

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Monday, 12th March, 2012

Present:- Councillor Michael Clarke – in the Chair

Councillors Councillor Ian Wilkes, Councillor David Becket, Councillor Eddie Boden, Councillor Julie Cooper, Councillor Linda Hailstones, Councillor Ann Heames, Councillor Mark Olszewski and Councillor Elizabeth Shenton

6. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Snell, Cllr Gilmore and Cllr Mrs Williams.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes from the meeting held on 28th November 2011 be agreed as a correct record.

9. SCRUTINY BRIEFS

The Committee discussed a proposed scrutiny brief regarding the future use of the former St Giles and St George's School and Maxims Nightclub. It was decided that the two properties be looked at separately as the Council was not thought to own the Maxims building but only the land it was built on. The main concern and the topic to be addressed in the first instance was the future of the St Giles and St Georges building.

Members considered that the following information be included on the brief:

Questions to be addressed:

- What was the current position regarding the former St Giles and St Georges building
- Whether the Council owned the land and not the building on the Maxims site and what the current situation was regarding this.
- How much was it costing the Council to maintain these buildings.
- Has a risk assessment been carried out regarding the cost to the Council both now and in the future of maintaining these buildings.
- Is there any strategic importance regarding the buildings.

Background Materials:

- Cabinet reports
- Recent valuations etc.
- Listed status.
- Building Control information.

Evidence and Witnesses

- Neale Clifton
- Simon Smith

Method of Scrutiny

- Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Timetable

- Additional meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee to be arranged mid April to consider an updated brief.

The Committee considered four scrutiny briefs that had been agreed at the meeting of the Active and Cohesive Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 5th March 2012.

Allotments Service – Review of Policy

The Committee considered a scrutiny brief considering whether the proposed allotments policy contained acceptable options to reduce the cost of the service and progress local management of allotment sites.

Members stated that it would be beneficial to invite existing community management groups such as the Friends of Lyme Valley to address those carrying out the scrutiny review.

It was also thought that there needed to be enhanced clarity as to exactly what the Active and Cohesive Committee was being asked to do and as to whether there was an aim to increase or amalgamate current allotments. Members agreed that an increase in allotment facilities was very desirable and that if there was suitable Council owned land not being used then this should be considered for allotments.

The Committee agreed that target dates needed to be included in the scrutiny brief and information regarding when any outcomes would be considered by Cabinet.

County Wide Museum Service – Staffordshire Museums Strategic Network Feasibility Study.

The Committee agreed that there should be representation from The Active and Cohesive Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the seminar due to be held on 27th March 2012 and that Cabinet dates needed to be included in the brief.

Community Centres Review

The Committee suggested the following with regards to the Scrutiny Brief:

- That there be clarity regarding exactly which services/activities were being looked at as these could range from indoor sports to chess clubs.
- That tangible measures be used to judge how well these worked.

Members suggested that in the first instance the majority of the questions to be addressed could be asked of the Community Centre Management Committees including what activities they would like to see happening in the centres.

The Committee also stated that care would have to be taken regarding any Community Centres that were not Council owned as action taken regarding these would be restricted.

The brief stated that the fact finding would be concluded in 12 weeks but the Committee recommended that this could be increased.

Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy

Members noted that a report on this was due to go to Cabinet in May 2012. It was agreed that this should be postponed until September to allow for further involvement from groups such as Parish Councils. Care also needed to be taken to ensure that there was no duplication of work between the Active and Cohesive and Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED: (a) That a scrutiny brief regarding the former St Giles and St Georges site be prepared for the next meeting of the Committee and that officers be in attendance to discuss the way forward.

(b) That an additional meeting of the Committee be held in April to discuss the scrutiny brief relating to the former St Giles and St Georges site.

(c) That the above recommendations relating to the Active and Cohesive Scrutiny Committee briefs be passed back to Officers.

10. WORK PLANS

The Committee considered the work plans and progress of the various Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Health Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That the work plans be agreed and updated.

11. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

A report was submitted identifying items listed in the forward plan of key decisions to ascertain if further examination of any issues was considered appropriate.

Members noted that a report on the Delivery of Home Improvement Agency Services was due to be presented to Cabinet in June 2012. It was agreed to take no action at the moment but to monitor the progress of this report at future meetings.

The Committee also requested that it be made clear on the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan that only the 1st Phase was due for completion in July 2012.

Advice was also sought regarding the Procurement of the Reporter and how scrutiny could best become involved in this.

RESOLVED: That the above recommendations and requests be provided to the relevant Officers.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

COUNCILLOR MICHAEL CLARKE
Chair