
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 18 APRIL 2011

EX.059/11 NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Cross-Cutting

Subject Matter

There was submitted Report OS.12/11 providing the final report of the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group, which had been endorsed by both the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels at meetings held on 24 March and 7 April 2011 respectively. The Panels supported the recommendations of the Task Group, set out on pages 3 and 4 of the report.

In addition, a further meeting had taken place on 11 April 2011 at which time Task Group Members from the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel had agreed additional recommendations.

A copy of the final report; Extracts from the above mentioned meetings (COSP.33/11 and EEOSP.24/11); and the additional recommendations had been circulated.

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group outlined the background to the matter, commenting that both the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels believed that the time was right to consider area working and neighbourhood based activities in a broad sense. That view was driven by the knowledge that government grants would be lost and recognition of the imperative need to work together to ensure that available funding was used in the most efficient and effective way.

She then explained the process followed in reaching the recommendations, which were very much informed by the individuals / bodies detailed in the appendices to the report, and ultimately agreed by the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

In conclusion, the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group expressed her thanks to Members, all those who had responded to the Questionnaire, and especially those who had attended the workshop session and provided very interesting information.

The Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel indicated that she fully supported the recommendations and asked that the Executive consider the same.

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder reported that neither the Assistant Director (Local Environment) nor himself had any problem with the recommendations relating to local environment. They were, however, slightly disappointed that the emphasis was on community engagement as opposed to in depth to service delivery.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group replied that it was her understanding that, when the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel first met, they were advised that the Assistant Director (Local Environment) was in the process of reorganising the area teams. It was therefore extremely difficult at that stage to make any comments since the existing structure was likely to change. She added that Members of the Environment and Economy Sub-Group had attended the partnership working meeting and had the opportunity to ask questions.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for undertaking what was very important work. There were a number of aspects, particularly working with other groups / partners to engage and take certain projects forward, which she would pick up in her capacity as Portfolio Holder.

Referring to recommendation 13 (that the Council enter into talks with Riverside to explore sharing staff and resources in areas of Neighbourhood Working, Community Engagement and Development), she stressed that the Council also liaised with other Housing Associations e.g. Impact Housing Association.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder added that the Council was always looking to expand upon the services provided via its Customer Contact Centre, and hoped that would prove to be a two way process.

The Leader then thanked Overview and Scrutiny Members for the very interesting work they had undertaken in relation to neighbourhood working. The overall aims which were around maximisation of the Council's resources were quite valid. Portfolio Holders would attend the meetings of the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels to be held on 9 and 23 June 2011 respectively. He added that the Executive was happy to address the recommendations.

The Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel commented upon the phased nature of the work going forward and asked whether there was a particular aspect which could be progressed as a starting point.

In response, the Leader said that informal discussions would take place with a view to moving matters forward. The Executive would seek the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels via two way discussions at the meetings in June.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

1. That the Executive received Report OS.12/11 and the amended recommendations circulated following the meeting of the Environment and Economy Sub-Group on 11 April 2011.
2. That the Executive agreed to accept the offer to meet with the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel at their meetings on 9 and 23 June 2011 respectively to discuss progress on the recommendations.

Reasons for Decision

To respond to recommendations of the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group