

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 6th September, 2010
6.00 - 8.00 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Barbara Driver, Wendy Flynn, Rowena Hay (Vice-Chair), Diggory Seacome, Duncan Smith (Chairman) Charles Stewart, Jo Teakle, Jon Walklett and Simon Wheeler
Co-optees:	James Harrison and Karl Hemming
Also in attendance:	Kath Chamberlain (Head of Service – Stronger Communities), Martin Cooper (Supporting People Interim Manager – Glos. CC), Wilf Tomaney (Urban Design Manager) and Councillor Klara Sudbury (Cabinet Member Housing and Safety)

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Jo Teakle and Charles Stewart, as well as Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development (Cllr John Webster) and co-optee Jackie Sallis.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. AGREEMENT OF MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2010 be approved by the committee as an accurate record.

At this point the Chairman invited nominations for the position of vice-chair of the committee now that Councillor John Rawson, who had previously held the post, had been appointed to Cabinet.

Councillor John Walklett proposed Councillor Rowena Hay.

Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that Councillor Rowena Hay be elected as vice-chair of the Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

None received.

5. MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

No matters referred to committee.

6. CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING

Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development had given his apologies.

Councillor Klara Sudbury introduced herself to the committee as the new Cabinet Member Housing and Safety. She was relatively new to the role and given the size of her portfolio, which she was rapidly coming to grips with, only had a small number of matters to raise at this meeting.

She had received a briefing from the Benefits Manager re: the proposed changes to housing benefits and the significant risk that some could be threatened with homelessness as a result. The proposals include reducing the number of private rental accommodation, allowing access to only the lowest 30%, rather than the current 50%. She assured the committee that the Housing Options, Housing Benefits and partners were looking at this matter closely. The impact was being assessed and further information would be brought to November meeting to discuss homelessness in greater detail.

Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were currently under review and there was speculation that they would remain, under a new title. Another anticipated change was that they would be community led rather than authority led.

She had hoped to discuss seagulls but she had nothing to add to what had already been reported. She accepted that it was an issue, especially to members of the public, but stressed that there was no additional funding.

Councillors Wheeldon and Walklett had recently invited her to walk around St. Pauls with them to get a better understanding of the ward. This had included the new development site.

The following responses were given to questions from members;

- She had been advised that work to build 48 homes in St. Pauls would start in January and take approximately 18 months. Concerns had been raised about security of the site once work started and Cheltenham Borough Homes had assured her that the contractor was aware of their responsibilities to maintain a secure site.
- She had not visited the local Schools during her walk around St. Pauls and suggested that if members had specific concerns, that they put it in writing so that she could formally raise it with Gloucestershire County Council, given that they were responsible for Schools in Cheltenham.

7. GLOUCESTERSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY 2011-2016

The Head of Service – Stronger Communities, started by introducing Martin Cooper, the Supporting People Interim Manager from Gloucestershire County Council.

She referred members to the discussion paper which sought the views and comments of members of the committee in relation to the Gloucestershire Supporting People Draft Strategy 2011-2015, which was currently out for formal consultation.

The Supporting People Programme was a national programme, which saw £22 million year on year, spent in Gloucestershire, on housing related services for vulnerable, local people. Supporting People had been proven to save other services money, with every £1 spent on Supporting People services, equating to a £1.78 benefit.

Supporting People was facing significant budget cuts but the Partnership Board had established that they didn't want to make percentage cuts across the board, so they had developed this transformational strategy, which proposed improved outcomes with reduced budgets.

She confirmed that an executive summary had been circulated with the agenda and then handed over to the Supporting People Interim Manager.

He thanked the members for their time and introduced a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix 1), which he suggested was a whistle-stop tour of the headlines within the strategy. In closing, he stressed the level of work that had gone into creating the strategy and urged members to give their views/comments.

The Chairman thanked him for the presentation and invited members to ask any questions.

