

**SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10TH JULY 2006**

**MINUTES
(18.00 – 20.25)**

PRESENT Councillor Mrs Driver (in the Chair), Councillors Allen, Mrs Franklin, Miss P Hall, Nicholson and Seacome
Councillor Morris as substitute for Councillor Webster
Mrs Kitchin, Mrs Steers and Mrs Sallis

APOLOGIES Councillor Webster
Deputy Finance and Economic Development (Councillor McLain)

RELEVANT DEPUTIES IN ATTENDANCE:
Leader (Councillor Smith)
Deputy Quality of Life (Councillor Mrs Ryder)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Miss Hall declared a personal interest in item 10 From Access to Excellence – Arts Development Strategy Monitoring report and item 12 Changes proposed for Mental Health Services as she was the Chairman of Naunton Park youth project and a member of the Royal College of Nursing.

Councillor Mrs Driver declared a personal interest in item 8 as she was the council's appointed representative on Hesters Way Regeneration Partnership Ltd

Mrs Steers declared an interest in item 8 Proposal for a single regeneration company for Cheltenham as she was a Director of Oakley Regeneration Partnership and the Chair of Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Project.

Mrs Kitchin declared a personal interest in item 10 From Access to Excellence – Arts Development Strategy Monitoring report as Chairman of Cheltenham Arts Club.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2006 be approved as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions or petitions had been received.

4. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE

(a) By Council – None

(b) By Cabinet – None

5. BRIEFING FROM CABINET DEPUTIES (Agenda item 6)

The Leader reported on the following:-

- St Pauls Regeneration – the Leader, the Deputy Quality of Life and Councillor Coleman as the ward councillor had met with St Pauls Action Group to explain the process with regard to the regeneration proposals following the recent change in the administration which residents had found useful. A briefing note is to be prepared for Cabinet on 25th July, followed by a further report with a clear decision in Autumn 2006. A newsletter had also been issued to all tenants in the St Pauls area.

The Leader indicated that during discussions with residents drugs related issues had been raised and he was aware of similar problems in other parts of the town. He suggested that the Committee might be interested in looking at these issues as part of its future workplan to be discussed later in the agenda, as it was within the remit of Social and Community.

On behalf of the Deputy Finance and Economic Development, the Leader indicated that the first Screen Writers Film Festival had taken place and had been a great success. Some very positive feedback had been received from the event and some opportunities for future partnership working.

The Leader provided the following responses in respect of member's questions and comments:-

- he confirmed that the newsletter had also been issued to owner occupiers in the St Pauls area.
- he acknowledged that whilst the Cabinet wished to consider all the options available in a wider context and in conjunction with other developments including Midwinter Area, there were other factors around funding streams and the LDF process to take into consideration. The Cabinet was trying to find the best way forward and make sure that as far as was possible the impact of St Paul's regeneration on other developments was linked up and understood.
- he confirmed that transport infrastructure will be considered wider than the immediate area of St Pauls, and include areas such as Kingsditch and the North West side of the town and pay heed to the Regional Spatial Strategy, however this was part of the environment portfolio. Councillor Allen pointed out that the pollution associated with transport was part of the Social and Community remit and asked that these concerns also be considered as part of the final proposals.

The Deputy Quality of Life referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and the two questions that had been raised within her portfolio. She updated the Committee on the progress against the disability adaptations at Leisure@cheltenham as set out in Appendix A. It was suggested that the update be passed to the Disabled Forum for information. She indicated that a response on the question relating to homelessness had been emailed to Councillor Morris direct, however a copy would be circulated to all members of the Committee for information.

Councillor Morris asked whether the Council will meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act within the required timescale? In response the Acting Strategic Director Social and Community said that he did not know the exact date but would find out. He

commented that the Act does not provide a 'standard' but places responsibility on service providers to make 'reasonable adjustment' to service provision to meet the needs of disabled.

