

**SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005**

**MINUTES  
(18.00 – 19.45 PM )**

**PRESENT** Councillor Mrs Ledoux (in the Chair), Councillors Allen, Forbes  
Mrs Hale, Mrs Holliday, Mrs Regan, Nicholson and Wheeler  
Messrs Howard, Sygerycz and Mrs Kitchin

**APOLOGIES** Councillor Mrs Driver  
Deputy (Neighbourhood and Community)  
Deputy (Green Environment and Licensing)

**RELEVANT DEPUTIES IN ATTENDANCE:**  
Deputy (Public and Environmental Protection)  
Deputy (Health, Wellbeing and Economy)

**1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Mrs Hale declared a personal interest in agenda item 10, Update on the work of Gloucestershire NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee as she was employed by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust.

**2. MINUTES**

Councillor Mrs Holliday explained that she had been unable to attend the meeting of the Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2005 because she was on holiday and had tendered her apologies, however these had not been recorded.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2005 be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs Holliday's apologies.**

**3. MATTER ARISING**

The Group Director (Social and Community) referred to Item 9A, Art Gallery – Review of temporary exhibitions policy and indicated that following discussions with the Assistant Director (Health and Wellbeing) regarding current work commitments and resource issues it was proposed that the item be included in the Committee Work Programme in the new year after 31 March 2006. This proposed timescale was accepted by the Committee.

**4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions or petitions had been received.

**5. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE**

**(a) By Council – None**

**(b) By Cabinet - None**

**(c) By other Committee – None**

## **6. BRIEFING FROM CABINET DEPUTIES (Agenda item 6)**

The Deputy (Public and Environmental Protection) wished to draw members' attention to two campaigns led by the Council's Environmental Health Division:-

- 1) 'Watch Your Step', the 2005 slips and trips campaign in the work place. The cost to the economy is £800 million of which £500 million is borne by UK businesses. At least 90% of those injured are absent from work for at least a week.
- 2) 'Safer Food, Better Business' Scheme. A successful bid by local authorities in Gloucestershire working in partnership has secured £306,000 of grant funding to help provide training and consultancy visits to local small catering businesses.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Regan, the Deputy (Public and Environmental Protection) explained that the grant comes as a result of new EU Regulations which will apply on 1 January 2006 requiring all food businesses to document their food safety management systems (many currently do not have management systems). The joint partnership scheme will assist the implementation of the Food Standard Agency's simplified approach to meeting the requirements of the new legislation, throughout the County.

The Deputy (Health, Wellbeing and Economy) reported on the following:-

- MAD Youth Council – two successful visits to Kingsmead School had yielded eleven new VMAD members and from today's visit, two MAD representatives which had to be decided by an election because so many pupils had been keen to join. Promotion of the very successful website had taken place over half term and since its launch the number of 'hits' has increased from 36,000 to 332,000, all updated and maintained by MAD representatives. The Deputy acknowledged the hard work of Kim Gibbon, the Council's co-ordinator of MAD culminating in these achievements.
- Art Gallery and Museum
  - some very successful workshops had been held linked to events put on by the Literature Festival on William Morris and the Arts and Crafts.
  - this year's 'Big Draw' attracted 690 visitors.
  - Cheltenham was participating with Bristol and Gloucester in a Government funded joint regional project to develop extended learning packages for schools.
- Leisure@Cheltenham
  - the new Commercial Manager Stephen Petherick now had his Management team fully staffed from today.
  - Craig Mortiboys had recently been appointed Healthy Communities Partnership Manager in the Health and Wellbeing Division. A joint report of the Deputy (Health, Wellbeing and Economy) and the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury PCT on Tackling Health Inequalities was to be presented to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

- The YMCA was celebrating 150 years in November 2005 and she would be attending this event

Councillor Mrs Regan congratulated those concerned in the development of the 'piazza' outside the Everyman Theatre in Regent Street which enhanced the street scene. She also commented on the success of the recent literature festival which was excellent for Cheltenham's reputation as a culture centre.

## **7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES REVIEW (Agenda item 7)**

The Community Partnerships Manager provided verbal feedback on the first meeting of the steering group which had taken place on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2005. She indicated that the group consisted of herself and Councillor Mrs Regan (Project Sponsor) together with representatives from MAD Youth Council, Cheltenham Community Projects also representing Cheltenham Community and Voluntary Action, the Youth Service, Play Development team and Policy team (CBC). Other members of the group who had sent apologies were Connexions, Sure Start and the regeneration co-ordinator.

