

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10th June 2003

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Harrington (Chair) and Councillors Lane and Mrs. Mead.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Bambrick (Vice-Chair)(Labour Group) and Councillors Hood, Lemmon and Martin (Conservative Group).

CYS/1. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th March 2003 were received.

CYS/2. **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT – PROGRESS REPORT**

Further to Minute No. CYS/54 of the Meeting held on 17th February 2003 the Committee was advised that four consultants had been asked to tender for undertaking the initial audit. The tenders had been received and clarified and it was intended to award the contract to the lowest priced tenderer. However, before finalising the process the Interim Housing Manager wished to investigate whether the DDA surveys could be undertaken together with other survey work required such as asbestos and general condition, rather than having the work undertaken separately.

The four consultants had been asked whether they could undertake this additional work and had confirmed that they did not cover the additional areas. The Council had therefore awarded the contract to the lowest tenderer and were expecting the work to be completed by the end of June. Subsequently the findings would be examined and a possible bid for capital resources made. Members suggested that an initial bid could be submitted into this year's capital programme.

Councillor Lane queried to what extent the audit would commit the Council to and was advised that the Council had an obligation to give maximum access to all of its public buildings. The audit would cover areas such as colour, brail, access for all disabilities and numerous other issues. All public buildings must be accessible by October 2004. The Economic Development Manager advised that he had sent a letter to all parish councils and business tenants to advise them of their responsibility with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act at the Chair's request.

The progress made on the implementation of the provision of the Disability Discrimination Act was noted.

CYS/3. **PLAY EQUIPMENT PROVISION – PROGRESS REPORT**

Members were reminded that in December 2002, a letter had been sent to all parish councils at the Committee's request to clarify ownership and management responsibilities for rural play sites. This letter was sent to all 26 parish councils and 25 responses had now been received. Twenty one parish councils accepted an understanding of the responsibilities outlined in the letter but four had been unable to sign the letter owing to concerns regarding ownership and responsibility for providing public liability cover.

Advice had been sought from the Council's insurers and subsequently further correspondence had been entered into with all 26 parish councils. An offer to stage a seminar/workshop event at which the complicated issues could be discussed in greater detail had also been made. A number of parish councils had indicated that they would be prepared to attend such an event if the necessary arrangements could be made. The Council's Facilities and Development Manager advised that it might be appropriate to invite parish councils to a seminar which covered responsibilities regarding play equipment plus other relevant issues in order to generate a wider audience. A general discussion took place within the Meeting regarding reforming the parish liaison meeting which had not met for a number of years.

The Committee was advised that good progress continued to be made with regard to the provision of a BMX/skateboarding facility. Under the auspices of the Crime and Disorder Partnership, a sub-group had been established comprising representatives from the Police, Youth Service and the Council.

Under Minute No. CYS/67 of the Meeting held on 24th March 2003 it was reported that the Council had allocated £60,000 in this year's capital programme to fund the provision of a BMX/skateboarding facility on the site of the Woodhouse Sports Ground Car Park (adjacent to John Nike Ski Centre). £10,000 from the Crime and Disorder Partnership made up the initial £70,000 funding available to deliver the project. A key element in the delivery of the project had been to identify clearly what young people required from the facility. Following extensive consultation with young people, (primarily managed by the Youth Service and the Police) a detailed specification had been produced.

One of the key issues for the young people was that they wanted the facility built in concrete. This requirement restricted the number of companies who could deliver the project and two companies had submitted tenders. The young people were involved in the tender evaluation process and with awarding the work to Fawns Recreational Services. It was anticipated that the work would commence on site on 7th July 2003 and be completed by 11th August 2003. If delivered on time

this would allow for the site to be opened and used during part of the Summer holidays.

The Committee was advised that the future management of the site was a key issue and whilst conclusions had not yet been reached, progress was being made on the following basis:-

- ❑ That young people should have an involvement in the future management of the site.
- ❑ That the partner organisations would play a continuing and active role in the future management and development of the site.
- ❑ That inspections of the equipment would be incorporated into the Council's existing play equipment monitoring regime.
- ❑ That the Wardens, based at Swadlincote Woodland Forest Park, would be utilised to visit the site on a daily basis.

