

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday 30 March 2010 at 6.00pm

Panel Members Present Councillor L. Harrison (Chair)
Councillor C. Creaney (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Z. Ali
Councillor K. Aftab
Councillor D. Pitt
Councillor M. Pitt
Councillor I. Shires

Portfolio Holders Present Councillor A. Andrew – Regeneration
Councillor A. Harris – Leisure and Culture

Others Members Present Councillor S. Coughlan

Officers Present Keith Stone – Assistant Director – Neighbourhoods
Ben Percival – Sports and Leisure Service Manager
Steph Simcox – Service Accounting and Financial
Services Manager
Craig Goodall – Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

76/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors P. Bott, E. Hughes and I. Robertson.

77/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

78/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

79/09 MINUTES

It was noted that a spelling mistake had been corrected on the version of the minutes to be signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes, as amended, of the meeting held on 18 February 2010, copies having been previously circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

80/09 **LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT MONITORING – THIRD QUARTER OUT-TURN**

The Panel were informed of progress against the performance of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets for the period of quarter 3 2009/10.

The Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods) reported that there were a number of national indicators (NIs) that were reported as underperforming within the Panels remit. He explained that they were all survey based perception measures and that work was being undertaken to refresh the Council and its Partners approach to these areas in an effort to improve performance.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:

NI 8 ‘adult participation in sport’

It was explained that this NI was measured through a Sport England telephone survey of 500 local residents. A Member commented that this NI could become more difficult to achieve if planned leisure centre closures went ahead.

NI 56d ‘obesity among primary school age children in year 6’

Members requested further information on how data for this NI was collected.

NI 4 ‘percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality’

Members were informed that the new neighbourhood management model was hoped to play a large part in improving this NI, however, engagement between newly appointed area managers, partners and Members was key to making a success of this new process.

Members were also informed that the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel had previously written to the Chair of Walsall Partnership requesting that further work was undertaken to improve this NI.

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1. further information on the collection method for data for national indicator 56d ‘obesity among primary age children in year 6’ be provided to Members for their information;**

and;

- 2. the following national indicators be considered for the Panels work programme during 2010/11:**
 - a. National indicator 4 ‘percentage of people who feel they can**

**influence decisions in their locality'; and;
b. National indicator 8 'adult participation in sport'.**

81/09 LEISURE CENTRE STRATEGY

Members considered the range of potential future options for how leisure centre facilities could be delivered in the borough.

The Sports and Leisure Service Manager explained that there were a range of options available for a future leisure centre strategy. He explained that the facilities currently available in the borough, including school sports facilities were in need of investment. There is also a significant over-provision in terms of quantity so now was an opportune time to decide what sort of delivery model the Council should pursue for the future to make best use of limited resources.

The Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder explained that the leisure centre offer for the borough needed revisiting. His ultimate aim was that the service should be provided at a neutral cost to the Council and not subsidised like it was now.

The Chair suggested that the Panel form a working group to investigate each of the future options in more detail to enable informed recommendations to be made to Cabinet during 2010/11. The Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder supported this suggestion.

The following are the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- It was possible to have simultaneous schools and community use at school swimming pools and leisure facilities so long as certain conditions were met.
- The need to ensure the Building Schools for the Future programme was a consideration in the development of the new strategy was noted.
- The proposal to close Willenhall Leisure Centre (WLC) was discussed in the context of the development of the new strategy. Some Members called for WLC to be kept open until the new leisure centre strategy had been set. The Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder could give no assurances that the centre could stay open whilst the strategy was developed as this was dependent on a separate piece of work being undertaken by the Friends of WLC. It was noted that it could potentially be possible to use any capital receipts from the sale of land or property of current leisure centre sites to reinvest in new provision, subject to specific approval by Cabinet as part of the overall capital strategy in line with the needs identified in the new leisure centre strategy.
- Health issues were noted as an important issue the new strategy could assist in improving. Leisure facilities could help to address health inequalities between the east and west of the borough.
- Schools received separate funding that part funds the cost of maintaining their swimming pools. Some Community Associations operated school swimming pools outside of school hours.

- A full and cross cutting scrutiny working group investigation was supported by all Members of the Panel. It was suggested that the scrutiny working group investigation should not consider the proposals to keep the existing offer as it was now or to stop and close all centres.

It was proposed and seconded that:

‘1. Cabinet defer any decision on the future leisure centre strategy for the borough until the outcome of a scrutiny working group investigation into the issue is completed during 2010/11 and ensures that all existing leisure centre stock be maintained and kept open to the public until the outcome of the scrutiny working group investigation has been considered by Cabinet.’

The motion was put to the vote and declared lost.

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1. Cabinet defer any decision on the future leisure centre strategy for the borough until the Panel has completed a scrutiny working group investigation into the issue during 2010/11;**
- 2. the scrutiny working group investigation should focus its considerations on the following leisure centre strategy options:**
 - a. existing offer with minor improvements;**
 - b. strategic spread of facilities across the borough;**
 - c. a single ‘jewel’ facility;**
 - d. strategic spread and a ‘jewel’ facility;**

and;

- 3. Councillor Harris be thanked for the allowing the Panel the opportunity to investigate and make recommendations on the new leisure centre strategy for the borough.**

82/09 WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10 & FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered their work programme and the latest edition of the Cabinet forward plan of key decisions.

RESOLVED:

That the following items be considered at the Panel meeting on 20 April 2010:

- a. Final report of the Alcohol Related Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group, and;**
- b. Community Payback Scheme.**

83/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as 20 April 2010.

The meeting terminated at 7.15 p.m.

Signed:

Date: