

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

22nd April 2004

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Southern (Chair), Councillor Lauro (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Isham, Jones, Mulgrew, Richards (substitute for Councillor Whyman M.B.E.) and Taylor.

Conservative Group

Councillors Mrs. Hood, Harrison, Shaw, Mrs. Walton and Mrs. Wheeler (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Renwick).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Whyman, M.B.E (Labour Group) and Councillor Mrs. Renwick (Conservative Group).

HCS/111. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th March 2004 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/112. **PRESENTATION ON "WALKING THE WAY TO HEALTH" PROJECT**

The Committee received a presentation from Debbie Chesterman which gave an update on the "Walking the Way to Health" project. Background was provided and details given of the partners in this scheme. Development of the project had taken place through walk leader training, capacity building and ensuring sustainability. A number of additional walks had been introduced, cascade training provided and an exit strategy prepared. The benefits of the scheme were demonstrated by reference to two case studies. Statistics were provided to show the number of people participating in the scheme, those registered with it and the referrals from health professionals. In terms of achievements, a health seminar had been conducted and the scheme had been awarded the three heart accreditation. There had been TV coverage of the project and it had been shown as an example of good practice. In future, further cascade training was planned together with the recruitment of additional walk leaders. It was hoped to encourage further sustainable walks and reference was made to an Active England bid.

Questions were invited and the Chair enquired whether walk leaders were required to undergo first aid training. The Officer confirmed the training provided. Councillor Carroll congratulated those involved on the success of this project and she hoped that it would continue despite the removal of funding. Councillor Harrison endorsed praise for the project and thanked the Officer for the presentation. Councillor Richards sought further

information about the present funding sources. He commented on the health benefits and questioned whether an approach could be made to the Primary Care Trust, for funding towards the scheme. The Community and Leisure Development Manager explained that funding had been provided by the PCT for the first year of the project. He also commented on the funding secured for the future and explained that an internal service development bid had been unsuccessful. There was agreement that this scheme needed to be continued in the future. Councillor Harrison commented that the Melbourne area was covered by the Greater Derby PCT and he suggested that an approach for funding be made to that organisation. The Chair thanked Debbie Chesterman for the presentation and he congratulated those involved for the successful delivery of the project.

RESOLVED:-

That the presentation on the “Walking the Way to Health” project be received.

HCS/113. **YOUTH NEEDS SURVEY**

It was reported that the Home Office had approved funding for a survey of the recreational and leisure needs of young people in South Derbyshire. The survey findings would be used to inform a Youth Engagement Through Sport Project, being developed by the Crime and Disorder Partnership. The survey had been undertaken as a partnership project and details were given of the partners involved. The survey involved the completion of over 2,000 questionnaires by 13 – 19 year pupils who lived in South Derbyshire. Consultation was also undertaken on a focus group basis using the mobile youth bus and through visits to urban parks. A 46% response had been received to the survey, which had significant statistical value. The findings had been compiled as the 2004 Youth Needs Survey and a copy of the document had been circulated to Members. The report findings would also be used to develop a Youth Needs Action Plan, which would assist partner agencies to deliver services for young people. The Action Plan would be particularly useful in developing the Youth Engagement Through Sport Project. It would target sports activity in areas where there were specific problems and would assist work with a variety of agencies. An important aspect of the project would be the use of sports leadership and coaching courses. The project would help to develop the Council’s Holiday Play Scheme Service. Details were provided of the financial implications, including the grant funding from the Home Office of £15,000 and from the Crime and Disorder Partnership of £30,000.

A presentation was also made on the Youth Engagement Through Sport Project. This confirmed the purpose of the project and provided background to it. A number of slides showed graphical information on the activities which took up young peoples’ time and provided a comparison of the recent survey with that completed in 2000. Further graphs showed reasons why people did not take part in sport, recreation or physical activity, together with suggestions by young people for further activities and facilities. The survey had sought views on the locations where young people would like to see activities. It identified the areas where respondents lived, their age and the school/college or youth group attended. The recommendations of the Youth Needs Survey were also reported.

