

## COUNCIL MEETING – 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010

### REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

21<sup>st</sup> June 2010

Present: Councillor Waters (Chairman), Councillor Patel (Vice-Chairman), Councillors R Bell, Blackwell, Dean, Graves, Perkins, and Shram.

Also present: Gail Arnott – Executive Director The Castle, Carol Conway – Principal Housing Strategy Officer, Clive Culling – Housing Renewal Manager, Liz Flores - Cultural Development Manager, Michael Heekin – Wellingborough Homes, Bridget Lawrence – Head of Organisational Development, Sue Procter – DC Leisure, Carole Stephenson – Head of Neighbourhood Development, Graham Stoppani – Head of Performance, Terry Wright – Corporate Director

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ainge, Higgins, L Lawman and P Raymond.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

**RESOLVED** to note that in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Code of Local Government Conduct and the Council's Constitution, the under-mentioned Councillor declared an interest in the following item:

Councillor	Minute No	Subject	Reason
Blackwell	5	Wellingborough Homes Progress Report	Wellingborough Homes Board member
	6	Leisure Centres Performance Indicators	Close relative with disability
Dean	5	Wellingborough Homes Progress Report	Wellingborough Homes Board member
Patel	5	Wellingborough Homes Progress Report	Wellingborough Homes Board member

#### 3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26/04/2010 be confirmed and signed.

**4. GROUNDWORK QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT (Minute 11 - 5/03/2010)**

A presentation was made to the Committee by Ann-Marie Lawson, Youth Programme Manager from Groundwork North Northants.

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Neighbourhood Development was received to give Members a quarterly update on the work carried out with young people in Irchester and Finedon by Groundwork North Northants

Since the Community Committee meeting in March youth workers had been working two nights a week in Irchester and Finedon to address issues related to anti-social behaviour.

The aim of the project had been to build relationships based on trust and honesty. The workers encouraged young people to think of the consequence of their behaviour and divert them from anti-social behaviour into positive activities. A further aim was to encourage young people to have a respect for their community and to work towards making their community a better and safer place to live for both younger and older people.

To date Groundwork had interacted with 60 young people to varying degrees which exceeded the government target of 50 for projects of this kind. There had been a variety of face to face contact ranging from participation in sessions on: alcohol awareness; informal education around sexual health; awareness of anti-social behaviour and its impact on communities; sports and equality and diversity.

Ms Lawson also outlined a number of individual achievements by young people who had been involved in the scheme.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee note the progress of the pilot Groundwork scheme working with young people in the rural areas of Finedon and Irchester.

**5. WELLINGBOROUGH HOMES – PROGRESS AND MONITORING REPORT (Minute 5 – 15/03/2010)**

The annexed circulated report of the Corporate Director was received on the performance progress of Wellingborough Homes which would enable Members to track the promises made to tenants.

The report detailed the performance of Wellingborough Homes during the fourth quarter of 2009/10. The performance was measured against commitments given to tenants at the time of transfer. It also included a general update on the activities of Wellingborough Homes over the last few months and a more detailed update on its financial position at March 2010. The organisation reported that it had been judged winner of the East Midlands Region “What we are proud of” award for its Tenants Resource Centre.

**RESOLVED** to approve:

- i) the progress and monitoring report from Wellingborough Homes;
- ii) the “promises tracker” report by Wellingborough Homes.

**6. REDWELL & WAENDEL LEISURE CENTRES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Minute 5 – 1/02/2010)**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Neighbourhood Development was received on the performance statistics for the Redwell and Waendel Leisure Centres for the 2009/10 financial year.

Sue Procter from DC Leisure attended to present the report. The report detailed performance indicators for visits to both leisure centres, outlined some of the initiatives and projects that had taken place over that period. It also set out future plans by DC Leisure to encourage further use of the various facilities and to develop the programme of activities.

Appended to the report were the attendances at both Redwell and Waendel Leisure Centres in graphical format;

Whilst considering performance indicators for the Leisure Centres, Members were advised that these may be affected in future by the withdrawal of government funding for the free swimming programme. A grant of £69,000 per annum had been awarded for a period of two years from 1 April 2009. The scheme would not be funded by the government after 31 July 2010, leaving a grant of only £23,000 for the current financial year.

Councillor Blackwell proposed that a report be made to Resources Committee on 21 July to consider ways in which the funding for free swimming could be continued in full until 31 March 2011. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Shram. An amendment was proposed by Councillor Patel and seconded by Councillor Perkins that half the cost of each swim be funded until 31 March 2011. On being put to the vote the amendment was lost by 3 votes to 4 votes. The proposal was put to the vote and carried by 3 votes to 2 votes.

It was agreed that, in order to make a decision before the free swimming scheme ended, a working group of all available members of the Committee produce the report to Resources Committee with the assistance and advice of officers.

**RESOLVED** that:

- i) the report be noted;
- ii) reports continue on a quarterly basis;
- iii) officers be instructed to identify proposals for continuing to fully fund the free swimming programme until 31/03/11, and to present these to Resources Committee at their meeting on 21/07/10;
- iv) a working group be established to which all members of the Community Committee would be invited to advise officers on the

development of proposals for continuing to fully fund the free swimming programme until 31/03/11 and to present these to Resources Committee at their meeting on 21/07/10.

## **7. THE CASTLE – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Minute 7 15/3/2010)**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Neighbourhood Development was received on the performance statistics for The Castle for the period 1/01/2010 – 31/03/2010, and 1/04/09 to 31/03/10.

Gail Arnott, Executive Director of The Castle, attended the meeting to present the report. The report detailed initiatives and projects that had taken place over the period. It also outlined future plans by The Castle to encourage further use of the various facilities and to develop the programme of activities.