The following responses were given to questions from members of the committee;

- Graph 1 showed the government's projections and this was currently being rigorously tested locally and would be reported on towards the end of the consultation period.
- All authorities and organisations had signed up to the countywide compact standards and the consultation period of 3 months was in line with those standards.
- The headline 'learning difficulties' did include people with other disabilities but these figures were dwarfed by those with learning difficulties. An existing service within Cheltenham specifically for those with learning difficulties had been identified as being well placed to expand and include those with other needs.
- He was conscious that there was no 'right' answer for a particular user group and other options would be explored, but equally it was difficult for him to say that everything was 'up for grabs'.
- Supporting People were clear that extra care was required to enable people to receive increased levels of care and support as their needs changed, whilst remaining in the same accommodation. This could be on a small scale or larger scale, which might include a retirement village. A commitment to outcomes was a key priority of the strategy. Land would be an issue in relation to a retirement village.
- Social exclusion related to people with issues such as drink, drugs and mental health problems, which might exclude or deter people from a community.
- The PCT was to be de-commissioned and at the moment it was unclear what the picture would be. A key element of the priorities was area planning and as such, work was currently being undertaken to map the

location of GP surgeries to prepare for the new commissioning framework.

- There were some very proactive GP surgeries across Cheltenham and work was being undertaken to forge links with these surgeries. An added benefit of this would be a reduction in unnecessary hospital admissions.
- There had continued to be a steep increase in the elderly population across the country, but this had not resulted in an equally large rise in those needing services. CBC and Glos. CC were currently working to develop an 'ageing population strategy' which acknowledged that the model had changed in order to cater for both, very active 60+ year olds and increasingly frail 70+ year olds. Perhaps this could be an area for further scrutiny?
- Resource Centres could be well placed to become community hubs and would be included in the mapping process. Supporting People were keen to avoid duplication.
- Carers were becoming elderly in their own right and the suggestion was that supported housing could play a part. It was also stressed that Supporting People was meant to compliment other services, but was very clear in this strategy, SP's primary purpose was in delivering outcomes. It could no longer be seen as a fund to be used as 'all things to all people'.
- At the moment rigorous needs testing was ongoing, in parallel to the strategy and would be concluded within the same period of time.
- In relation to those sleeping rough, discussions were ongoing across the County as to what the model should actually achieve. A night shelter would only do so much and would not address the wider problems. The current proposal was for a gateway assessment centre, a safe place to stay for the short term, whilst a full assessment of needs could be made.
- It was accepted that some of the wording was grammatically incorrect and this would be amended.
- At the moment there were home improvement agencies in each district and the plan was to pull them together in to a countywide service in order to reduce overheads. In depth legal discussions were ongoing to ensure that each district would benefit from any savings.
- The plan was not to cease 1-2-1 floating support, but rather, support people until they were comfortable accessing group support, which would result in being able to reach more people and maximise what is already in place.
- It was unclear how the strategy would fit into the wider, 'strategic planning' picture of the Joint Core Strategy. The Head of Service would talk to the relevant Service Manager.

The Chairman thanked both the Head of Service – Stronger Communities and the Supporting People Interim Manager for their attendance and asked members to contact the Head of Service, with any further comments. Members were also asked to make any relevant groups aware of the consultation and again, send details to the Head of Service.

In closing the Chairman confirmed that the key messages from the committee were;

1. Support for Carers
2. Links with GP surgeries post PCT
3. Care villages
4. Consultation process
5. Direction of travel was positively received, with one member commenting that it was "right and good".

8. PUBLIC ART REVIEW

The Urban Design Manager introduced the report and explained that it had come to the committee following a request from Councillor Hay that the Public Art Policy be reviewed.

Following discussions with Councillor Hay it was agreed that rather than focus on the policy, the review should be wider-ranging and look at the processes, policies and procedures associated with delivering public art.