The Community Partnerships Manager explained that the group had set the context by discussing the vast amount of change currently being driven by National policy including the 2004 Children Act, Every Child Matters and Youth Matters Green Papers applying to 11–19 year olds specifically and the impact of the schools project locally. With the benefit of the expertise and knowledge of the partners around the table the project brief presented to Committee in June 2005 was considered in the context of what outcomes the steering group wanted from this piece of work. Some guiding principles for work to be undertaken were established including:-

- Local reflection of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters agendas
  - how existing provision meets need
  - identification of gaps in provision
  - clear outcomes and performance measures
- Early intervention/ preventative action
  - focus services to address most vulnerable (0 – 19 year olds)
- Empowering young people to enable them to influence and actively participate in decision making
- Volunteering – key element of 'Youth Matters', young people getting involved with community projects etc
- Strategic links and prioritisation at a local level
- Process
  - local issues influencing County structures
  - local structures
  - involvement in County structure
  - communication and partnership working
- Make best use of resources available, use project to attract and secure additional funding

The Community Partnerships Manager indicated that the next steps included extending the project group to include representation from the County Council's Youth Offending Service and Early Years Service. A draft Project Initiation Document was being produced for consideration by the steering group at the next meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November and in the meantime representatives would be attending the County Council's conference on 'Youth Matters' – the County's response to the Green Paper.

Councillor Mrs Regan commented that whilst it was a huge and daunting project, particularly with so many agencies being concerned she was very much looking forward to getting further involved in the review and thanked the Community Partnerships Manager for all her hard work to date.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the progress to date.

## **8. PLAY AND FREE TIME STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (Agenda item 8)**

The Community Partnerships Manager introduced this Information/Discussion Paper which had been circulated with the agenda. She explained that the intention was to formally consult the Committee on the draft partnership action plan for the Play and Free Time Activities Strategy which was attached, prior to submission to Cabinet, for endorsement. The Committee was also asked to consider its further involvement in the implementation and delivery of the strategy.

The Community Partnerships Manager introduced Tracey Brown, the Community Play Development Worker to the Committee who provided a presentation which summarised the textual information that will form the body of the Play and Free Time Strategy, the process undertaken to date and the next steps.

Councillor Wheeler commented that the draft action plan was excellent, however he hoped that its delivery would not be overly regulated or prescriptive, like the recent changes to Ofsted regulations which in his opinion had resulted in a number of child minders leaving the profession. In response the Community Partnerships Manager clarified that the Council's role was to facilitate delivery of the strategy in partnership with key stakeholders across the borough. Whilst Health and Safety was a key issue it was important to enable children and young people to take an element of risk during play within a safe environment and the steering group were looking to set up an operational forum for sharing good practice.

Councillor Mrs Regan referred to one of the objectives in the action plan: Encourage the use of open spaces and pointed out that the Council was currently working against this objective as the Parks and Landscapes section was in the process of reducing the amount of open space available in Hatherley Park by the creation of some wild flower borders. In view of the general lack of playing spaces available in Cheltenham, was this decision absolutely necessary? Councillor Mrs Regan welcomed encouraging children and young people to participate in activities that promote healthy lifestyles but indicated that this should apply equally across the borough and not just some of the more deprived areas of Cheltenham mentioned in the presentation.

Councillor Allen raised some concern because he felt that the plan was rather ambitious. He stressed the importance of involving local communities in the first instance and indicated that co-ordination by the Council was key. He suggested that the strategy should also be about learning to respect open spaces and coexistence between adults and children and young people.

Mr Howard welcomed the Play and Free Time Strategy, but suggested that the age range 0 – 19 should be structured into smaller age bands, because the needs of individuals would vary significantly between bands. He also stressed the importance of teaching children and young

people the value of health in the long term so that they could take some responsibility for themselves. Mr Howard re-iterated his disappointment that the council had decided to delete the Massive programme for young people as part of the last budget round.

The Community Partnerships Manager thanked the Committee for their input and confirmed that all comments would be considered as part of the wider consultation exercise.

The Chairman thanked the Community Partnerships Manager and the Community Play Development Worker for a very interesting presentation.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the Information Paper and receives periodic updates in future.

## **9. PROMOTING DISABILITY EQUALITY (Agenda item 9)**

The Community Development Manager introduced this Information/Discussion Paper which had been circulated with the agenda. The briefing summarised the first meeting of the review of promoting disability equality held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005. He drew particular attention to the following key issues:-

- Other groups will be invited to attend for specific items for example MEND, Star college and the Phd Forum.
- The notional completion date for the review is June 2006 at which time a report will be brought back to the Committee summarising the findings.
- The group agreed that Cheltenham Disability Forum should be used as a first port of call but it was recognised that it was not yet fully representative of different groups of disabled people such as those with learning difficulties or mental illness. However, there were other groups, such as user, carer and representative groups who do represent these communities that the Council could approach in the meantime.

