

AT A MEETING
of the
**COMMUNITY ORGANISATION, LEISURE
AND CULTURE SCRUTINY AND
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

held at The Council House, Walsall on
Thursday 16 June 2005 at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Towe (Chairman)
Councillor Phillips (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Arif
Councillor Beeley
Councillor Bott
Councillor Burley
Councillor Minur
Councillor Woodruff

CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

The chairman advised the panel of the following change in the membership of the committee for the duration of the meeting: -

Delete: Councillor Ault
Substitute: Councillor Minur

APOLOGIES

Apologies for non attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Ault.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or indication of party whipping identified at this meeting .

MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 5 April and 12 May 2005 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record of the proceedings subject to the following amendment:

Minutes of Meeting of 5 April 2005 – minute number 111 headed Review of Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel for the year 2004/05.

First paragraph – delete reference to Councillor Beilby and substitute Councillor Beeley.

CURRENT POSITION OF THE PANELS WORK PROGRAMME AND
PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/6

The report of the Executive Director was submitted: -

(see annexed).

Members noted the work of the panel during the 2004/5 municipal year and the current position.

The chairman Councillor Towe advised members that the scoping criteria circulated to members would be a positive way forward to selecting the items for the panels work programme for 2005/6 municipal year.

Members considered this matter and proceeded to identify areas of work to be included in the programme as follows: -

1) Procurement

The chairman reminded members that during the previous municipal year the panel had identified the procurement process as being an area which was felt to be in need of review to enable members to get a clear picture of the process from beginning to end of the cycle.

The panel was advised that a procurement intentions plan was being prepared and members could by way of review look at the gateway stages.

AGREED:

It was agreed that Jamie Morris would prepare for consideration at the next meeting on 4 August a plan setting out the spending proposals i.e. major procurement effecting the panels remit and that this plan could be used by members to identify the areas within the procurement process for initial review.

2) Consultation

AGREED:

This area of work was felt to be a priority which affects all the services and elements of this panel's workload. Members were of the view that it was crucial to include consultation as an integral element of the review process when looking at subjects to be scrutinised, such as, the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, Citizen's Panel etc.

3) Citizens Panel

John Pryce-Jones was present at the meeting to advise members on the progress of the citizens panel following the presentation at the meeting 5 April 2005.

John advised members that the citizen's panel had been expanded as part of the council's budget process and that the membership had been increased from 500 to over 1,000. He further advised that a new consultant company i.e. BMG had been employed to undertake the process of identifying and recruiting to the panel.

Members expressed some concern that following the last meeting nothing appeared to have been done to address members' concern about the process for selection of members to the citizen's panel.

Members were of the view that the scrutiny panel should be fully involved in the process in terms of ensuring that the diversity of the community is taken on board and that all geographical areas of the borough are included when appointing members to the citizen's panel.

Members were also concerned about the process of the selection of the company chosen for this work and felt that process should also be examined together with the criteria for increasing the membership from 500 to 1,000.

The panel was advised that the makeup of the citizen's panel was yet to commence and that it was hoped that this would be completed before the end of this summer.

Agreed:

The panel agreed that in order to resolve some of the concerns raised by members of this panel that the company chosen to organise the citizen's panel and its membership together with the officers involved in the procurement process for the selection of the company be invited to attend the next meeting of this panel to be held on 4 August 2005 to explain the background to the work which has been undertaken and the work proposed.

4) Putting the Citizen First

Jamie Morris advised the panel that work was in progress towards to transfer date for Putting the Citizen First. He said that when a date has been identified a report will be prepared firstly for submission to cabinet, then to scrutiny panel and ultimately to council.

Some members raised concern about the future of the proposed one stop shops for the local areas within the borough.

Jamie confirmed that this was still an integral part of Fujitsu's plans and that this would go ahead.

Considering this area of work members were of the view that the Putting the Citizen First issue should be fully discussed at council and not at the scrutiny performance panels. Members were unclear as to whether constitutionally they were in a position to defer scrutiny of this issue and direct the matter to council for a presentation to all members.

AGREED:

It was agreed that Jamie Morris would advise members at the next meeting of the panel to be held on 4 August 2005 as to whether a presentation could be made at council to all members on these issues.