Councillor Lane queried whether the management arrangements for the site would be in place by 11th August 2003 and it was confirmed that it was hoped to have arrangements "firmed-up" by then. Councillor Lane suggested that the Committee review the management issues at a future Meeting. The Council's Community and Leisure Development Manager advised of the potential to expand the site and involve the Ski Centre in this expansion.

The Committee agreed to issue a press release on progress on the site and to receive a further report to the Committee on 8th September 2003 regarding management arrangements for the site. It was also agreed that the Committee would visit the site on its completion.

CYS/4. **COMMUNITY SAFETY BEST VALUE REVIEW - UPDATE**

The Council's Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that the Best Value Review Team had considered many issues including water safety, burglary etc. but had focused on two in particular. As an "inward" issue the team focused on the topic of Section 17 and the statutory duty to look at crime and disorder issues. The "outward" issue focused on was youth related anti-social behaviour. This course of action had been agreed at the Council Meeting held on 17th April 2003. Draft base-line assessments had been completed and submitted to the Meeting of the Housing and Community Services Committee held on 5th June 2003. Working practices had been changed within Council departments which were now undertaking work related to crime and disorder. This had involved an education process which was to be continued by such methods as changing service plans and including crime and disorder implications in staff inductions etc. The Team had encountered problems mapping anti-social behaviour (due to the formation of beat rounds). Also, the Council did not have a system for logging criminal damage and

therefore a co-ordinated way forward was required. An improvement plan was to be produced to improve the two areas focused on.

Councillor Mead queried whether a drinking ban could be imposed in parks and on certain streets. She was advised that there were difficulties in imposing such a ban but that Trading Standards had recently carried out some “test purchasing”. Members talked about employing mobile wardens to cover areas such as parks in addition to Swadlincote Woodlands. The Committee was advised that the employment of such wardens had been included in the Crime and Disorder Action Plan but the cost for one warden for one year alone amounted to some £150,000. The Council’s Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that he was to produce a bid for a feasibility study for a neighbourhood warden scheme and a discussion regarding the warden system which operated at Bolsover took place. Councillor Lane asked when the improvement plan would be available and it was hoped that this would be completed by the end of the Summer 2003. The Committee agreed to receive a report on the improvement plan at its Meeting to be held on 8th September 2003.

CYS/5. **FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was reminded that previous programmes had covered the following four main areas:-

- ❑ Best Value Reviews
- ❑ Plans and Strategies
- ❑ Special Projects
- ❑ Responsive Issues

Also in the previous year the Committee had adopted the practice of focusing on housing and related matters at one meeting and issues related to clean, green, safe and active public space at the next. This was to allow a representative of the Tenants Advisory and Consultation Team (TACT) to be co-opted on to the Committee to contribute to discussions on housing matters. An outline programme based on this framework was circulated for approval. It was noted that an item on the Community Strategy was included for every Meeting in view of its importance to the work of the Council and its relationships with partner organisations. The Committee was asked to advise which special projects it wished to consider and when. The Committee was also asked to give consideration to the following issues:-

- ❑ How to secure greater involvement by local people and external stakeholders in the work of the Committee.
- ❑ The nature of the Committee’s contribution to the Council’s preparations for Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

- The role of the Committee in managing performance.
- The need for site visits to gain a first hand perspective of service delivery issues or to observe best practice by other councils or service providers.

The Committee gave detailed consideration to the proposed Work Programme and agreed it in principle. It was agreed that site visits to Pear Tree Court, Etwall and Pine Grove, Newhall sheltered housing facilities should be organised before the Meeting on 28th July 2003. The Disability Discrimination Act was to be considered at the Meeting to be held on 28th July 2003. The special project on Partnership Working was to be linked to the Local Strategic Partnership. The special project Health Issues (including levels and provision of facilities) was to be received at the Meeting on 28th July 2003. A report on the LIFT project was also to be requested for the July Meeting. The issue of abandoned vehicles and Comprehensive Performance Assessment support was to be considered at the Meeting on 8th September 2003.

The Council's Policy and Best Value Manager suggested having a Supporting People theme to the next Meeting and inviting representatives from Social Services and the Primary Care Trust. A general discussion took place regarding the need to ensure that representatives of Social Services felt comfortable in attending such a Meeting and a personal approach to particular officers should be made in that regard. The Council's Housing Strategy and Partnership Manager was also to be invited to the next Meeting.

Finally, the Committee agreed to consider the special project Car Parking at its Meeting on 16th February 2004.

K HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The meeting terminated at 5.40 p.m.