

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2001 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Ellis (Chairman), Councillors Boaden, Mrs Fisher, Knapton, Mallinson J, Toole and Weber.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillors Bloxham, Mrs Bradley, Mrs Pattinson and Mrs Southward attended the meeting as observers.

Ms Joan Ellis of Joan Ellis Associates in respect of Agenda item A.4 – Raffles Community Buildings.

COS.24/01 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor McMillan.

COS.25/01 AGENDA

The Chairman indicated that he had agreed to a report of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive concerning a review of Smart Cards being dealt with at this meeting as an urgent item in view of the need to progress the matter prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

COS.26/01 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meetings held on 11 September, 11 and 17 October 2001 were signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meetings. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2001 were noted.

COS.27/01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING DECLARATIONS OF "THE PARTY WHIP")

There were no declarations affecting any item on the Agenda.

COS.28/01 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

RESOLVED – That it be noted that there were no matters which had been the subject of call in.

COS.29/01 WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy submitted an Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2001/02, which took into account matters scheduled to be dealt with by this Committee.

Members felt that the programme was extremely helpful and asked that a similar document, highlighting Forward Plan issues relevant to the Committee, be included on future Agendas.

RESOLVED – (1) That the 2001/02 Work Programme for the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

(2) That an item highlighting Forward Plan issues relevant to this Committee be included on future Agendas.

COS.30/01 REFERENCES FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee considered the following references by the Executive to Overview and Scrutiny as consultees:

- (i) Leisure and Community Development Services – Revenue Estimates 2002/03

The City Treasurer submitted Financial Memo 2001/02 No.101 considering the revised revenue estimates for 2001/02, together with the estimates for 2002/03 for Leisure and Community Development services. The report had been compiled in the light of the City Council's agreed Budget strategy for 2002/03.

The City Treasurer then responded to Members' questions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

- (ii) Housing General Fund Revenue Estimates 2002/03

The City Treasurer submitted Financial Memo 2001/02 No.102 considering the revised revenue estimates for 2001/02, together with the estimates for 2002/03 in respect of Housing General Fund services. The report had been compiled in the light of the City Council's agreed Budget strategy for 2002/03.

The City Treasurer then responded to Members' questions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

- (iii) Leisuretime Best Value Fundamental Performance Review

Pursuant to Minute COS.19/01, copies of the Executive's response to this Committee's comments regarding the Leisuretime Best Value Fundamental Performance Review had been submitted.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

COS.31/01 RAFFLES COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

The Head of Community Support presented report LCD.87/01 concerning the use of community buildings in the Raffles area. Notes of a Focus Group meeting conducted by Ms Ellis on 21 November 2001 were also tabled.

He outlined the background to the matter, together with the consultant's recommendations on how the operation and management of the buildings could be consolidated. He added that the report had been prepared in response to those recommendations.

Ms Joan Ellis was present at the meeting and, together with the Head of Community

Support, responded to Members' questions.

In considering the matter, Members requested that a further report, including more clearly defined recommendations for the City Council's buildings, together with cost/savings implications, be submitted for consideration.

The Chairman thanked Ms Ellis for her attendance.

RESOLVED – That the Director of Leisure and Community Development be requested to submit a further report, including more clearly defined recommendations for the City Council's buildings, together with cost/savings implications, to a future meeting of this Committee.

COS.32/01 LEISURETIME COMPETITIVE PROCESS - KEY ISSUES AND INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCUMENTATION

Consideration was given to the Director of Leisure and Community Development's report to the Executive (LCD.92/01) which summarised the current position in respect of the Leisuretime Competitive process.

The Director commented that his report provided an introduction to the key components of the documentation and the assumptions behind them which would be used to carry out the tender, together with the opportunity for feedback before they were submitted for final approval. It was anticipated that the draft documentation would be complete by Christmas and available for consideration in the New Year.

He commented upon work undertaken to date, the timetable for completion of the process, risk assessment, the documentation, what would be required from both the Contractor and the Council, the evaluation process, Best Value and the next steps.

The Committee gave detailed consideration to the report and raised the following issues:

A Member questioned whether the timetable for completion of the process was adequate. The Director commented that clearly the duration was a matter for the Council, but urged Members not to lengthen it. He added that, although he felt that the process could be completed within the timescale identified in his report, it may be necessary to hold special meetings to achieve that.

Clarification was sought with regard to the TUPE arrangements for the potential transfer. The Director commented that, although tenderers would not be obliged to exceed the minimum TUPE requirements, they would be invited to demonstrate how their terms would do so for which credit would be given.

