

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 21st July, 2014

Present:- Councillors John Bull (Chair), Roger Symonds (Vice-Chair), Colin Barrett, Paul Myers, Charles Gerrish, Barry Macrae and Nigel Roberts

Also in attendance: Andrew Pate (Strategic Director, Resources), David Trethewey (Divisional Director , Strategy & Performance), Andy Thomas (Group Manager Strategy & Performance) and Graham Sabourn (Head of Housing)

Cabinet Member for Community Resources: Councillor David Bellotti

14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

15 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Colin Barrett declared an other interest, (as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests) in relation to Agenda Item 6 (Items from Public & Councillors) as he was an Honorary Member of Access Bath.

Councillor Charles Gerrish declared an other interest, (as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests) in relation to Agenda Item 6 (Items from Public & Councillors) as he was a member of B&NES Inclusive Sport and Physical Activity Association (BISPAA).

18 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

19 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Susan Charles, Chair, Warm Water Inclusive Swimming & Exercise (WWISE) Network addressed the Panel. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book, a brief summary is set out below.

She said that it was absolutely vital that an integral part of the leisure provider contract negotiations included the provision of fully accessible warm water pools at 32C, with changing facilities suitable for all ages and all levels of disability. Such pools fit well within your Vision as a Council and will also assist in the delivery of your Health & Wellbeing Strategy, your Children & Young People's Plan and now your Fit for Life Strategy. Furthermore they will ensure that, at long last, B&NES will have leisure facilities which are truly inclusive and available to all members of the community. Finally, they create the potential of enormous savings to the NHS & Social Service budgets.

She added that they recognised that warm water pools with fully accessible facilities for people of all ages whatever their level of disability can be expensive. However, if incorporated at the planning stage of a new or remodelled facility, they become part of the overall design.

She said the people that need these facilities would then have the chance to become healthier & fitter, manage their own conditions, thus improving their quality of life and helping them to maintain their independence.

She asked that the Council give it the most serious consideration.

Councillor Colin Barrett asked if after campaigning for so long she could see any light at the end of the tunnel.

Susan Charles replied that she could see that there could be, but needed the Council to support them in their request.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that he was a supporter of this type of therapy. He asked though if at this stage they could identify any factual savings.

Susan Charles replied that she did not have any figures to hand. She said that the Network had held talks with the Divisional Director for Environmental Services to discuss the matter. She added that a provider may wish to invest in the pools or that grants may be available.

The Chairman thanked her for her statement.

Eamon McClelland addressed the Panel. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book, a brief summary is set out below.

He spoke of the requirement for public authorities to develop and publish an Equalities Strategy.

He said that in particular the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) came into force across Great Britain on 5th April 2011. It means that public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

The PSED requires authorities to ensure their procurement process promotes equality and achieves wider social benefits and opportunities.

He added that authorities must comply with the best guidance document Buying Better Outcomes – Mainstreaming Equalities considerations in procurement. The guidance states that it is ‘a way for a public authority to deliver its broader strategic objectives, in addition to the core purpose of a contract and value for money’.

Also in relation to equalities provision ‘it is important that they are considered upfront before the procurement process starts’.

For some years, Access B&NES have been working with the Council, Aquaterra, the Bath Spa Trust and all available authorities to endeavour to deliver a facility suited to the needs of a large sector of the population of Bath and North East Somerset.

He said that in a survey conducted between 2005 – 09 37% of people responded to say that they felt they faced barriers to access facilities.

He commented briefly on the Fit for Life Strategy to say that he felt it was a good document as it aims to ‘support and improve the health and wellbeing of the population by ensuring sustainable, high quality sport and physical activity infrastructure and opportunities to enable residents to live active lives, helping to prevent ill health, reduce social isolation and maintain independence for longer’.

Councillor Barry Macrae asked what did the Council not do currently that would improve the current situation.

Eamon McClelland replied that a joined up approach was needed. He said that arrangements needed to be in place to enable people to get from their home to leisure facilities and that then those facilities need to have appropriate changing and toilet provision.

