

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD – 13 MAY 2010

**REPORT ON THE SCRUTINY ASSEMBLY MEETING, 29TH MARCH 2010:
CONSULTATION ON THE PRIORITY PLANS 2010/11**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update members on the feedback from the Scrutiny Assembly meeting held on 29th March 2010 as part of the consultation process on the Priority Plans for 2010/11.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the Report:

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A Scrutiny Assembly meeting was held on 29th March 2010 to enable Scrutiny Members to input into the development of the Priority Plans 2010/11 as part of the consultation process.
- 3.2 The meeting was attended by 24 Scrutiny Members, including the Scrutiny Leadership Board and 3 Co-opted members. 6 Cabinet Members attended to present the Plans.
- 3.3 The meeting consisted of 1 or 2 table discussions on each Priority Plan. Cabinet Members presented the proposed Plans, with the exception of the Children & Young People Priority Plan which was presented by the Corporate Director on behalf of the Cabinet Member, and the sessions were Chaired by the Scrutiny Lead Members. Scrutiny Members selected 2 priority areas to scrutinise, and places were allocated on a first-come-first-served basis to ensure coverage across all priority areas. Priority Plan Editors acted as scribes for the discussions.
- 3.4 Scrutiny Members were asked to agree a group response to three questions:
- Are the members in broad agreement with the priorities, or not?
 - Are there any missing? What and why should it be a priority?
 - Is there anything included that should not be a priority?
- 3.5 The meeting was timed to take place before the proposed Priority Plans were presented to the Corporate Management Team, CAPS and Cabinet. This allowed the comments made by Scrutiny Members to be considered, and if agreed, for the Plans to be amended before progressing through the decision making process.

- 3.6 There was generally broad agreement with the Priorities in each plan. There was a suggestion that managing the appearance of industrial estates should be incorporated as a priority in the Housing, Regeneration and Prosperity Priority Plan. Additionally there were comments made on each plan relating to specific priorities or sub-priorities, cross-cutting issues, cross-cutting themes (e.g. risk assessment/funding), the impact on local people and performance management.
- 3.7 Following the meeting, feedback from the Scrutiny Members was considered by Cabinet Members, Corporate Directors and other senior officers.
- 3.8 Notes from the workshop sessions are attached at the end of this report. Actions agreed as a result of ensuing consultation with Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors are noted in brackets and in bold at the end of each point.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Equal Opportunities

There are no equal opportunities directly arising from this report.

Environmental Impact

None arising directly from this report.

Legal Comment

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

Links with Corporate Priorities

Links to all Corporate Priorities.

Opportunities and Risks

There are no opportunities or risks identified directly from this report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Ward Implications

Nil

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1. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Chair: Cllr Joy Francis Presenter: Julia Almond Scribe: Rachael Foster

Session 1

Cllr Miles Hoskins, Cllr Jayne Greenaway, Cllr Adam Stanton

- The group was in broad agreement (MH – stated that they were practical, objective and what the council is all about)
- Recognition around the table of links / interdependencies with other priority plans and Council Services e.g. Think Family and therefore didn't feel that there was anything missing
- Nothing else to add and there was nothing that was identified that shouldn't be a priority.

There was discussion around performance monitoring specifically in relation comparisons with statistical neighbours (SN). JA explained that different SN used for different performance measures; discussion stemmed from comparisons for young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

(Action: RF to send detail of SN to Cllr Jane Greenway)

MH raised the point about how frontline staff communicate with young people – young people's attitudes / behaviour and how they express themselves has changed and frontline staff training should reflect this to ensure that we are engaging young people in all council services.