Clarification was sought with regard to the level of financial support required to undertake monitoring of the performance of the partner in delivering the contract and the service. The Head of Legal Services indicated that the Council would retain core responsibilities e.g. Best Value/Health and Safety, would wish to ensure that the service was delivered in an acceptable manner and therefore effective monitoring was vital. The Director added that it was not possible to quantify the financial implications as that time.

Attention was drawn to what the Council would require of the Contractor and the Director commented that, although the Council must ensure that value for money was achieved, it would also have to release control since only by doing so would capital investment be

forthcoming.

A Member expressed concern at the scenario whereby responsibility for setting prices would rest with the contractor and questioned whether the market was sufficiently competitive. The Director commented that it would not be in the contractor's interest to force prices up since that would result in a loss of both income and customer satisfaction.

A Member stated that there were errors in the numbering of Appendices to the report and the Director undertook to rectify the same.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Director's report be noted.

(2) That observations of this Committee, as outlined above, be forwarded to the Executive.

COS.33/01 BEST VALUE FUNDAMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR EMPTY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The Manager and Assistant Manager, Repairs and Improvements, presented report H.112/01 concerning the Best Value Fundamental Performance Review for Empty Property Management. Attached to the report for Members' consideration were the Best Value and External Challenge reports.

In considering the matter, Members complimented the Officers for what they felt was an extremely good report.

The Best Value Officer commented that although it was an excellent review it did not include Allocations and, if inspected, would be criticised for being narrowly focussed.

The Assistant Manager commented that discussions were being undertaken with the Allocations Section and an Action Plan would be prepared to address relevant issues.

The Manager and Assistant Manager then responded to Members' questions.

Members expressed concern that gardens were often not tidied up until after properties were re-let and that certain tenants did not have the means by which to undertake necessary work themselves. The Assistant Manager commented he was in discussion with the Works and Parks Departments on ways in which the situation could be improved.

A Member commented that he was aware of instances when Gas and Electricity Companies had cut off supplies to properties as a result of arrears accrued by previous tenants, which could have serious implications for the young/elderly particularly during the winter months. He added that he would like to see more effort put into resolving the matter. The Manager indicated that Surveyors were being asked to obtain as much information as possible with regard to suppliers from outgoing tenants in order to minimise the inconvenience caused.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Best Value Fundamental Performance Review for Empty Property Management and the External Challenge report be noted and action be focussed on what could currently be achieved.

(2) That the Director of Housing be requested to submit a progress report to this Committee in the New Year.

COS.34/01 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY – PROGRESS REPORT

The Community Safety Co-ordinator presented report TC.235/01 concerning the Best Value Review of Community Safety which had been undertaken in conjunction with the Crime and Disorder Audit. He outlined the progress made in respect of the consult, compare, challenge and compete elements. Copies of the Hotspots Focus Group facilitated session held on 16 November 2001 had also been circulated.

He then drew Members' attention to the project plan for the review, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, which showed the anticipated completion date to be 30 April 2002.

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy commented that the Hotspots Group were frustrated in tackling socio-economic factors and this should be picked up in the Best Value Review of Regeneration.

RESOLVED – That the Community Safety Best Value Review Project Plan and progress made to date be noted.

COS.35/01 QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Pursuant to Minute COS.11/01(c), the Head of Community Support presented report LCD.93/01 providing suggestions for the Council's contribution to celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

He outlined the various suggestions, which included a Street Music Festival and Street Parties. Although it was considered that the main thrust for celebration should be on the selected dates of 1 – 4 June 2002, it would be possible to theme certain of the events included in the Council's Special Events Programme around the Queen's 50 year reign.

RESOLVED – That the following be forwarded to the Executive for consideration:

This Committee supports the suggestions for celebrating the Queen's Golden Jubilee as contained within report LCD.93/01, subject to the following:

- (i) Up to a maximum of £10,000 be allocated from within existing budgets (but not from the Grants for Leisure Budget) to fund applications for celebrations as outlined in the report, including £2,500 towards the cost of the Street Music Festival.
- (ii) That arrangements be made for the Upperby Gala to take place on an alternative date during 2002.
- (iii) That the Multi-Cultural Festival should concentrate on Commonwealth cultures and be renamed as "Commonwealth Festival" for 2002 only.

COS.36/01 SMART CARDS REVIEW – TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy presented report TC.236/01 concerning a review of Smart Cards.

He commented that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had at its meeting

on 22 November 2001 agreed that there should be a review of Smart Cards and that this Committee should undertake that review. He then drew Members' attention to the draft Terms of Reference attached to the report.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Terms of Reference for the review of Smart Cards be agreed.

(2) That the Chairmen of the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committees be invited to attend future meetings of this Committee when this matter was under consideration.

[The meeting ended at 4.10 pm]