Councillor Charles Gerrish commented that he was in the process of co-ordinating a meeting with the relevant Cabinet Members to see if any progress can be made on this matter. He asked how the Council can get better at hearing the views of the public.

Eamon McClelland replied that the Council needed to open a range of channels of communication so that the public have easier ways to pass on their messages.

The Chairman thanked him for his statement.

The Chairman then read out the following statement on behalf of the Council.

The Council is looking at a range of options – including accessible teaching pools – as it seeks to modernise its leisure facilities, this is supported by the ‘Fit for Life’ Strategy.

The Council and the CCG will be working closely to ensure that the new leisure contract provides the best possible service for local people and supports them to live healthy lifestyles.

It is important to clarify that the provision of warm water swimming facilities is not the same as the provision of hydrotherapy services which is a specialist health service provided from appropriately equipped, specialist facilities and funded by the CCG.

The Council's objective is to provide accessible leisure facilities, rather than specialist health services, for which there is advice and guidance on best practice produced by Sport England in their 'Accessible Sports Facilities Design Guidance Note.

(<http://www.sportengland.org/media/30246/Accessible-Sports-Facilities-2010.pdf>)

The Council appreciates comments from the public as it continues to develop plans for delivering these options through dialogue with potential contractors as part of the procurement process for the new leisure contract. This contract will be awarded in January 2015, with a contract start date of July 2015.

20 MINUTES - 12TH MAY 2014

Councillor Colin Barrett commented that at this meeting he had asked questions relating to the use of consultants and the use of agency staff and the costs associated and that he would like those to be recorded.

The Chairman asked the Democratic Services Officer to speak to his colleague who administers the meeting on a regular basis to see if she had a record of the questions.

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting in their current form as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

21 PERFORMANCE REWARD PROGRAMME - THE BETTER TOGETHER PROJECT

Councillor Eleanor Jackson addressed the Panel. She said that she thought that one weakness of Re:Generate was the amount it depends on personal activity for its success. She added that she had met of range of staff over the years with each one apparently re-inventing the wheel and not passing on any information to their successors.

She stated that she felt that £106,000 was an awful lot of money to achieve a community feel good factor and that Radstock in Bloom could tick all the boxes in the report for £16,000. She added that currently on a budget of around £12,000 donated by Radstock Town Council, Radstock Traders, Radco, individuals and voluntary bodies we achieve a far higher level of community involvement.

She said that in earlier reports the Council had been told about '300 pledges' made on the doorsteps of Radstock, but she was unaware that any had come to fruition. She added that a lot of promises have been made that simply could not have been delivered.

She concluded by strongly urging that the contract for Re:Generate be terminated immediately in relation to Radstock.

Councillor Charles Gerrish referred the Panel to section 5.4 of the report which mentioned Keynsham South but not Keynsham North although he was sure work had taken place in the area. He added that feedback on projects had reduced quite considerably recently.

The Group Manager, Partnership Delivery replied that work had indeed taken place in Keynsham North and apologised for the omission.

The Chairman invited Nick and Rob from Re:Generate to give their presentation to the Panel. A copy of the presentation can be found on the Panel's Minute Book and is also available online as an attachment to these minutes. A brief summary is set out below.

Re:Generate began in 2008 working in Whiteway. We developed the following two projects.

Changes - A community group leads children and young people's activities in an area where YP and families were disengaged from Council services.

Doorstep - A social enterprise that addresses fly-tipping and works with Council partners.

Big Local, Radstock - Shared headline needs from listenings to be mapped onto their findings to inform spending. Supported on Steering Group, now the Partnership.

Foxhill - Helped set up facebook page and website for community engagement and information sharing. Plans are also underway to hold a Sports Day for young people on 30th August.

They aim to empower, inform and influence people and organisations and provide a lasting legacy.