(Action: RF to raise this as a potential action for Efficient Community Focussed Council Priority Plan)

Suggestion from JG that should sharpen up objectives around NEETs
AS was seeking re-assurance about actions around Children in Care

Session 2

Cllr Louise Lomax, Cllr Yvonne Hicks, Val Lindley (Co-opted), Mel Ward (Primary Parent Governor Rep)

The group were in broad agreement with the priorities

Potential omissions:

- A target around Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children in Care – this has provisionally been added to reflect focus on improving outcomes for Children in Care
- Priority 3 very much focussed on educational attainment – more emphasis on the enjoy aspect and PHSE.
(Response: have provisionally added a key objective and target around Healthy Schools which aims to provide a foundation for children to achieve the 5 ECM outcomes)
- The BSF programme – ensuring the welfare of pupils whilst this work is happening. How do we keep the consistency of education and welfare of children through out.

(Response: BSF is part of BTISLC which has as part of its plan actions to ensure that these concerns are addressed.)

There was nothing identified that shouldn't be a priority. There was also discussion in this group about how progress is monitored.

2. ADULT CARE AND SUPPORT

Chair: Cllr. Derek White Presenter: Cllr. Jacqui Seymour Scribe: Helen Cross

Session 1

Present: Cllr Veronica Fletcher, Cllr Keith Austin, Cllr Roy Picken, Dag Saunders (Co-optee)

Also present: Paul Donohue, Corporate Director, Cllr Rosemary Chaplin, Cllr Graham Hossell

Did they agree with the priorities?

The priorities were supported. Key discussion points for consideration when developing actions are provided below.

Was there anything missing?

Nothing specific was identified.

Was there anything that should not be a priority?

Nothing specific was identified.

Key discussion points were:

- Ensuring action if misuse of direct payments is discovered;
- Increasing chances to access supported housing;
- Ensuring safeguarding when implementing personalisation;
- How can we ensure the quality of the work undertaken by social workers;
- Identifying and providing details of preferred providers to support people making choices
- Managing the increasing pressures on budgets, including pressures on Health;
- Managing the occasional difference in needs between the carer and the care for;
- Providing flexibility in respite.

Session 2

Present: Cllr Roger Aveley, Cllr Charles Smith

Also present: Paul Donohue, Corporate Director, Paul Clifford, Corporate Director, Cllr Rosemary Chaplin

- Did they agree with the priorities?

The priorities were supported, there was a concern expressed that it seemed a lot of priorities to deliver against. Key discussion points for consideration when developing actions are provided below.

- Was there anything missing?
Nothing specific was identified.
- Was there anything that should not be a priority?
Nothing specific was identified.

Key discussion points:

- Ensuring there is robust monitoring of services in place, particularly independently provided services;
- Supporting people in accessing benefits;
- Providing list of preferred providers
- Ensuring we ask people what is important to them
- Working with LINKs where possible and appropriate
- Supporting young men when they are at risk of being homeless and subsequently losing their employment;

3. COMMUNITY PROTECTION & COHESION

Chair: Cllr Karen Tomlinson Presenter: Cllr Miles Hosken

- Are the member's in broad agreement with the priorities, or not?
Yes
- Are there any missing? What and why should it be a priority?
No
- Is there anything included that should not be a priority?
No

Additional points for consideration

- Alcohol – new rights for councillors to object to licensing – LACORS (Mike Atherton to investigate) **(No action taken at this stage)**
- Is Hate Crime a significant problem for the borough to include as target action under priority 1? Agreement reached that it should remain as an action **(Addressed in the Priority Plan)**
- There is a need for Community Support Officers to have more powers **(Addressed in the Priority Plan)**
- Question raised on drugs not included as action theme – agreement reached that alcohol was more of a priority area **(Addressed in the Priority Plan)**
- Alcohol is being distributed by adults to Children and Young people and is a problem – First response needs to be reported as a criminal offence to the police **(Noted – no change)**

- Impact of alcohol consumption of case reported for Domestic abuse is significant so alcohol needs to be a key area of work (**Noted – no change**)
- Perception that we are not doing anything – we need to be communicating with the community outside of the usual suspects (**Addressed in the Priority Plan**)
 - We need to target perceptions of older people
- There is a need for better lines of reporting incidents and communicating what these lines are to the public (**Addressed in the Priority Plan**)
- There is a need to ensure prevention of crime and disorder through providing more activities for young people to engage with e.g. youth clubs (**Refer to Children and Young People Priority Plan**)

