

CO-OPERATIVE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny
Committee held on Thursday, 2nd February, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic
Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors A. McClements, (Chairman), S. Bentley, N. England, K. Guy, T. Hope, A. Jhawar, Scrutiny Co-optee L. Baker-Oliver.

Also Present: Cllr Arnold England, Cabinet Member Leisure & Wellbeing; Cllr Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships; Stuart Davidson, Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager; Rachael Jones, Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager; Wendy Tonge, Priority Action, Parish Liaison Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

CCSC-21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 1st December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CCSC - 22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors J. Loveridge, K. Tomlinson.

CCSC-23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CCSC-24 MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Chairman reminded members that the purpose of the meeting was to scope the review of the Management of Community Centres. Two Scrutiny Suggestions had been received to review this topic, including one from the Chairman. The aim of the meeting was to provide background information about the topic to inform members' decisions about the method and scope of the review.

Copies of the presentation, information on the community centres and the scoping meeting template were tabled at the meeting.

A presentation was made by the Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager to provide background information, budget information, a breakdown of usage, typical programmes, current initiatives and future opportunities. The following points were highlighted:

- During 2003/04 ten community centres had been transferred to other providers leaving the Council to manage five community centres including Donnington, Brookside, Watling Street, Leegomery and Sutton Hill, which were retained for their strategic importance in terms of the communities they served.

- Until the end of 2008/09 the management of the community centres sat in the Neighbourhood & Communities team but as part of the service review and restructure moved to Leisure Services from April 2009. This meant staffing levels, policies and procedures had been reviewed with the intention of making £25,000 worth of savings.
- Priorslee Community Centre which was originally outsourced has returned to Council management. The Council therefore manages six community centres.
- As part of the restructuring process, it has now been proposed to move the management of the community centres to the Priority Action Team. The Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager explained the rationale which would be that the team was out working with, and supporting, communities and had the skills and resources to support the management of the centres and to help people to help themselves. The scrutiny review would assist in determining the direction of future work.
- The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager summarised the facilities available at the Council managed community centres and Members received a copy of the programme for each community centre.
- Following the start of the new administration there has been an increased recognition that the community centre is a vital part of the Co-operative Council.
- The current budget for the Community Centres is £230,000 a year including £10,500 allocated to Woodside Park Lane Centre. This covered the cost of the repair and maintenance of the centres, the operating licences, insurance and administration costs.
- Proposed savings of £14,000 would be generated from an increase in hire charges from April 2012.
- The presentation highlighted suggested areas that scrutiny may wish to look at as part of the review, including:
 - Alternative management vehicles – one size unlikely to fit all
 - Social Enterprise (individual or collective)
 - Parish Council Partnership
 - CVS Partnership
 - Co-operative pilot in Brookside
 - Watling Street expression of interest
 - Proposed transfer to Priority Action Team

Members and officers had a discussion regarding the management of the Council community centres and the models of management that could be considered.

- The Chairman said that from her own experience the management of the community centres concentrated on the physical management of the centres rather than the development of the centres' programme and the needs of the community.
- A Member asked how long the crèche at Donnington had been vacant for. The Priority Action, Parish Liaison Manager said that the crèche had been vacant for two months and had folded due to a lack of interest. However, interest in the space had been raised by St. Matthew's Church who did not have a community hall and were considering the community centre as a possible option.

- Members raised the issue that there was a lot of reliance on TCAT as a partner and asked how this is funded. The Officers explained that those adults using the facilities who are able to pay will do so.
- Members discussed the possibility of the Council exploring the transfer of community centres to local Town and Parish Councils and raised this as a model of management that they would like to consider. It was recognised by Members that the programme at Hollinswood and Randlay Community Centre had been improved by understanding what the local community needed.
- Members agreed that the needs of the communities are very different and there is not one single model of management that would suit all community centres.
- The Priority Action, Parish Liaison Manager said the aim is to support the community to ensure that the community centres work for them.