Councillor Roger Symonds commented that he felt there was a need for staff within Re:Generate to stay in post for a longer time to complete proposed projects. He added that Curo had done a lot work locally in Combe Down and didn't necessarily feel the Council were getting value for money from Re:Generate.

Councillor Cherry Beath commented that there was a need for Re:Generate staff to work closer with Ward Members. She added that she was not sure how many true outcomes had been achieved by Re:Generate over the past three years in Combe Down.

Nick from Re:Generate replied that in 2012, central government funded for one year only 5 additional Community Organisers in Foxhill and Odd Down, Radstock; and Timsbury, Farmborough and Camerton. He added that Re:Generate supported them for a further year following that with no funding. He said that this was a part of a national programme to train 500 Community Organisers.

He stated that he believed they have additional capacity to help locally.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that he was concerned with the amount of Council resources that was being put into this work.

Councillor Nigel Roberts commented that he was aware of some of their successful work in Southdown, but had also heard that a lack of continuity had not helped in some other areas.

Councillor David Bellotti, Cabinet Member for Community Resources said that he took the comments made by the Panel seriously and would discuss the matter with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet. He added that maybe in hindsight it would've been an idea to have approached a large voluntary group such as the YMCA to aid with training and supervision.

He said that youth work within Keynsham Town Council was very good and that he would advocate using the successful Time Out project as support.

Councillor Charles Gerrish reiterated his earlier point that it was an absence of feedback that he felt was leaving Councillors with a lack of knowledge and therefore called for greater engagement from Re:Generate.

Councillor Paul Myers commented that he felt there was currently a real lack of success stories from the effort being put in. He suggested that an on-going assessment of the project was required.

Rob from Re:Generate said that one of their main roles was to empower residents to work with others and that he felt they had achieved that.

Nick from Re:Generate added that he was proud of the work they had achieved so far.

The Strategic Director of Resources said that the Council should look to learn from this experience and ask the Cabinet to look at the matter further to see where improvements can be made.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Re:Generate for attending and their presentation.

22 FINANCING OF SITE PROVISION FOR PROPOSED GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE (LOWER BRISTOL ROAD)

The Chairman began this item by saying that depending on the level of information that the Panel wish to receive that it may need to go into exempt session.

Councillor Charles Gerrish said that he did not feel that the Panel had been given enough information and that they should know how the current figures were reached.

The Strategic Director of Resources replied that the Panel needs to know whether the figures are consistent with those approved in the budget.

Councillor David Bellotti, Cabinet Member for Community Resources said that if the Panel intended to go further than the Cabinet had done yet that he would have to raise an objection.

The Strategic Director of Resources asked if the project was still on track financially.

The Head of Housing replied that the costs for the project are comfortably within the agreed budget. He added that build costs are lower than expected and on costs are slightly higher.

The Strategic Director of Resources asked if capital budgets were over-stressed.

The Head of Housing replied that overall expenditure was to be well within the agreed £2.5m.

The Chairman asked what was contained within the on costs.

The Head of Housing replied that it was fees associated with legal, planning, architects and engineering surveys. He added that time was critical on site and that they were looking to commence work in August.

Councillor Barry Macrae asked who had made this commitment.

The Strategic Director of Resources replied that the budget had been agreed at Cabinet and then by Council. He added that the current decision had been made by two members of the Cabinet.

Councillor Charles Gerrish commented that he was concerned as any eviction costs should not be a capital cost. He added that it was in everyone's interest to know what the true cost of the project would be to the Council and that those figures should be known prior to a decision being made.

The Strategic Director of Resources replied that the budget as a whole is monitored on a regular basis and that with Cabinet approval the Panel would be updated with the exact figures.

Councillor David Bellotti added that if the figure of £1.8m was exceeded then the Council's Section 151 officer would have a decision to take and that he would be consulted to discuss if further funds should be found. He added that the figures would be released when they could.

Councillor Barry Macrae said that he was concerned over the possible revenue figures. He also asked why the Council was paying for the site.