4. EFFICIENT, COMMUNITY-FOCUSSED COUNCIL

Chair: Cllr Adrian Meredith Presenter: Cllr Sean Kelly

Session 1

Attending: Cllr Kuldip Sahota, Cllr Ian Fletcher, Cllr Liz Clare

Also present: Richard Partington (Priority Plan Lead), Jonathan Eatough and Louise Stanway

General comments:

- What appears to be missing is **something on social inequality** (Cllr Kuldip Sahota). Would like to see more money invested in ‘non-rural’ areas.

RP advised of the data observatory and the gathering of local intelligence to better inform service areas. There is a big focus on locality working and getting a better understanding of our communities.

Cllr Kelly explained that rural areas had not been invested in, in previous years, which is why money has been specifically allocated now. This does not mean we are overlooking ‘non-rural’ areas.

- Cllr Liz Clare has an issue with ‘**access to Council services**’. We need to make sure that the information we provide to the public is correct. There was an issue in a recent issue of Insight where the wrong contact details had been provided for Councillors. If we are going to communicate we need to get it right. (**Need to feed back to Nigel in PR**)

Around consultation and communication – Donnington is a district Centre and local people want this recognising as they often feel overlooked. Suggests that we get more involved – perhaps arrange some meetings throughout the year to provide local people with the opportunity to say what they want.

- **Supporting ward members** – communication can be sloppy and Councillors still find a lot of information out from reading the Shropshire Star.

We need to ensure that where there is something of significant impact in a particular ward – that Councillors are kept informed (Cllr Kelly).
(Need to arrange a meeting between RP, Emma Price, Nigel Newman, Andrew Meredith and Rachael Jones to agree a way forward.)

- Cllr Ian Fletcher queried '**access to Council Services**'. He has come across an issue with the new weekly planning list. Apparently this was supposed to have been re-launched on 22 March and is something that a lot of Councillors like to receive. As of yet he has not received anything and he is not impressed. **(Need to feed back to Di Birks or Dave Fletcher).**

Also has an issue with '**modern technology**' as there are still a lot of people that are reluctant to use it. A prime example he has is 'First Point'. As a recent user, he thinks we should develop some simple guides to assist people with using the facility. From his own experience he needed assistance from one of the receptionist and feels that it can be quite difficult to use unless there are staff on hand to help. **(Need to feed back to Andrew Meredith)**

Another example is phone calls and call waiting times (Cllr Liz Clare). The public don't like automated services, or to have to wait 3 or 4 minutes before getting put through to someone. They want a voice on the end of the phone that can deal with anything – single integrated records for example? **(Need to feed back to Andrew Meredith)**

Generally the group was in broad agreement with the priorities but Cllr Liz Clare did express one concern around 'Working Together' – whilst she recognises the need for joint working, there are some discussions that need to be held separately (for the different political groups).

It was also suggested that under 'Improving Performance/Outcomes' we take out reference to NEETs as a target of specific action as although it is a priority, things do change over time. Would be best not to make reference to anything at this high level – the detail should be in the action plan.

Session 2

Attending: Cllr Jane Greenaway, Cllr Adrian Williams, Cllr David Chaplin
Also present: Richard Partington (Priority Plan Lead), Jonathan Eatough and Louise Stanway

General comments:

- Cllr Adrian Williams thinks it is very difficult to 'let people know' what is going on. If you meet people on the street and communicate to them

then eventually the information does filter back but not sure how we can do any more than we are already doing. Most people are understanding and know that we can't do everything.

- Cllr Adrian Meredith strongly believes it is the **role of elected members to keep people informed** and from his own experiences, people like/welcome this. Most people are more interested in what is going on in their local area.
- In the past, there has not been enough emphasis on the part that local residents play in what goes on in the area (Cllr Jane Greenaway). We should be doing more around community engagement. All agreed.