The Deputy Quality of Life reported on the following issues:-

Leisure@Cheltenham

- the pool closure for a 6 day period following a rupture in the pool pipework. Remedial works have been undertaken and detailed investigations are taking place to ascertain the cause of this and previous ruptures. The Cheltenham and District Schools Swimming Gala had been re-scheduled and successfully held on 6th July with 26 schools taking part.
- the appointment of 3 full time cleaning staff had taken place to replace the contract cleaners that have been in place for the passed three years. Shifts will be reflective of the fluctuating operational demands on the site.
- procurement for a 5 year vending service contract had taken place from 1st June. The site is awaiting the installation of the final food/snack machine which will provide a greater range of healthy snack options.

Sports Development

- The 3rd Gloucestershire Youth Games. The Deputy provided details of the games which were held on 16th and 17th of June in Gloucester. This year's event also featured a number of initiatives linked to the Sports Relief Charity and raised in the region of £2000. From the eleven teams that Cheltenham entered seven medals were won.

The Chairman indicated that she would be attending a Capita Conference in London later that week on local authority leisure provision and community engagement through sport and hoped to bring back some good ideas.

In view of the timescale, it was agreed that the briefing note on Housing Services which had been prepared by the Deputy Quality of Life to update the Committee would be circulated separately.

The Chairman thanked the Deputies for their briefings. She explained that there were now more deputies reporting to Social and Community than there had been previously and suggested that three Deputies per meeting on an alternate basis might be more appropriate. This suggestion was supported by the committee on a trial basis.

6. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2006/07 (Agenda item 7)

In introducing this item the Acting Strategic Director Social and Community reminded the Committee that it needed to agree a work plan for 2006-07 which reflected the Council's agreed business plan priorities, whilst leaving sufficient headroom to respond to urgent issues through the year. He suggested that Members completed the scrutiny topic pro-forma for items they wished to appear on the work plan and return it for consideration by the Committee at the next meeting. It was noted that Councillor Webster had already submitted three forms and was preparing a number of others for consideration.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the report and that members complete the pro-forma for items they wish to include in the future work plan for consideration at the next meeting.

7. PROPOSAL FOR A SINGLE REGENERATION COMPANY FOR CHELTENHAM (Agenda item 8)

On behalf of the Member working group Councillor Allen presented this report which had been circulated at the start of the meeting. He explained that since the last meeting of the Committee the group had met twice, the first set the terms of reference of the review and the second was a joint meeting with the Single Regeneration Company Feasibility Group (SRCFG) representing members of the current regeneration companies in the borough to answer some of the queries and concerns raised at the first meeting. He indicated that as the feasibility that the group is carrying out was still underway, it was apparent that more time will be needed in order to obtain answers to all the questions. In order to progress the feasibility that the group have undertaken they have identified that they need to employ external expertise and have submitted a bid to Second Homes funding. As this decision is unlikely to be made until September the amount of progress that SRCFG feel that they will be able to make in the meantime will be limited.

Councillor Allen outlined the pros and cons of forming a single company and stressed the importance of protecting the local nature of involvement in neighbourhood projects and remembering the regeneration activities of groups within the borough yet outside of the designated regeneration areas.

The Chairman thanked the group for their report and commented that this was an example of Overview and Scrutiny working at its best. The Committee was keen to receive regular updates in future and it was anticipated that the next progress report of the member working group would be in September 2006.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the report and the progress of the Single Regeneration Company, Member Working Group.

8. PROMOTING DISABILITY EQUALITY (Agenda item 9)

The Corporate Policy Manager presented this Information/Discussion paper which had been circulated with the agenda. He indicated that the review group had met seven times since it had been established in June 2005 and outlined the progress against the work programme which had been agreed at the start of the review. He indicated that members and officers on the review group were pleased with progress to date which contributed directly to the development of the council's Disability Equality Scheme to be published by December 2006 with a three year action plan, but recognised that there was still a lot to do. He thanked the Cheltenham Disability Forum for their involvement particularly in the impact assessments undertaken to date. He indicated that as part of next steps the group will be meeting with 10 representative disabled community groups to discuss disability issues.