Current performance indicators included targets for performances, income, capacity, and participation, and a description of each was given under the respective headings within the annexed report.

In summary The Castle had achieved a positive turnaround of over £100,000 from a loss of £77,800 in 2008/09 to a profit of £37,000 for 2009/10.

The challenge for 2010/11 was to continue maintaining quality and increase artistic output in order to maximise profitability. The budget would set to realise a profit of £15,000 for 2010/11. This target was set within the context of funding reduced by £15,000 from Northamptonshire County Council.

**RESOLVED** to note the report detailing the performance of The Castle over the last 12 months.

## **8. GRAFFITI REMOVAL PROCESS AND PROCEDURES (Minute 4 - 24/06/2008)**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Environmental Services was received to update and inform Members of the current process for removal of graffiti within the Borough of Wellingborough.

The report outlined the Council's powers and responsibilities for its own properties and actions taken in respect of private property.

A report relating to the graffiti removal policy was presented at the Community Committee on 2 June 2008 and subsequently to Council on 24 June 2008 where the policy was adopted. It was the intention of Amenity Services to update the policy in accordance with recent legislation, new technical advances, and socio-demographic changes in order to ensure that the policy was up to date and fit for purpose.

Members were asked to agree the establishment of a member/officer working group to discuss and produce an updated graffiti removal policy. In addition to the production of an updated graffiti removal policy, investigations into

comparable policies have demonstrated that, in other authorities, a pricing structure was applied to the removal of graffiti from private property. This could be considered an option for this Authority also.

**RESOLVED** to form a working group composed of Councillors Dean, Patel, Perkins, Shram and Waters, to discuss and update the graffiti removal policy.

## **9. ANNUAL TARGET SETTING FOR SERVICES**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Performance was received to provide Members with a summary of performance information for the year to date ending 31/03/2010, and to seek approval for performance targets for 2010/11.

The proposed performance targets for 2010/11 and the reasoning behind them were detailed for each service responsible to the Community Committee in Appendix A to the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) that the performance targets for 2010/11 be adopted;
- ii) to note that the impact of central government budget decisions could necessitate a review of performance targets in subsequent months.

## **10. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN: 2009-2012**

The annexed circulated report of the Corporate Director was received to update Members on changes made to the Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan and the role of the Council in delivering this plan.

The Children and Young People's Plan set out how public services would work together to provide for the needs of young people. It was first drafted in 2006 and had recently been updated to take account of changes in young people's circumstances and new approaches by public sector agencies. The latest revision of the Plan called for stronger partnership working between public sector agencies. The Council proposed to respond to this call through revised governance arrangements for the local delivery of the Plan.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) to note the updated Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2012;
- ii) to note the changes to the governance arrangements to the delivery of the Children and young People's Plan 2009-12 in the Borough;
- iii) to receive an update on the progress made in achieving the Children and Young People's Plan in six months.

## **11. HOUSING RENEWAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY 2010 REVIEW**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Built Environment was received to inform Members of the proposed amendments to the Housing Renewal

## Enforcement Policy.

Amendments were proposed to the Policy and delegated powers to provide more comprehensive and effective control of poor housing conditions in the private rented sector. This would protect those most vulnerably housed in which the poorest conditions are traditionally found.

Approval of the reports recommendations would:

- a) Provide a strong incentive to landlords to deal promptly with poor living conditions in the properties they managed, through a clear, fair and transparent process with appropriate sanctions; and
- b) Facilitate effective action to deal with the problems caused by empty properties and cost effectively take ownership away from those who failed to respond to the advice and assistance offered through the Council.

### **RESOLVED** to:

- i) adopt the amended Housing Renewal Enforcement Policy and include the introduction of a fee of up to £300 for the service of notices under the Housing Act 2004, dependant on the cost to the Council of the enforcement action to date;
- ii) note the sub-delegation to the Housing Renewal service of powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in accordance with this policy.

## **12. DELIVERING AFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING ON EXCEPTION SITES – NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PARTNERSHIP WORKING PROTOCOL - DRAFT**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Built Environment was received to request Member approval of the Northamptonshire Partnership Working Protocol for bringing forward affordable housing in rural areas.

The Council had a strategic and statutory responsibility to meet the housing needs of all communities and to enable the provision of affordable housing. As such it had to establish and meet the needs of the rural areas. There had been a great deal of progress in this respect but further work was still needed to ensure that all the villages had an up to date survey, tailored to local needs, which would enable appropriate affordable housing schemes to be brought forward.

Midlands Rural Housing (MRH) had developed a protocol, attached as an appendix to the report, for working with Parish Councils to complete Housing Needs Surveys and to bring forward affordable housing schemes. Members were asked to approve this document.

**RESOLVED** to approve the document 'Delivering Affordable Rural Housing on Exception Sites – Northamptonshire Partnership Working Protocol'.

### **13. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES**

The annexed circulated report of the Corporate Director was received to seek authority to agree to the Northamptonshire Partnership 'Participation Principles' appended to the report. This set of common guidelines was for use by Northamptonshire Public Sector agencies when working with community representatives.

In recognition of the importance of community participation in decision making, both at national and local levels, the Northamptonshire Partnership had developed a set of guiding principles. All public sector agencies within the Northamptonshire Partnership were invited to adopt these principles as a basis for future working. The adoption of the principles was intended to bring about improvements in services for the public by extending the involvement of local people in the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of services.

**RESOLVED** that the Council abide by the Northamptonshire Partnership Participation Principles as the basis for public involvement in service design, planning, delivery, and evaluation.

The meeting concluded at 9pm.

Chairman