The Cabinet Members arrived at 6.35pm

- Members continued to discuss the issue of the Town and Parish Councils and said that the transfer of assets needed to be considered and where there is no loss of income to capital holdings the transfer of assets gave the parish more than just a building.
- The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing highlighted that the Park Lane Centre is an excellent model of how things could be done differently by including the commercial sector and having an appropriate pricing structure to ensure that groups offering support that benefits the community are not deterred by the high costs of hiring the facilities.
- Members raised concerns about the access to community facilities that are joint use . This concern was echoed by the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing who said the Council needed to ensure that it is involved in the negotiations for joint use for all new school/ community centres. Members agreed that the importance of the community centres could not be underestimated, for example Sutton Hill Community Centre has groups that have broken down the barriers to isolation.
- The Cabinet Member for Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships; reiterated that the community needed to take ownership of the centre with key holders and community deposits to ensure affordable access is available for all groups.
- The Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager suggested Members should consider the role of the community centre and whether the management focus should be on making a profit or community benefit.

Following the discussion, members considered the scope for the review and agreed:

- That the review would be carried out as an in-depth review
- That the objective for the review would be to identify the range of management models and make recommendations to Cabinet on suitable options for consideration for the Council run centres.
- Members decided that they would like to visit all six Council run community centres. Members discussed the possibility of recommending a suitable model for each community centre but dismissed this due to the time constraints of the review.

- The Chairman suggested that the Members also look at some of the surveys and information collated about the community centres, including any information on the pilot scheme in Brookside. Members agreed that this was an option to be considered as well as engaging with the Brookside Improvement Group .
- Members felt it was Important to consider how the rural community centres work and look at the success they have by knowing their communities.
- Members agreed that the Parish and Town Councils know their own communities and that they would like to visit some of the Parish Councils that are successfully managing their community facilities. Cllr Bentley raised that without the Town and Parishes intervention at Ketley the Community centre would not have survived.
- The Members decided to follow the Cabinet Members recommendation that the Committee looked at an example of a charity managed community centres.
- As The Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager had raised the question on the role of the community centre Members discussed the feasibility of considering other facilities in the area and having access to the community centres business plans and financial information. It was felt that this would be helpful in considering suitable models.
- Members decided that because Telford College of Arts & Technology was a partner providing a number of courses across the Boroughs community centres that they should be invited to a meeting with the Committee.
- The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing recommended that the Committee invited Members of the Neighbourhood team to a meeting to discuss the value of the Community Centres from their perspective.

The Cabinet Members and Officers were thanked and left the meeting at 7.06pm

RESOLVED

- **That the review would be carried out as an In-depth review**
- **That the Scrutiny Officer would draft the terms of reference for the review for circulation to members for agreement.**

CCSC-25 NEW SCRUTINY SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

At the meeting on 5th December 2011, the Scrutiny Management Board had considered two Scrutiny Suggestions which had been referred to the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration for the Committee's work programme.

The first suggestion related to the application of Section 106 Agreements and the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Telford & Wrekin. The Scrutiny Management Board had recommended the inclusion of this suggestion in the work programme. Members discussed the suggestion and agreed that a report on the development of the CIL would be requested as an agenda item at a meeting later in the year. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer and Chairman would liaise with the service area to determine the appropriate time for this to come to scrutiny.

The second suggestion related to communication with Town & Parish Councils regarding the sale of Council assets. There was a discussion about the suggestion and the Members agreed that they did not want to include the suggestion in the work programme at this stage when the Neighbourhood Planning pilots were underway.

RESOLVED

- **That a report on the CIL would be brought as an agenda item to a future meeting of the Committee.**
- **That the second suggestion would not be included in the Forward Plan at this time.**

CCSC- 26 FORWARD PLAN

The Chairmen drew members' attention to a report on the Co-operative Council which was due to go to Cabinet on 29th March. Members agreed that this report should be included in the Committee's work programme and that the Scrutiny Officer would liaise with the Cabinet member and senior officers to request that the report is brought to scrutiny prior to Cabinet. A meeting would then be arranged accordingly.

RESOLVED

That an additional meeting of the Committee would be held to review the Co-operative Council Cabinet report and dates would be agreed by e-mail.

The meeting ended at 7.23pm

Chairman:

Date: