

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

26th November 2009

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Lemmon (Chairman), Councillor Grant (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Atkin, Bladen (substitute for Councillor Roberts), Harrison, Hewlett, Mrs. Hood and Murray.

Labour Group

Councillors Mrs. Gillespie, Mrs. Lane, Rhind, Shepherd and Southerd (substitute for Councillor Richards).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Roberts (Conservative Group) and Councillor Richards (Labour Group).

HCS/35. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ROSLISTON FORESTRY CENTRE – UPDATE ON BUSINESS PLAN 2008/09**

A report was submitted providing details of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review of the 2008/09 Rosliston Forestry Centre Business Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a presentation from the Head of Leisure and Community Development about the performance and development of Rosliston Forestry Centre since the last Overview and Scrutiny Review in November 2008. Full details were provided within the report of the 2008/09 income and expenditure totals and visitor numbers. It also highlighted some of the variations for individual budget lines, including the rising costs for electricity, equipment and tools, and income received from the cabins. It was confirmed that a revised budget and marketing strategy had addressed these matters for 2009/10.

A number of future developments that had been successfully progressed were also confirmed, including the building of five business units, improvements in The Glade in the Forest Arena, and a new crazy golf facility. It was confirmed that the Forestry Centre had developed into one of the District's busiest, biggest and most well used community/leisure/visitor facilities. Significant numbers of local people and tourists used the Centre on a regular basis as a venue for exercise, play and holidays.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the progress made by Rosliston Forestry Centre together with its vision for the future be noted.***

- (2) *That a review of Rosliston Forestry Centre's Business Plan be completed in the future, and that, in particular, the 'Get Active in the Forest' and Environmental Education work be addressed as part of this review.*

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/36. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (1ST JULY – 30TH SEPTEMBER 2009)**

A report was submitted detailing performance for the quarter ending 30th September 2009, in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-14. The Corporate Plan Action Plan consisted of four main themes, and this Committee was responsible for actions within the 'Safe and Secure' and 'Lifestyle Choices' themes.

Officers pointed out those actions/targets which were at risk and those indicated as probable failures. Further questions were asked on the indicator which related to the use of the Telecare Service.

Officers were thanked for the achievements so far, and for the continued improvement overall. Thanks were also recorded to the Policy Officer (Performance) for delivering a full and comprehensive report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) *That the key achievements and performance for the quarter ending 30th September 2009 be noted.*
- (2) *That where performance has failed to achieve the specified target the response be noted.*

HCS/37. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY 2010**

Member's approval was sought for the proposed Private Sector Housing Policy 2010, which had been revised to take account of the results of the Private Sector House Condition and Energy Efficiency Survey undertaken in 2009 and current corporate priorities.

Private Sector House Condition Surveys (HCS) were conducted on a regular basis by local authorities as a means of maintaining a detailed picture of the housing conditions in the private sector. The Survey provided evidence that the authority was committed to meeting its obligations under current housing legislation.

The report listed key findings of the HCS, and in response to the proposed Private Sector Housing Policy, identified three key priorities where attention would be focused. These were:-

- (1) Improving the Private Rented Sector.
- (2) Assisting, older, disabled and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes.

(3) Promoting and achieving Low Carbon Communities.

Initiatives to support these priorities were largely low cost and relied upon enabling, regulating and partnership working in order to maximise limited resources. However, there were some proposed initiatives; Home Repair Plus Grant, Relocation Grant and a number of energy conservation schemes, which were entirely dependent on external funding in order to operate. Early indications from EMRA (East Midlands Regional Housing Group) were that £375,000 would be made available to South Derbyshire for 2010/11 to support these initiatives. It was anticipated that funding levels would be confirmed in early 2010. Funding of £33,000 had already been secured from DEFRA to operate the Domestic Flood Defence Scheme.

