

## **ACTIVE LIFESTYLES, LEISURE & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Active Lifestyles, Leisure & Culture Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 18th January, 2011 at 3.30 p.m. in Committee Room 3, Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors V.A. Fletcher (Chairman), K.T. Blundell, R.G. Chaplin and J.A. Francis  
Ms D. Davis and Ms J Gulliver (Co-optees)

**Also Present:** Councillor V. Tonks

Councillor S. Bentley (Cabinet Member: Active Lifestyles, Leisure & Culture)  
P. Clifford (Strategic lead – ALL&C), J. Rowe (Head of Environmental Services), P. Harris (Corporate Finance Manager)

#### **ALSC-14     MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED –**

- (a)     **that the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman;**
- (b)     **that the notes of the Working Group held on 1 December 2010 be noted.**

#### **ALSC-15     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor F.R. Picken and Mr D Saunders (Co-optee), and A. Astley (Head of Customer Services, Leisure & Libraries)

#### **ALSC-16     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **ALSC-17     SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING 2011/12-2013/14 – ACTIVE LIFESTYLES, LEISURE & CULTURE**

##### **(a)     Presentation of Budget Proposals**

Councillor S. Bentley (Cabinet Member for Active Lifestyles, Leisure & Culture) was invited to present the Cabinet's budget proposals in relation to the Council priority for Active Lifestyles, Leisure & Culture. As part of this, documents were circulated showing monitoring information during Quarter 3 on actions in the Active Lifestyles Priority Plan, and a list of "quick wins" that were planned for delivery over the next 6 months. These included completion of the Playbuilder programme with the delivery of 11 further projects by the end of July, launch of the men's health project in partnership with AFC Telford and NHS Telford & Wrekin, development of a 'one-stop shop' website for activities and facilities, and development of a marketing &

communications plan. Key objectives were to provide a more positive message about the services that were provided, and to better promote the Council's leisure facilities and the health opportunities available to local residents.

The Chairman reported that a number of questions/lines of enquiry had arisen from the seminar/workshop held on 4 January, and these were circulated along with the programme for the re-structuring of the Council's service areas. Members had previously received a copy of the Cabinet's Service and Financial Planning Strategy. Responses from the Cabinet Member, Strategic Lead – ALL&L and the Head of Environmental Services were then provided to the questions that had been circulated:

**Re: proposed investment for improving Telford Town Park:**

*Is the investment proposal for Telford Town Park a specific grant from a third party? If so, does the receipt of this grant release other funding for other initiatives? If this funding were not available would this work on the Town Park continue? Does this funding include the £25k previously discussed for the feasibility study for rugby facilities within the Park?*

Response – the Council had been successful in getting Parks for People Stage 2 grant funding amounting to £2.135m for improvements to the Town Park. There were strict conditions on how the funding could be used, which meant there could be no flexibility in the agreed programme. The funding for the new visitor centre was related to the Southwater regeneration project, and a building had been agreed, subject to planning permission. In terms of other funding, the Friends of the Town Park group were being encouraged to submit their own bids for grant funding, supported by officers.

In relation to the cost of a feasibility study for rugby and other sports facilities, the Chairman invited Cllr V Tonks to address the meeting. Cllr Tonks stated that discussions had been held a while ago with the Rugby Club and representatives from other local sports clubs regarding the development of sporting facilities. In order to submit any funding bid, £25k was needed for a feasibility study. While it had been suggested that the Council could support this, no money or action had been forthcoming. In comparison to the £300k being spent on a 5-a-side facility at AFC Telford, it was wrong that £25k could not be found to help support the development of a number of local sports clubs.

Response - the Cabinet Member stated that he was not aware of any previous discussions on this issue, and that there was not £25k available in the proposed budget for 2011/12. In terms of the investment at AFC Telford, this would provide a high class community facility, including proper pitches, changing rooms, lighting etc. The suggestions for sporting facilities in the Town Park were from private clubs, and perhaps alternative ways could be found to fund the feasibility study (eg: access to money from the BSF programme). He would like to meet with Cllr Tonks to discuss the matter further, and would ask officers for information about the discussions that had taken place previously with the sporting bodies referred to. The Corporate Director added that any feasibility study would need to address where funding for any new facilities would come from, given the financial position facing the Council. Any request for match-funding from the Council could probably only be met by cutting back on other programmes.

**Re: savings that would have to be made over the next 2 to 3 years:**

Response – the Corporate Director stated that as well as the 20% staff savings, non-staff savings had been identified to help balance the books for 2011/12. However, a number of these were “one-off” savings, and wouldn't be able to be carried forward into future years.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for their attendance.

**(b) Comments on Budget Proposals**

The Chairman advised that the Committee now had to consider any comments on the budget proposals relating to Active Lifestyles, Leisure & Culture, which would be forwarded to the Community Focussed, Efficient Council Scrutiny Committee for consideration as part of the overall scrutiny response to the budget proposals.

**RESOLVED** – that the following comments be referred to the Community Focussed, Efficient Council Scrutiny Committee for consideration:

- The Committee are satisfied that the process to consider and agree the service and financial planning proposals for 2011/12 – 2013/14 has been open and transparent ;
- The Committee recognise that significant savings must be made during 2012/13 and 2013/14, and recommend that consultation on these savings should be carried out. The Scrutiny Committee will expect to have a key role in this consultation process;
- The Committee welcome the additional funding for the Town Park, and were assured that the issues below have been included in the funding bid
  - better signage (with warden contact tel no)
  - appropriate lighting is installed
  - wardens are available during park opening hours
  - contact information for wardens and security is available
  - pathways are maintained so they do not become overgrown
  - Gateways to define entry into the Park
- The Committee recognise the Council does not have the resources to fund the feasibility study on the proposal to develop further sporting facilities in the Town Park eg: rugby, hockey, archery, cricket. However, the Committee recommend that:
  - the Cabinet Member for Active Lifestyles meets with the Scrutiny Member who raised the issue
  - the Cabinet Member for Active Lifestyles considers the work undertaken previously with local partner organisations
  - the Cabinet Member for Active Lifestyles investigates the lease of the land used in the Town Park for sporting facilities
  - that partner organisations and national sporting bodies are approached to consider investment opportunities in the Town

**Park to develop sporting facilities, including contributing to a feasibility study if necessary.**

- **Update reports on progress of this work be received.**

**ALSC-18     SCRUTINY RESPONSE TO NHS CONSULTATIONS**

The Scrutiny Manager presented a report which outlined the Committee’s proposed response, in its role as the statutory health scrutiny body, to consultation exercises by two NHS organisations.

Under new government regulations, Primary Care Trusts were required to develop and publish a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) for their area by February 2011. The PNA would be used as the basis for market entry to provide NHS pharmaceutical services. The consultation document from NHS Telford & Wrekin had been circulated to Members and discussed at a Working Group on 1 December. The proposed response, based on the comments agreed at the Working Group, was appended to the report.

The West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) was consulting on proposals to become a NHS Foundation Trust. As a Trust, it would have greater freedoms to enter into legal and financial agreements with partner organisations and re-invest any budget surplus. The governance arrangements would also change, with a Board of Directors managing the organisation on a day-to-day basis, and being held accountable by a Members Council consisting of members of the public, staff representatives, and representatives from partner organisations. The consultation document had been circulated to Members and discussed at a Working Group on 1 December. The proposed response, based on the comments agreed at the Working Group, was appended to the report.

**RESOLVED – that the responses to the NHS consultations, as appended to the report, be approved.**

The meeting ended at 4.56 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....