Councillor Mrs. Wheeler praised the report and highlighted particular issues. She felt that this survey would provide excellent information for the future, referred to links to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and external funding opportunities. Councillor Harrison was pleased that the Chellaston School had been included as its catchment area including pupils from Melbourne. He referred to the report recommendations and particularly to the youth facility plan. He noted that many recommendations proposed further studies rather than the delivery of a service. He questioned the timescale for implementation of the Plan, whilst being mindful of the funding implications. Officers confirmed that delivery targets were within one year and progress was already being made towards the achievement of some objectives. The Youth Needs Survey provided evidence that would assist funding bids to various sources.

Councillor Carroll congratulated the Community and Leisure Development Team for the work undertaken. She was slightly disappointed at the level of responses from students at the Chellaston School and the requests that facilities be provided within the Derby City area. Councillor Isham echoed the praise and commented on the high response rate to the survey. In response to a further question an Officer explained the approach taken using the mobile youth bus. Councillor Isham was concerned at some of the reasons given for not participating in activities, specifically on the grounds of safety, cleanliness, litter and glass. This confirmed that young people were also mindful of anti-social behaviour problems and if this prevented engagement, it was a serious issue. Councillor Mrs. Walton referred to the new skateboard park provided in Hilton. She hoped that facilities resulting from this consultation would in turn encourage even greater participation in the future. Councillor Richards echoed the praise and spoke of the roles performed by youth councils. He felt they were an excellent means of getting feedback from young people, securing their ownership and respect, to prevent vandalism of facilities provided in the future. Officers provided information on the composition of the South Derbyshire Youth Council.

RESOLVED:-

That Members accept the findings of the survey and approve the recommendations contained within the survey that will be used to deliver the Youth Engagement Through Sport Project.

HCS/114. **BRETBY CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE – SCRUTINY PANEL**

RESOLVED:-

That the Open Minutes of the Brethby Crematorium Scrutiny Panel Meeting held on 28th January 2004 be received.

HCS/115. **PROVISION OF NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY SURFACING**

It was reported that £60,000 had been allocated in this year's Capital Programme for the provision of new play equipment and safety surfacing. Sites at Winchester Drive, Linton and Salisbury Drive, Hartshorne were identified as priorities. This was based on two external reports undertaken by Wicksteed Leisure in 1998 and ROSPA risk assessments undertaken in 2002. The reports identified specific items of equipment at these and other sites that failed to conform to current standards. Where parish councils had

agreed, all such equipment identified as a high priority had been removed. Many of the recommendations related to the provision of safety surfacing and often, this was more expensive than the equipment itself. Where finance had been available, total site upgrades had been pursued, rather than providing surfacing under often very old equipment.

Based on the recommendations, Linton and Smisby parish councils had removed equipment from their sites. Negotiations had continued with Hartshorne Parish Council about upgrading the Salisbury Drive site and the Parish Council was currently consulting the local community on this issue. The capital allocation this year provided an opportunity to upgrade three sites. Because of the large number of projects being undertaken by the Grounds and Facilities Unit in the current year, it was necessary to use external support to assist in the delivery of this project, at a probable cost of £4,000-£4,500.

The financial implications identified the likely cost of each joint project and the contributions being sought from the respective parish councils. Hartshorne Parish Council was still consulting on the facilities to be provided and had not yet fully committed to a joint scheme. Smisby Parish Council was seeking external funding and had asked for a contribution of £5,000 towards its scheme.

Councillor Taylor questioned whether a financial contribution had been agreed with Hartshorne Parish Council. He also compared the site at Salisbury Drive to that on the Goseley Estate and asked how Officers had distinguished provision, particularly as significant anti-social behaviour problems were experienced on the Goseley Estate. The Officer spoke of the survey undertaken and the equipment identified which did not meet current standards. The assessment had been undertaken purely on this basis. The Council's Sports Development Officer had met with Hartshorne Parish Council and a project was planned for the future. Councillor Mrs. Wheeler spoke of the partnership benefits and the pragmatic approach being taken. Councillor Jones welcomed the proposed funding for the Smisby area as it had no play facilities at present.