In terms of **Member support** – has seen an improvement in the support received but there is still a problem in identifying the 'line of command'. Often Members are passed from one officer to another when they have an enquiry/issue and Members are not always aware of changes going on across the organisation. Suggests that we produce a list of details for HOS/senior managers that states who is responsible for what, where they are based (so Members can pop in to see them if they are visiting the building) and what their contact numbers are. Keeping this information up to date is also very important. All agreed. **(Need to set up a meeting with Emma Price, Debbie Germany and Richard Partington to discuss/action.)**

- In terms of **Community Engagement** - the most challenging thing is getting people 'interested' in the first place. If we get people interested then they are more likely to take part in the future (Cllr David Chaplin).

Also thinks we need to develop the officer roles so they have a better understanding of the roles of Members (what they do etc)...

- **Fast and flexible decision making.** We need to think about the decisions that are made in accordance with the law (Cllr David Chaplin). Sometimes the answer to something has to be 'no' because of this and members of the public need to understand why. Officers need to provide clear guidance to Members to help them understand and feed back to the public.
- **Delivering efficiencies and savings** – Cllr Jane Greenaway wanted to know how Members would feed in/contribute ideas. Cllr Kelly advised of the Employee Suggestion scheme and said that this would be open to Members as well as employees. This will be launched in April **(Need to speak to Debbie Byle)**

What is missing?

- It was agreed that the term 'transparency' needed to be included around fast and flexible decision making. Generally the group was in agreement with the priorities.

Key actions from these sessions:

- Take out reference of NEETS (under Improving Performance/Outcomes)
- Need to add the term ‘transparency’ around fast and flexible decision making.
- Create a new action to develop a guide for Councillors around ‘lines of command’ so they know which HOS are responsible for what, where they are based and how they can be contacted. Also need to make sure that this is kept up to date.

Actions taken as a result:

- **Have removed the reference of NEETS from the priority ‘Improving Performance/Outcomes’**
- **Have reworded the priority around ‘Fast and Flexible Decision Making’ to read:**

Achieving fast and flexible decision making while also ensuring good governance, accountability and transparency
- **Created a new action (under ‘Working Together’) to produce an online ‘One Council’ guide for employees and members explaining who does what in the new structure and where they are based**
- **All sections in this feedback, highlighted in red text, have been fed back to the appropriate managers for consideration/response.**

5. HOUSING, REGENERATION AND PROSPERITY

Chair: Cllr Alan Mackenzie

Presenter: Cllr Eric Carter

Session 1

- Broad agreement with the priorities in the plan?
Yes
- Is there anything missing?
Managing the appearance of Industrial estates in the Borough
- Anything which should not be a priority?
No

General feedback

- Links to CYP and NEETs, need to ensure we are joined up in our approach with skills and training
- There is a need to advertise tourism in the Gorge as more than just a one day visit and encourage longer term stays
- There is a need to promote/develop cheaper accommodation options for visitors

Session 2

Broad agreement with the priorities in the plan?

- Yes

Is there anything missing?

- Managing the appearance of Industrial estates in the Borough (**Action to be included in Priority Plan**)
- Amending objective in sub priority 6 to reflect both urban and rural housing e.g. 'Through the partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency deliver sufficient new housing to meet the need of both rural and urban areas' (**Objective has been amended to reflect both rural and urban**)

Anything which should not be a priority?

