discussed the likelihood of bids from previous applicants and the hope that new organisations would also come forward. Other points were the likelihood of this funding being oversubscribed, the assistance that could be provided to applicants and a comparison was made to other funding streams, for which there was sometimes a lack of take-up. It was noted that these monies were for revenue schemes and it was suggested that the guidance documents give examples, to clarify what the money could be used for.

It was agreed to recommend to the Housing and Community Services Committee the criteria contained within the report for the allocation of the £100,000 of revenue funding, subject to the clarification provided above.

OS/9. **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 – QUARTERLY REPORT**

The Committee was reminded of the purpose of this legislation and the approval by Council in September 2011 of the Council's RIPA Policy and Guidance Document. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was authorised to review the Council's use of RIPA and for the period May to July 2012 there had been no authorisations requested for the use of these powers.

It was agreed to note the report.

OS/10. **REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT**

The Committee was asked to consider minor alterations to the sections of the Constitution that related to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These were to meet requirements of regulations made under the Localism Act 2011. Alterations were required to Article 6 of the Constitution and to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules. Appended to the report were draft documents showing the proposed alterations, which the Committee was asked to consider.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council the adoption of the proposed changes to Article 6 and the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, as submitted.

OS/11. **WORK PROGRAMME**

It was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed an annual work programme, which was reviewed at each Meeting. A copy of the work programme had been circulated and the covering report reminded of the items proposed for the October and December Meetings.

The Chairman gave an update on the formation of the Police and Crime Panel. The shadow group, which comprised Members of district and borough councils, Derby City Council and the County Council, had met on two occasions. The short-listing of independent representatives and the need for

substitute representation were particular issues raised. As an outside body, it would be a matter for the Council to appoint a substitute Member.

A Member enquired whether there was capacity within the work programme to consider the review of Council Tax Support. It was suggested that an additional Meeting of the Committee could be arranged for this purpose and the Officer agreed to investigate this proposal.

Finally, the Chairman explained that an approach had been received from Erewash Borough Council for assistance with its Overview and Scrutiny function. It was proposed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Lead Member would attend a Meeting of that Authority's Scrutiny Committee in the first instance.

It was agreed that the work programme report be received.

MRS. A. PLENDERLEITH

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 8.25 p.m.