RESOLVED:-

That Members approve the programme outlined in the report for providing new play equipment at Linton, Hartshorne and Smisby.

HCS/116. **NATIONAL ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY**

It was reported that nationally, alcohol misuse cost £20 billion per year. This was as a result of alcohol related health problems, crime and anti-social behaviour, loss of productivity in the workplace and problems for the families of those who misused alcohol. The National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy aimed to reduce the harm associated with alcohol misuse. It focused on the prevention, minimisation and management of the harm caused through activities based on better education, improving health and treatment, combating alcohol related crime and disorder and working with the alcohol industry. The strategy placed implementation and delivery duties on a range of agencies including local authorities. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP's) with representation from local voluntary organisations and the drinking industry would be responsible for co-

ordinating delivery and developing where necessary a local strategy, within the wider framework set by the Local Strategic Partnership. CDRP's could assist by providing a forum and by sharing information and good practice. CDRP's would also be responsible for determining local priorities within the framework set down by the strategy. The strategy encouraged local authorities in particular to consider the application of specific reported measures to address local alcohol related issues.

Councillor Richards commented on levels of after work drinking due to stress. He suggested the addition of this issue to those reported. Councillor Carroll welcomed the initiative and spoke of the problems caused from the misuse of alcohol. Councillor Harrison sought further information about the composition of local forums and those companies which would represent the alcohol industry. As an example, the Community and Leisure Development Manager commented that the Breweries Association wished to be represented on the Crime and Disorder Partnership. At a local level, work could be undertaken with companies like Wetherspoons. He also reminded Members that the Council would soon become responsible for Liquor Licensing and this role would help the Council to regulate in the future. Councillor Mrs. Walton referred to under age drinking and she questioned whether any supermarket had lost its liquor licence, as a result of sales to minors. The Chair advised that he had accompanied the police on patrols and a particular problem occurred where older youths purchased the alcohol and then gave it to younger people. The Officer explained that in the past year, two test purchasing operations had been conducted and a case was currently being progressed against a retailer.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee accepts and supports local implementation of the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy by the Crime and Disorder Partnership and the Council.

HCS/117. **DERBYSHIRE ARTS PARTNERSHIP**

It was reported that a new National Partnerships Framework had been agreed, which aimed to establish an infrastructure for strategic leadership and planning for the arts. The framework was based upon the establishment of County based or similar arts partnership that would involve local authorities and regional arts boards. The Vice-Chair had attended two meetings with Officers to discuss the formation of such a partnership for Derbyshire. As a result, Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and all other District and Borough Councils within the County had agreed in principle to the formation of a partnership. A formal agreement was currently being developed between the authorities and proposals were being drawn up for how the partnership would work. Initially, proposals included appointing a Partnership Manager, a creative arts project and a young peoples' internet initiative. It was envisaged that the partnership would function in a similar way to the successful County Sports Partnership. A report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to confirm the arrangements for operation of the partnership and its work programme.

To fund the partnership, it was proposed that subscriptions paid to the Arts Council be made to the new partnership. The Arts Council would provide matched funding. This Council's current subscription was £1,080 per

annum and this contribution would result in a total budget of over £150,000 for the first two years of the partnership. The Chair thanked the Community and Leisure Development Manager for the various reports submitted on the activities of this Division.

RESOLVED:-

That the Council continues to be involved in the development of the Derbyshire Arts Partnership.

