

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

held at The Council House, Walsall on
Thursday 4 August 2005 at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Towe (Chairman)
Councillor Phillips (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Arif
Councillor Ault
Councillor Beeley
Councillor Beilby
Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Woodruff

18. APOLOGIES

An apology for non attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor Burley.

19. SUBSTITUTIONS

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

Delete: Councillor Burley
Substitute: Councillor Cassidy

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

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

MINUTES

21. RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 16 June 2005 a copy having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chairman subject to the following amendment: -

- Apologies

Councillor Beilby.

- Changes in Membership

Delete: Councillor Minur
Substitute: Councillor Munir

22.

CITIZENS PANEL

Prior to the discussion of this item the chairman advised the panel that he wished to make a statement to members in respect of the scrutiny role for this panel.

He proceeded to advise the members as follows: -

- “Scrutiny provides members with the opportunity to examine various functions of council, to ask questions on how decisions have been made, to consider if improvements can be put in place and to make recommendations to that effect.”
- “Scrutiny does not have the power to question operational activities once they have been agreed by cabinet or the executive management team unless it is the form of a call-in which must be done within five days of cabinet.”
- “To undertake any form of scrutiny the panel will receive detailed information from officers and others, regarding any issue, to ensure members are fully informed. Following which members can make recommendations to improve the progress in the future.”

The panel noted the statement made by the chair and requested that a copy of the statement be provided to each member of the panel.

Citizens Panel

The chairman proceeded to welcome the presentation from the BMG Company.

Karen Adderley introduced the representative from the BMG Company Mr Simon Maydew and Andrew Mellors, the senior policy officer at this authority who would be addressing the committee.

Karen commenced with an outline of the presentation advising members of the reasons behind the developing of this authority’s citizens panel.

Karen advised members that the pilot for the citizens panel had been established in the 2004/5 municipal year and it became part of this authority’s

corporate plan and the expansion of the panel became a pledge within this municipal year.

She continued that the recent CPA inspection recognised the Councils consultation strategy as effective and in order to meet the pledge and move forward some £30,000 had been allocated within the budget to provide an increase in the membership of the citizen's panel.

She went on to advise members of the tendering process through which the BMG Company had been appointed for this 3 year period.

She further advised the committee that this company had been chosen because of its commitment to reach all of the community within the borough and their wide expertise and knowledge in this area.

The committee welcomed Simon Maydew who proceeded to present to the panel his companies proposals and actions to date.

He referred to the 'harder test' document which put more emphasis on the citizens panel as the main source of information in the future. He said that the new way of CPA testing would involve identifying how services have been shaped and influenced by public involvement.

The proposed new 1,250 member panel was aiming to be robust and inclusive to be able to deliver the information required for the CPA. He went on to explain to the panel how the citizens panel would be developed.

He said that the 1,250 members would be made up of all 20 wards in the borough and that a third of the panel would be replaced each year. He advised that an average of 50 to 70 panellists would be recruited from wards via a postal recruitment process with random selection of citizens invited to take part.

He continued that the recruitment questionnaire also gives a taster of types of questions asked and issues covered.

He said that some 6,000 questionnaires had already been sent out and approximately 350 people had already signed up to be part of the panel.

In response to questions raised Simon advised members that a backup plan had been established to ensure that all wards are equally represented on the panel and that when the recruitment process was complete he would be able to plot on a map the parts of the ward from where representatives were recruited. Members felt that this information would be very informative to them and requested that this information be provided to members of the panel at some stage. Members also requested copies of the sample questions which are being put to potential panel members.

He went on to say that the panel would be fully recruited by the end of August.

Simon proceeded to advise members on how the citizens panel would be used.

He said that approximately 3 postal surveys would be undertaken per year to all panellists and it was hoped to achieve between 50 and 70 percent response rate and that panel members would be given a copy of the results of the survey via at least one yearly newsletter.

In response to a question raised he confirmed that an acceptable level of response would be dependent on the subject matter but that on average a 50 percent response rate was expected.