- No

General feedback

- Signposting to the rail freight needs to be improved
- Donnington to be recognised as a district centre (**Action to be included in Priority Plan**)
- Need to secure method of funding for adult skills (**Addressed in Priority Plan**)

6. ENVIRONMENT & RURAL AREA

Chair: Cllr Roger Aveley

Presenter: Cllr Adrian Lawrence

(One session only)

- Are the member's in broad agreement with the priorities, or not?
Yes
- Are there any missing? What and why should it be a priority?
No
- Is there anything included that should not be a priority?
No

Additional points for consideration

- Traffic light maintenance – possible PI ‘number of times lights are malfunctioning’ **(To be considered in the Priority Plan)**
- Fly tipping – more needs to be done in relation to surveillance and opening times of recycling centres **(Addressed in the Priority Plan)**
- Congestion – contribution by developers where congestion is increased through new projects **(Addressed in the Priority Plan)**

7. ACTIVE LIFESTYLES – LEISURE & CULTURE

Chair: Cllr Karen Tomlinson (KT) Presenter: Cllr Stephen Bentley

Present; Cllr Louise Lomax (LL), Mel Ward (MW) Co-opted Primary Parent
 Also present: Paul Clifford (PC) Corporate Director, Angie Astley (AA) Head of Service Leisure & Customer Services, Clare Hall-Salter (CHS) Planning and Performance Manager and Scribe.

(One session only)

- AA introduced the priority plan and explained what ‘Active Lifestyles’ is and talked through the priorities.
- AA explained the importance of mapping the offer and then promoting the offer
- MW asked how this will be done
- AA explained via software system and database, going into the community to obtain the information to populate the database and also to carry out research in the community to find out what the community would like to be provided
- AA talked through the physical environment priority and that a lot of the work is already resourced.
- AA discussed events and activities and a key priority is to work in partnership.
- KT queried the move of the tennis centre from Hadley to Oakengates
- PC recapped the importance of mapping, research, and promotion for all activities
- AA emphasised the importance of social workers as good advocates to inform people about activities. This was supported by MW.
- KT asked about provision for disabled and what provision already exists, what are the gaps and the importance of working with partners
- MW asked if there is already a record/database in existence
- AA explained that there wasn’t one but several databases exist and need joining together
- MW stressed that at present the community don’t know what’s out there e.g. Green Gym and that the activities need greater promotion

- LL stressed that the Voluntary sector activities need capturing e.g. Severn Gorge Trust and the partnership arrangements with the PCT
- AA explained that both keeping the database up to date and promotion/sign posting are key requirements
- PC explained that it would be web based/electronic format (repository). The information would then need to be marketed effectively.
- KT & MW expressed that the community need to be able to update the database themselves. This will need moderating and keeping up to date
- LL asked how you would encourage people to use/take up the 'offer'. She stressed how some members of the community feel threatened by areas they don't know e.g. woodland
- MW stated that we should publicise more widely so people don't feel intimidated
- KT e.g. Leegomery walking group.
- KT suggested that the Housing Trust, Libraries, Social workers should be used to sign post information.
- LL stated that we shouldn't overlap with Health Improvement PCT, but should compliment their work
- MW stated that we should work in partnership
- AA stated that the PCT do want to be involved
- KT said that we should try not to duplicate information
- KT asked about the Flex card and encouraging the private and voluntary sectors to give incentives/vouchers to encourage participation
- KT said we need to look at resources
- KT asked what we will be doing about community use of schools facilities that aren't going to be re-built as part of the BSF programme
- SB stated that we need 'proper' information sharing, especially with partners
- KT asked how do we research all information to put on a website for active lifestyles
- PC explained there would be a variety of ways, via marketing, promotion and talking to partners
- SB stated that we also need to improve information sharing within the council
- LL stated that the priorities were all encompassing and quite high level
- KT said that we should make the most of free publicity e.g. TV programmes Dancing on Ice, etc to publicise activities
- MW said that we should ensure there are links through to private sector and parish council websites from the active lifestyles website

- SB stated that working with Parish and Town councils is very important and not to be missed
- KT expressed the need to cross reference with other priority plans and be mindful of financial constraints
- SB stated that there would be a move away from restrictive arrangements for community use for future SLC projects
- KT and MW were very pleased with this approach to community use
- LL expressed the need to work with clubs and societies.

QUESTIONS:

- All members were in agreement with the priorities
- All members agreed that there was nothing missing
- All members endorsed the existing priorities