

ACTIVE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 5 March 2012

Present:- Councillor A Heames – in the Chair

Councillors Cairns, Cooper, Mrs Heesom, Miss Olszewski, Tagg J H,
Taylor K-N, Miss Walklate, Wilkes and Mrs Williams.

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Cornes.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 31 October 2011 be approved as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. PRESENTATION BY HELEN RILEY - DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND TRANSFORMATION AT STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL. PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONING PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT

Helen Riley of Staffordshire County Council gave a verbal presentation advising Members of progress made on the four phases of the programme with approximate timescales.

The Research Stage had been completed and it was indicated that the Design Stage built upon the need to design a range of commissioning options including shared commissioning approaches and a consistent Third Sector Commissioning Framework across the Staffordshire Region. It was at this stage that each public sector organisation decided which approach best fitted their requirements for Debt, Benefits and Consumer Advice Services and Third Sector Infrastructure and Volunteering Services.

The next phase was 'Test' with its starting point to clarify the investment and commissioning requirements/outcomes from each of the participating public sector organisations. The information would help to inform the service specification and participating organisations would be consulted about the final specification prior to commencing the procurement (tender) process.

It was proposed that the Third Sector Infrastructure and Voluntary Services would go out to tender in July 2012 with a contract start date of April 2013. The Debt, Benefits and Consumer Advice Service was proposed to go out to tender in November 2012 with a contract start date of October 2013.

The final stage 'Implementation' would, subject to demonstrable success, include project sign off and partner commitment to the new commissioning approach.

Resolved:- That Helen Riley be thanked for her informative presentation.

5. BATESWOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report detailing the findings of the recent consultation exercise carried out in accordance with a request made by Cabinet on 7 September 2011 to ascertain public opinion on requests from the community for additional bridle route provision and use of part of the main pool for fishing in Bateswood Local Nature Reserve.

The extent of the public consultation exercise that included a Public Meeting held on 13 January 2012 was outlined in the officer's report and it was reported that 210 individual responses to the questionnaire had been received together with 10 letters from individual residents. In addition, receipt was also reported of two petitions as follows:-

Petition containing 257 signatories

"We, the undersigned, would like to support the proposal of extending the bridle path in Bateswood Local Nature Reserve and would like Newcastle Borough Council to take into consideration when deciding whether to approach these proposals."

Petition containing 225 signatories

"We, the undersigned, wish Bateswood to remain as a nature reserve. We do not want to have fishing or any activities on the lake nor do we want an extra bridleway on the reserve.

Both of the above petitions had been presented at the Council meeting on 22 February 2012 where it was resolved as follows:-

"(a) That the petitions be received.

(b) That the petitions be referred to Cabinet for consideration in the context of the full consultation exercise which has recently been undertaken in relation to requests for additional recreational facilities in Bateswood Local Nature Reserve.

(c) That the petitioners be informed of resolution (b) above.

It was indicated that the discussion at the public meeting had highlighted many conflicts and tensions between community user groups regarding the use of the site.

Having considered the officer's report, the Committee agreed that a working group should be established consisting of Councillors Cairns, Cooper, K-N Taylor, Wilkes and Mrs Williams to carry out a formal scrutiny of this project. It was agreed that the first meeting of the Group should be held as soon as possible in order to agree a timetable and format for the scrutiny process.

Resolved:- (a) That the information be received.

(b) That a working group as indicated above be established to scrutinise the requests for additional recreational activities at Bateswood Local Nature Reserve Project.

6. DRAFT BRIEFS FOR SCRUTINY AND WORK PROGRAMME

Further to the discussion of the previous meeting, the Committee considered draft briefs prepared by the officers for the scrutiny of the undermentioned topics:-

- Allotments Service
- County Wide Museum Service
- Community Centres Review
- Green Space Strategy

Resolved:- That the draft briefs for scrutiny be agreed and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for final approval.

7. THE FORWARD PLAN - ACTIVE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - EXTRACTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING MARCH 2012 TO JUNE 2012

Consideration was given to items contained within the Forward Plan which were relevant to this Committee.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

MRS A HEAMES
Chair