He continued that the panel would be monitored and members replaced from time to time.

Following a question raised he explained that a mechanism could be put in place to ensure that deceased members were removed from the list promptly without causing distress to loved ones.

The Chairman thanked Simon for his presentation and requested that the panel would receive further update on the progress of the citizens' panel during this municipal year.

It was AGREED:

That a copy of the sample questions being put to potential members of the citizens panel together with details on where within each ward the panel members had been recruited from should be submitted to the next meeting.

23. DISABILITY STRATEGY

The panel received the Disability Strategy review document: -

(see annexed)

The Chairman thanked Councillor Arif and the Panel for all the work they had carried out and requested Councillor Arif to go through the document.

Councillor Arif presented the document and commenced by thanking all members and officers who participated in the review and in preparing the document for presentation at this meeting.

Councillor Arif advised the panel that the aim of this process was not just to ensure that the correct level of provisions were available for the disabled within this authority but also for this council to champion the disability strategy.

Members proceeded to consider the document in further detail and in referring to the recommendations; members referred to the physical access audit summary report setting out details of the process of monitoring schools action plans. Members noted that a copy of this document would be submitted to the

Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Performance Panel and were of the view that the results of the discussions on this issue from the children's panel should be submitted along with their report to the Community Organisation, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Performance Panel.

Members requested that this information be submitted in view of their concerns that some schools were not in a position to adequately fund the new disability requirements.

Following further consideration of this issue the panel AGREED: -

- a) That the recommendations set out in this review document be submitted to cabinet emphasising the financial implications of implementing the changes recommended in the physical access reports.
- b) That the Chairman of Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Performance Panel be informed of the information set out in resolution 14 and request that the scrutiny chairman give consideration to the physical access audit report including details of the process for monitoring schools access plans; and subject to the panels scrutiny of the information inform this panel of their findings.
- c) That this review document be circulated to the disability groups and forums within this borough seeking their views on the recommendations.
- d) The panel will monitor the action plan and report on progress in the annual report of scrutiny to Council.

24. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The Chairman welcomed Vanessa Holding and Steve Phipps and requested them to address the panel.

Vanessa outlined their responsibilities and advised members that she covered Community Safety within the Neighbourhood Directorate and that Steve covered the Leisure and Culture Services. She gave the committee an overview of the areas they could be looking at in terms of performance information.

She suggested the panel could consider looking at a number of areas to scrutinise including: -

- The Beacon Index monitoring
- The strategy BVPI
- Safer Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership (Crime and Disorder Strategy)

She said that within those areas the measures that could be looked at could include for example: -

- BVPI
- By exception i.e. traffic lights
- LPIs
- By themes

Vanessa went on to suggest that members could explore performance management process approaches via the performance management information systems (PMIS) or to look at hot topics/issues.

Other issues which could be looked at included for example: -

- CPA – (changing to much harder process)
- Data quality
- User satisfaction

She said that it was open to members to decide their preferred approach to scrutinising performance in future and that the options put forward were just some possible suggestions.

Councillor Phillips said that she would wish to see the committee monitoring the spending of leisure centres by ward and the subsequent user satisfaction on these services.

David Martin advised the panel that there could be over some 200 indicators that could be chosen and the panel would need to identify why they would wish to monitor the particular information chosen. He said that consideration should be given to identifying whether there were other models that other scrutiny panels were using to monitor performance and that this could be used as a starting point. He further suggested that the panel might wish to consider all the indicators in a workshop setting and during that process identify the ones which provide the information members are looking for.

Councillor Arif expressed some concern about the monitoring of performance information which he felt should be undertaken by cabinet and that in his view scrutiny's role should be looking at decisions made by cabinet and the impact these decisions were having.

David Martin suggested that the committee should set up a meeting at which a workshop style discussion could take place for approximately two hours and that at that meeting a map of what all the indicators look like in terms of a hierarchy of measures available to scrutinise could be presented. The panel could drill further down so that they could identify from there which areas required monitoring.

Councillor Arif said that when the panel had completed this process the PMIS system would be a useful method for continuous monitoring.