Members also agreed that a site visit should be arranged for all members of the panel to the council's one stop shop prior to the next meeting of the panel.

5) Parks and Green Spaces

Tim Challans advised the panel that consultants had been appointed to work on this project and the aim was to prepare a green space strategy which would be quality audited and would identify a quantity of sites. Following the identification of sites these would be discussed with Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and members to enable the parks and green spaces to be identified within those sites. He said that the process of identifying sites should be completed by January 2006 and that a supplementary document would be adopted by approximately April 2006.

He continued that a detailed action plan was being prepared and should be available within weeks.

AGREED:

It was agreed that Tim Challans would submit an action plan at the next meeting of the panel on 4 August 2005 to include a work schedule of where work has already taken place within sites identified to date.

6) Ofsted Report

Tim Challans advised the panel that the first draft of the Ofsted plan following the report had been made available to members and that as a result the process of recruiting 16 youth workers had commenced.

AGREED:

The panel agreed that details of how the youth workers were to be deployed within the borough should be presented to the next meeting of the panel for consideration.

That the amended ofsted action plan be circulated to members for comment.

7) Walsall Illuminations

Tim Challans advised the panel that a specialist had been commissioned to review the long-term role of the illuminations. He said that the specialist would look at the following elements to further identify the continued value of establishing the illuminations: -

- Economics – including funding
- Social benefits
- Image of the borough
- Planning and operation
- Environmental impact
- How it links into other festivals in the borough

He said that an action plan would be developed to ensure that there is a clear vision for the illuminations which are in line with Walsall's vision.

Detailed analysis of the 2005 illuminations event would take place.

Members were of the view this analysis should include in the survey organisations such as "friends of the park" to ensure that comprehensive views of the effects of the illuminations is gathered.

AGREED:

It was agreed that a site visit be organised for members of the panel to the Walsall Illuminations in October 2005 following which a report be submitted to the panel in January 2006 setting out the work of the review.

8) Funding to Voluntary/Community Organisations

AGREED:

Members felt that this was an area which could be reviewed in September 2005 by way of investigation into the management of grants to these organisations including the criteria used to fund the organisations chosen for funding together with the list of which organisations have been chosen and the reasons behind those choices.

9) Disability Strategy

AGREED:

The members noted the work to date of the Disability Strategy Working Group and agreed that the working group should commence concluding this review document for consideration at the next meeting of the panel to be held on 4 August 2005.

10) Community Associations

AGREED:

The members noted the work to date of the work group which had been established during the 2004/5 municipal year and agreed that it was necessary to allow the work group to complete its review and submit its document to the panel at an early meeting.

ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK GROUPS

The report of the Executive Director was submitted: -

(see annexed).

Members considered the report in detail noting the work of the two work groups which had been established during the 2004/5 municipal year i.e. Disability Strategy Review Working Group and Community Association Funding Working Group.

AGREED:

The committee agreed that both working groups should be re-established for the municipal year 2005/6 and that the memberships should be as follows: -

1) Disability Strategic Review Working Group

Membership should be: -

- Councillor Arif
- Councillor Beeley
- Councillor Phillips
- Councillor Woodruff

That Councillor Cook be invited to attend the final meeting of the work group to enable the work commenced to be concluded.

That the next meeting of the work group be held on 5 July 2005.

That the remit of the work group be as agreed during the 2004/5 municipal year.

2) Community Association

That the membership be as follows: -

- Councillor Phillips
- Councillor Beeley
- Councillor Beilby
- Councillor Bott

- Councillor Burley

That the terms of reference be as agreed during the 2004/5 municipal year.

FORWARD PLAN

A copy of the Forward Plan for May 2005 was submitted: -

(see annexed).

AGREED:

That the contents of the Forward Plan be received and noted.

PUBLICITY

Members raised a number of concerns in respect of the engagement of the public at a scrutiny meeting. The first concern raised related to the meeting room which members felt was not conducive to the engagement of the public. Concern was also expressed about the lack of publicity for scrutiny meetings and it was suggested that consideration should be given to a number of ways of publicising scrutiny meeting.

A suggestion was also made that meetings of the panel could be held outside the council house on occasions when the panel were having indepth scrutiny on particular issues of great concern to the public.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.50p.m.