HCS/118. **CORPORATE PLAN – TARGETS AND MILESTONES**

It was reported that the Corporate Plan was an important part of the Council's Performance Management Framework along with the Best Value Performance Plan, Service Plans and the Employee Review and Development Scheme. The current Plan was agreed by the Council and covered a three year period to March 2007. The Plan was built around eight key aims and for each of the key aims there were a number of targets and first year milestones. Details were provided of each of the key aims. At the April Meeting of Council, Members were asked to agree Committee and Service Plan responsibilities for each of the targets and milestones. This would help to ensure that the plan was delivered efficiently and effectively. Attached to the report were proposed target and milestone responsibilities for the Committee. The annexes also provided details of the respective lead officer within the Corporate Management Team and the Service Plan responsibilities.

It was anticipated that all policy committees would play an important role in shaping proposals and monitoring and reviewing performance, in achieving targets and milestones. At present, the draft Service Plans for 2004/07 were being finalised in the light of Corporate Plan responsibilities and the 2004 budget proposals. The Plans would be monitored and reported to Committee on a quarterly basis, to enable Members to have more involvement in managing performance. Other areas where Members might wish to have more involvement included appointing a "champion" for a specific proposal, agreeing briefs for plans, strategies and project plans and making site visits to discuss issues and proposals with customers and frontline staff. The Director of Community Services questioned whether Members might wish to consider these issues and provide feedback on their relative priority.

Councillor Harrison endorsed the proposals submitted for Member involvement and when consideration was given to appointing champions, he confirmed that the Conservative Group would wish to be involved, if possible.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Committee and Service Plan responsibilities for Corporate Plan targets and 2004/05 milestones, as set out in the report, be noted.***
- (2) That Members provide feedback on how they would like to contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan.***

HCS/119. **AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOMES**

A report had been submitted at the Chair's request. At present, if the Council wished to undertake additional borrowing, to help fund Council housing improvements, the costs would impact directly on the Housing Revenue Account. It would therefore affect capacity to deliver service in other areas, or adversely affect balances on the account. All Councils were subject to a housing "subsidy" calculation and for this Council it meant a negative subsidy and a projected net contribution.

A proposal had been made by the House of Commons Group that the Government should make an allowance within the HRA or within the subsidy calculation, to reflect any borrowing taken out to improve homes. If the repayment requirement was covered in full by the allowance, the affect would be that borrowing would not be detrimental on other parts of service delivery or on balances. It would mean that the contribution of this Council's HRA to the national pot would be reduced. The Group referred to this process as an investment allowance or as a "fourth option". This was on the grounds that currently, to generate significant new investment for Council house improvements, Councils were required to pursue stock transfer, a private finance initiative or arms length management. If this proposal was adopted by Government, it would give additional flexibility in the process of improving South Derbyshire Council homes.

The Chair confirmed that he had received this letter and sent a personal response in support of the Group's aims. Councillor Carroll spoke in support of the Group's aims and felt it offered a way forward for many local housing authorities. Councillor Harrison spoke on behalf of the Conservative Group. He was mindful of criticism from the CPA Inspectors regarding slow progress on the stock options work. Against this background any further delay or additional confusion should not be supported.

RESOLVED:-

That the Council supports the House of Commons Group proposal that a "fourth option" allowing investment in Council homes is adopted by the Government.

HCS/120. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th March 2004 were received.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND REPORTS – SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE
(Paragraph 3)

A Member requested an update on current recruitment issues for the Sheltered Housing Service.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST RECEIVED FOR FORMER SHELTERED HOUSING UNITS AT BASS'S CRESCENT, CASTLE GRESLEY AND SMALL THORN PLACE, WOODVILLE *(Paragraph 9)*

The Committee deferred consideration of this item.

DAY TO DAY GAS SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 2004 – 2007 *(Paragraph 8/9)*

The Committee made recommendations to the Finance and Management Committee regarding the appointment of the Day to Day Gas Servicing and Maintenance Contract.

FORMER TENANT ARREAR WRITE OFFS *(Paragraph 7)*

The Committee recommended that the Finance and Management Committee write-off a sum in accordance with Financial Regulations.

R. W. SOUTHERN

CHAIR