The panel AGREED: -

- That a special meeting be set up in September or October when Vanessa Holding and Steve Phipps would attend to present members with a package of information to enable them to fully discuss the areas which could be chosen to monitor performance.

25. PROCUREMENT

A report of corporate procurement setting out the procurement intentions plan for 2005 was submitted: -

(see annexed)

Lawrence Brazier, Procurement Manager reminded members that at a previous meeting the leisure management project had been identified as one that members wished to use as a model to understand how the procurement cycle would work in practice. He said that as requested at the last meeting the procurement intentions plan for the coming year was presented which includes the leisure management project.

He said that the role of the panel was to consider the service as a whole as well as any associated procurement processes that may result. The gateway process would allow this to take place within a methodology that provides the opportunity to carry this out in a robust and structured way. The intention he said was that members would be supported or facilitated on how to carry out this work.

He said that the leisure management project was currently at the strategic assessment stage. Tenders are being sought for consultants to frame the options for the future development of the service which may result in a procurement exercise for the project as a whole or an internal improvement plan. This is the strategic procurement “make or buy” decision.

He went on to outline the purpose of the strategic assessment of the project as a whole.

He said that the major procurement of leisure management project had not yet commenced and that options need to be identified initially. When the options process was completed in November/December a decision could then be made about what reviews could be commenced.

Members were of the view that the options document should be presented to the scrutiny panel before it is submitted to cabinet. Tim Challans advised of his intention to consult with the panel throughout the development of the leisure management service.

Councillor Phillips was of the view also that the procurement intentions should be clarified to identify to members which areas of work already scoped within the plan would not go ahead.

Lawrence Brazier suggested that he could provide a forward and backward looking statement to enable members to see which items were actually proceeded with from the intentions plan.

The Chairman suggested that a work group be established and requested members to show their interest to become a member of the group.

AGREED

- 1) That a Procurement working group be established with the following members:
 - Councillor Arif
 - Councillor Towe
 - Councillor Beeley
 - Councillor Ault

- 2) That the first meeting of the working group be established as soon as possible and that Lawrence Brazier will address this working group setting out the terms of reference of the working group in terms of the gateways which can be reviewed.

26. DEPLOYMENT OF YOUTH WORKERS

The briefing note prepared by Tim Challans was submitted: -

(see annexed)

Tim advised the panel that six of the full time youth workers had already been appointed and that a further ten were in the process of being recruited.

He further advised the panel that the four workers who would be commencing their duties within the next two months will be based at the following centres: -

- Collingwood
- Pelsall
- Birchills/Leamore
- Bentley and Darlaston

He concluded that the process of recruitment would be completed by December.

Members noted the report.

27. PARKS AND GREEN SPACES – ACTION PLAN

The report of Assistant Director Leisure and Culture was submitted; -

(see annexed)

Tim Challans advised the panel that a consultancy had been appointed to deliver the green space strategy and that the action plan submitted at this meeting had been compiled in consultation with them. He said that categorisation of the 200 sites to be audited had been undertaken and is being finalised.

He said that the action plan identifies the process for completing the green space strategy and the supplementary planning document and there adoption by cabinet in early 2006.

Members considered the stages of the action plan and Tim further advised the panel that a ten thousand household survey was being undertaken in respect of stage 3 of the action plan. He agreed to supply members with a copy of the questionnaire which would be circulated to households.

Councillor Phillips said that the action plan should be rearranged to ensure that the issues referred to in stage 4 of the plan regarding the "identification of issues, opportunities and priorities" to be undertaken before the consultation stage, particularly the establishment of workshops with elected members referred to in stage 3.

Tim Challans agreed that this would be amended.

The Chairman suggested that a work group be established and it was AGREED:-

- 1) That a green space strategy working group be established with the following members:
 - Councillor Phillips
 - Councillor Towe
 - Councillor Beilby
- 2) That the friends of the park groups be invited to nominate two representatives to sit on the working group.
- 3) That the first meeting of this working group be set up as soon as possible