The report set out some of the key issues and sought agreement of the proposed scope and timetable for the review, as well as nominations for two members of the committee to form part of the Public Art Review Group.

In addition to the report, the Urban Design Manager confirmed that current members of the Public Art Panel included;

Adam Reynolds – representing parks development / green environment, CBC
Brian Carvell – Cheltenham Arts Council
Cllr Andy McKinlay – Cabinet Member Sport and Culture
George Breeze – Community representative
Jane Lillystone – Museum, Arts and Tourism Manager, CBC
Lesley Greene – Independent public art consultant
Nick Sergeant – University of Gloucestershire
Paul McKee – Arts Development Officer, CBC
Wilf Tomaney – representing Built Environment/Planning, CBC

Cabinet Member Housing and Safety highlighted the Gloucestershire Quality Design Initiative, an on-line resource which was recently launched by the County Council and offered information on public art.

Suggested steers for the Public Art Review included;

- Could S106 funding be pooled to create one high quality, well placed piece of public art, rather than numerous based on cost / health and safety?
- Could developers consider approaching the Gloucestershire Arts College, providing students with an opportunity and developers with a cost saving?

The committee agreed that the review group should include; 2 Borough Councillors, 1 County Councillor, a representative of the arts community and an independent member, for whom there should be no vested interest and the position be advertised.

Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that;

- 1. A Public Art Review Group be established and Councillors Seacome and Hay be nominated as the Borough Council members. A County Council member, art community representative and community representative are also to be included in the Review Group.**
- 2. The processes, policies and procedures associated with delivering public art be examined by the Review Group.**
- 3. A detailed timetable be established by the Review Group at their first meeting, with the aim of bringing a final report to the Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee in approximately 6 months, with interim progress reports as necessary.**

9. CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL OF PERFORMING ARTS

Councillor Seacome, a representative of Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts (CFPA), reminded the Committee that this matter had been prompted by the adverse public reaction to the £24k charge by Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) to CFPA, for hire of the Town Hall.

Councillor Seacome had attained some figures from the finance department at CBC which had allowed him to calculate the average booking fee for the period in which CFPA used the venue. The hope being that the figure proposed by CBC could be renegotiated.

Representatives from CFPA met with Cabinet Members, Councillors Jordan, Webster and McKinlay and whilst they had used a different formula, both parties had a similar figure.

A report was being drafted to support discussion at the upcoming Council meeting and Councillor Seacome was confident that a mutually beneficial outcome could be reached.

10. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Chairman referred members to the work plan and summarised the items currently scheduled for the next meeting on 8 November 2010;

- Arts and Culture Grant Review Working Group
- Tourism and Marketing Strategy
- Crime and Safety Overview (inc. CBC, Police Authority and Partnership updates)
- Homelessness Prevention Initiatives

He highlighted that there were a number of issues which were yet to be scheduled and invited members to contact Saira Malin, Democratic Services, with any further items to be added.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN DETERMINES TO BE URGENT AND WHICH REQUIRES A DECISION

Budget Scrutiny Working Group

The Chairman referred members of the Committee to the report which had been circulated at the start of the meeting (Appendix 2).

The report proposed the formation of a Budget Scrutiny Working Group and sought 2 members from each scrutiny committee.

Councillors Walklett and Smith volunteered.

Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that Councillors Walklett and Smith represent the Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

Ward Walkabout

The Chairman acknowledged the merits of having Cabinet Members visit different wards and encouraged those that were interested in arranging such a visit, to contact Saira Malin in Democratic Services.

Cheltenham Rugby Club

The Chairman advised the Committee that he had received a letter from Cheltenham Rugby Club, dated the 13 August 2010. The letter stated that following their presentation to the Committee on 07 June 2010, Cheltenham Borough Council had yet to contact them with regard to arranging a further meeting to finalise their lease arrangements. The Chairman formally issued the letter to Grahame Lewis, Strategic Director and asked that he take the matter forward.

Duncan Smith
Chairman