Councillor Mrs Hale indicated that it was a very worthy review, but suggested that the Council should focus on the extent to which its own services and functions take into account the needs of disabled people in the first instance. She referred specifically to the Council's newsletter which was very difficult to read for the visually impaired.

Councillor Mrs Regan commented that access into a number of shops around the town was still a problem for some disabled people as not many doors were automatic and suggested that this was an area that could be looked at as part of the review. She indicated that some work had been undertaken by the Council in her own ward to provide dropped kerbs and she hoped that this would be extended to the rest of the town. She suggested that resident Associations also be approached as they may have information on the over 60's group.

Mr Sygerycz congratulated the Community Development Manager for the work undertaken to date. He commented that a dropped kerb of 6 inches was actually more beneficial to wheelchair users than 1 inch which was sometimes problematic and asked what more the council intended to do to improve access and mobility around the town for disabled people. In response the Community Development Officer indicated that it had been suggested that the Assistant Director (Integrated Transport) be asked to join the project team due to the links with transport and urban design. Mr Sygerycz commented that access to the Municipal Offices by disabled users was difficult outside of core hours, he indicated that he had been waiting at the back entrance for fifteen minutes earlier that evening.

In response to a question from Councillor Holliday, the Community Development Officer clarified that the Phd Forum stood for physical disability forum and it was based at Hesters Way Resource Centre. The aim of the forum was to make education accessible to all people with physical disabilities in the Gloucestershire area.

Mrs Kitchin suggested that disabled groups representatives should be consulted in all planning exercises to allow more consideration of the needs of disabled users. She acknowledged that council officers understood their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act but asked that the information be conveyed to the developers too. The Group Director (Social and Community) commented that new planning applications had to pass certain regulations including requirements of the DDA.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the Information Paper.

## **10. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE NHS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Agenda item 10)**

As the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), Councillor Forbes introduced this Information/Discussion paper which had been circulated with the agenda. The briefing set out the last six months of activity of the OSC together with future agenda items. Councillor Forbes welcomed members' comments to feed back to the Committee.

Councillor Mrs Hale suggested that the National Programme for Information Technology which was introduced on 01 July 2005 could be a potential area for review particularly in view of the adverse press surrounding this new national information system.

In response to comments made by Councillor Mrs Regan relating to the Drug Misuse Aftercare Project, Councillor Forbes confirmed that the review would focus on existing aftercare services for problematic drug users or former drug users leaving prison or residential rehabilitation.

The Committee indicated that it would be interested in receiving further updates in future on the progress of the new Out of Hours services and Gloucestershire's Dental Action Plan.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the Information Paper.

## **11. SPORTS FACILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Assistant Director (Health and Well Being) introduced Craig Mortiboys to the Committee who was the Council's newly appointed Healthy Communities Partnership Manager within the Health & Wellbeing Division. She explained that his core remit focused upon the strategic delivery of sport and physical activity programmes, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles across the borough. She referred to the links with the report to be discussed by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005, on Tackling Health Inequalities and promoting healthier communities.

The Assistant Director (Health and Well Being) indicated that as requested by the Committee at the last meeting, the graphs from the presentation had been circulated to Members in order for further analysis to determine the focus of possible future work. She referred to the question raised by Councillor Mrs Hale at the last meeting relating to Q1 of the survey and confirmed that the information had not been presented particularly well and the rows were not intended to add up.

Members made the following comments:-

- it was suggested that linking in with the Cabinet report on health inequalities and the future OSC review on links between deprivation and childhood obesity, the Committee could focus future work around reducing childhood obesity including trying to make sports facilities more attractive to inactive children
- a number of facilities available across the borough were being under-used for example Brizen recreational playing field with a 400 metre running track – more promotion was therefore required.
- the council should help to promote activities on behalf of the organisations that provide them, for example the Ramblers Association would welcome young people.
- It was important to involve the whole community, the general decline in physical activity was unfortunately a sign of modern times.
- it was important to make healthy options available in all premises where food was provided
- it was important that feedback from the survey was conveyed to each of the schools that had taken part in order to look at ways that by working with the council the situation could possibly be improved.

The Healthy Communities Partnership Manager indicated that part of his remit was also to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy eating across the borough working in close partnership with a range of local and countywide partner agencies, including the Gloucestershire Sports Partnership, Cheltenham School Sports Partnership and the PCT. He indicated that the Sport and Play Division would be feeding back to the schools through the sports coaches and would continue to engage with them to address some of the inequalities highlighted by the results of the survey.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the progress made to date and the focus of future work be around reducing childhood obesity.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005**

**COUNCILLOR MRS J LEDEUX**  
**Vice Chairman**