The Private Sector Housing Manager also confirmed that there would be a further consultation event to allow Members to consider this policy in more detail. Details of this would be provided at a later date.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the draft Private Sector Housing Policy 2010 be approved as a basis for wider consultation.***
- (2) That the Head of Environmental Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing and Community Services Committee be given the authority to agree any amendments to the draft policy arising from the consultation, prior to the implementation on 1st April 2010.***

HCS/38. **SERVICE REVIEW FOR PUBLIC EVENTS**

A report was submitted detailing a review of the five large public events organised by the Council and its principle partners. This included a strategic review of the Council's role in public events and the production of a list of recommendations, which would improve the event to further meet the needs of the Council's Corporate Plan and the residents of South Derbyshire.

The events under review were Liberation Day, Festival of Leisure, the National Forest and Beyond Walking Festival, Housing Open Day and the Christmas Lights switch on. Consultation had taken place with staff, stakeholders and Councillors, and other local authorities and organisations had also highlighted a number of key issues and recommendations. From this consultation and further research, a number of recommendations had been made, which would ultimately help each event to strengthen its aims, understand its audience, use the budget efficiently and find some consistency in the event planning by sharing knowledge across the Council and other local authorities.

A full summary of the consultation that had taken place was included in the report under the headings:

- Staff Consultation.
- Stakeholder Consultation.
- Other Authorities and organisations.

- Member's consultation.
- Attendee's consultation.

Full details of the recommendations for each event were included within the report.

Members commented on the Christmas Lights switch on event and suggestions were made that this should be more family friendly, that further consultation should take place with people who didn't attend the event and whether the fairground contributed to the costs incurred.

RESOLVED:

That the list of recommendations, arising from the review be approved.

HCS/39. **REVIEW OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN OPEN SPACES**

It was confirmed that the need for a review of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in parks and public open spaces (POS) was identified after a number of incidents of damage and anti-social behaviour occurred in the District maintained parks and open spaces in South Derbyshire during 2007 and 2008.

At the initial meeting of the 'ASB in Open Spaces Working Group', a template was completed, which identified information required in order to establish a baseline. A communications strategy was also produced which identified the consultees.

Details were provided on the cost of damage to the Council, the cost of security guards and also the difficulty in obtaining statistics to provide a clear baseline for the levels of anti-social behaviour and crime at each of the open spaces. A table was provided showing crime and anti-social behaviour recorded at or near to the parks during 2007/08. However, it was not clear whether all these crimes had occurred within the parks, or in the vicinity of the parks. Further details were given on the perception of ASB and damage at parks, reports from the park keepers to the Anti-social Behaviour Officer and staff time spent dealing with anti-social behaviour. Recommendations that had arisen from this report were detailed under the headings:

- Underage drinking.
- Damage and specific hotspots.
- Dog fouling.
- Litter.
- Other issues.

A Member pointed out that it might be a deterrent to issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and then publicise the offenders.

It was suggested that education initiatives be extended to other areas, that it would be a great loss if the Pavilion at Maurice Lea Park was removed, and that litter picking exercises could be expanded.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the review be accepted and the review action plan be approved.

HCS/40. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were asked to consider the updated work programme and review its content where appropriate.

RESOLVED:-

That the updated work programme be approved.

HCS/41. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th October 2009 were received.

STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS (Paragraph 3)

It was agreed that the structural improvement works at Church Gresley and Castle Gresley be approved.

IMPROVEMENTS TO EUREKA PARK, SWADLINCOTE (Paragraph 3)

A shortlist of contractors to be invited to tender for the works at Eureka Park was approved.

LAND AT MIDWAY (Paragraph 3)

It was agreed that an area of land at Midway be deemed surplus to requirements and approval was granted for its disposal.

RESTRUCTURING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE (Paragraph 1)

The recommendations as detailed in the report for the restructuring of the Leisure and Community Development Division of the Community Services Directorate were approved in principle.

J. LEMMON

CHAIRMAN