The Chairman thanked the hard work of the Corporate Policy Manager and Community Development Manager during this review. She pointed out that the review

group will be going out into the community to meet with the organisations instead of expecting them to come to the Municipal Offices.

The Committee suggested that the results of the housing management impact assessment should be shared with Cheltenham Borough Homes. The Chairman indicated that as she was now on the Board of CBH she would ensure that they were informed.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the progress of the review group.

9. FROM ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE – ARTS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY MONITORING REPORT (Agenda item 10)

The Assistant Director Health and Wellbeing introduced Jane Lillystone to the Committee who was the new Museum and Arts Manager and who briefly introduced this report which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Arts Development Officer (ADO) updated the Committee on the progress made against the action plan contained within the strategy in its second year drawing particular attention to the headline tasks achieved to date. The ADO had also used the opportunity to display some photographs of the various arts development projects during 2005/06, which members found interesting.

The ADO indicated that encouraging progress had once again been made over the past twelve months despite the delay in the appointment of the virtual arts officer due to the delay in the sale of the Axiom Centre and his own absence during a four month period. However he was optimistic that with the addition of the Virtual Art Centre Officer and the recent appointment of the Museum and Arts Manager he would be supported and encouraged to continue with the outstanding work resulting from the implementation of the Arts Development Strategy and which will continue into year three.

Mrs Kitchin welcomed the progress which had been made to date but pointed out that Cheltenham did not currently host a visual arts festival which was a gap that should be filled. She also questioned the development of artists studios in the town centre because property/rents were so expensive. She suggested it would be better to use the centre for display purposes with venues such as the Art Gallery and Museum and the Town Hall and have the studios out of town. In response, The ADO explained that he had been approached by local artists who had found an affordable building to rent in the vicinity of the Brewery site.

In response to a question from Councillor Seacome, the Assistant Director Health and Wellbeing confirmed that in accordance with the original recommendation made by Council, the Playhouse is to receive the remaining £200,000 from the capital receipt of the Axiom subject to the provision of a detailed plan for the funding which is aligned with priorities contained in the Council's own business plan. She indicated that a meeting between the Deputy Finance and Economic Development and the Chairman of the Playhouse to discuss its first Business Plan was due to be arranged shortly and a briefing note would be produced for the Committee following the outcome.

In response to a question from Councillor Morris, the ADO indicated that despite a small internal budget some very successful pieces of arts outreach work had been undertaken in

two of the regeneration areas. The St Paul's Said and Done' project had cost £2500 and £500 had been contributed by Cheltenham Borough Homes, Cheltenham Community Projects, and University of Gloucestershire and the Everyman Theatre. The visual and oral/written archive on the evacuation and ultimate demolition of India and Pakistan House had cost £10,000 and the project had been wholly funded by CBH. In response to further comments the ADO indicated that the outreach work delivered by the Everyman Theatre was in his opinion exemplarily and it was a model for theatres up and down the country.

Mrs Kitchin expressed concern that in gathering information for the arts development strategy the Cheltenham Arts Club had not been approached or consulted upon and as far as she was aware neither had the other 56 societies affiliated to the Cheltenham Arts Council. In response the Museum and Arts Manager confirmed that the intention was to draw on the wider artistic community in future.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the progress made within the second year of the Arts Development Strategy Action Plan

10. UPDATE ON WORK WITH CHELTENHAM'S BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES (Agenda item 11)

The Acting Strategic Director Social and Community introduced this report which had been circulated with the agenda. He explained that in response to the recommendations of the CBC commissioned study by 'Linking Communities', Community Services had succeeded in securing one years matched funding from the Adult Education (Gloucestershire) enabling the recruitment of a full time worker on a 12 month contract since November 2005. Since then, as well as contacting a number of local individuals and organisations and networking countywide the postholder has helped organise a number of successful BME events and participated within the internal Macpherson Group addressing issues of a racial nature. However capacity and resources both within the Council and within the communities was inadequate – a situation exacerbated by the potholder's sudden and unexpected departure for domestic reasons. As an interim measure Adult Education (Gloucestershire) had diverted its funding to provide one of its own workers in the field one day a week. CBC had agreed in the last budget round to mainstream funding from April 2007.

The Acting Strategic Director Social and Community provided the following responses to members' questions:-

- the £31,100 for the post currently included match funding.
- the internal MacPherson Group will continue to address issues of a racial nature within the authority and is responsible for developing and training the authorities' racial incidents policy and procedures. The police offer support, signposting and advocacy.
- GlosRec continued to have capacity issues and was therefore unable to provide the Cheltenham focus that was needed to further develop BME work.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the report and continues to support the BME work and developments which are being undertaken by the council.

11. CHANGES PROPOSED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES – COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO NHS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (Agenda item 12)

In introducing this item, the Leader explained that the Gloucestershire Partnership NHS Trust is consulting on a range of proposals which will impact on the way in which mental health services are delivered. He had asked Councillor Miss Hall as the council's representative on the Gloucestershire NHS O & S Committee and Councillor Mrs Franklin to review the proposals and identify issues which the council may want to reflect in a response to the consultation and he thanked them for their invaluable input.

Councillor Miss Hall outlined their views set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.5 of the paper and welcomed any additional comments from the Committee.

The Committee was particularly concerned at both the speed of change and lack of infrastructure planning accompanying the proposed changes to mental health services by the NHS which left older people and their carers very exposed and under resourced.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorses the comments outlined in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.5 of the paper as a basis for a response by the Leader of the Council to the Gloucestershire Partnership NHS Trust.

12. PROPOSED DRUGS WORKING GROUP

The Chairman referred to the comments made by the Leader earlier in the evening and indicated that she would be very interesting in setting up a working group.

RESOLVED that the Committee establish a drugs working group consisting of Councillors Mrs Driver, Mrs Franklin and Seacome.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 11th September

Councillor Mrs B Driver
Chairman

Appendix A

Deputy Briefing Note

Social & Community O&S Committee Monday 10th July

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20TH FEBRUARY 2006

Representatives of the Disabled Forum provided the following feedback in respect of the tour:-

- there was no clear signage as to the location of disabled parking from the main entrance of the car park and there were too few disabled spaces available

Progress to date : *The disabled parking, signage and number of spaces form part of car park upgrade works which are scheduled to be complete in August*

- the controls in the disabled lift were awkward and uncomfortable to use

Progress to date: *Feedback has been reported to the lift supplier, and will be considered when a new lift is to be scheduled to be installed. Lift programmed to be replaced in 2014, although funds put by for 2006/07 for minor control adjustments*

- the internal doors were heavy for disabled users to open

Progress to date: *Feedback has been reported to the council's property services department and will be considered when replacement doors are scheduled for the centre, as part of the 20 year maintenance programme. The main corridor doors accessed by the public are due to be upgraded next year*

- signs were too high for wheelchair users to see

Progress to date : *Enlarged / new signage is being installed on the site, with completion scheduled for August.*

- no tactile signs for visually impaired users

Progress to date: *Forms part of the DDA audit report. Property services will report on progress at the Customer Forum meeting 2nd August and the Deputy Quality of Life will also be attending*

- no signs for disabled access to the second floor

Progress to date: *Forms part of the signage works*

- a general location map of facilities in the reception area would be useful

Progress to date: *A site location map has been produced and erected. Individual pamphlets will be produced in the autumn*

- a hoist was required in the changing village

Progress to date: *Changing room hoist has been ordered and will be available in September.*

In addition to the above actions the following have also taken place:

- The Disability forum have been invited to attend the Customer Forum, it is hoped they will attend the meeting to be held on 2nd August.
- Replacement and upgrade to fixtures and fittings within the disabled dryside changing room area formed part of the recently completed refurbishment works.