The Head of Housing replied that the operating model was to be revenue neutral to the Council. He added that the Council had found one Registered Housing Provider (RP) that was willing to work with us and that they too have no profit motive. He assured the Panel that contract negotiations had taken place to protect the Council.

He stated that the contract would have a minimum ten year break clause for the RP whereas the Council will have to only give three months' notice. He added that the Council will have control of who stays on the site.

He said that the RP have advised that they require the site to be at 80% occupancy level and that the Council has agreed to risk share that with them for one year. This would result in a maximum exposure of £300 a week if pitches were not occupied. He informed the Panel that in the most recent survey 28 pitches were needed and that he saw no reason that that figure will have changed.

He stated that the approval of the Core Strategy was reliant on this site coming to fruition.

Councillor Charles Gerrish thanked the Head of Housing for the recent visit to a Gypsy and Traveller Site in Bristol as he had found it very informative. He added that he would be surprised if we did not fill our site easily. He commented that the project would be revenue neutral 'to Housing' as servicing would come out of the central budget.

The Head of Housing replied that there would be a small revenue stream to the Council and that the site would also be eligible for New Homes Bonus.

Councillor Charles Gerrish asked what the next steps were on the part of the RP.

The Head of Housing replied that their Chief Executive and Development Officer would be making recommendation to proceed to their Board on 23rd July and that following that plans were in place for the Council, HCA and the RP to meet on 25th July.

Councillor Gerrish asked for assurances that no funds would be released before a contract had been signed.

The Strategic Director of Resources replied that was the case.

Councillor Barry Macrae and Councillor Colin Barrett wished to have their reservations about the site and their unhappiness with the process noted.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Housing for his update.

23 APPROACH TO SHARED SERVICES AND CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT WITH NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

The Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that local authorities have under successive governments been encouraged to work together and at various points initiatives been developed to drive this further from Local Government Reviews and boundary changes to programmes like Total Place and Community Budgets.

He added that with the scale of change faced by Local Government, collaboration and sharing services has emerged as an area where we need to look actively at the range of opportunities that might exist.

Councillor Charles Gerrish said that he welcomed this report. He added though that he thought that the Strategic Management Teams should meet more than twice a year.

Councillor Barry Macrae said that he hoped the planned savings for the agreement would be justified and cost too much in effort and funds to find them. He added that he felt that B&NES should be looking to use the areas in which it is strong within other Councils.

The Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance replied that a piece of work would only go forward if deemed value for money.

Councillor Colin Barrett asked if the Trades Unions were aware of these proposals.

The Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance replied that discussions have taken place with the Trades Unions and that they will continue to do so. He added that the proposals had been met with a positive feedback. He added that the most recent meeting had taken place on May 29th 2014 and representatives from Unison, GMB, Unite and ATL were present.

The Chairman commented that he welcomed this piece of work.

24 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance gave a presentation to the Panel regarding this item. He said that the plan was to report again to the Panel in November and asked Members to let them know if they required more detail in some areas. A brief summary of the presentation is set out below.

Key Achievements

88% of residents satisfied with local area as a place to live (up 3% on 2012)

Top performing Council (2013) in the South West for GCSE results and in the top third Councils nationally

100% of our complex families felt listened to and kept informed by their key worker

73% of service plan commitments delivered in full.

Key Performance Indicators

There are 99 Key Performance Indicators across the Council.

34% are Green for 2013/14

14% are Amber for 2013/14

13% are Red for 2013/14

39% are currently labelled as Other for 2013/14

73 are populated with performance data, 24 are missing data but have an explanation and 2 are missing data with no explanation.

Councillor Barry Macrae asked what was meant by the use of the term Other.

The Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance replied that there would be three possible reasons for this. The first being that there is no target currently set, no baseline figure as it is a new indicator or no data to compare it against. He added that the figures in November would be a better judgement.

Workplaces update – Key benefits

Savings of £3.5M
40% less office space
70% less energy use

Residents' Satisfaction

Satisfaction with how the Council runs things has increased to 67%

64% of residents trust their local Council whilst only 34% trusts Parliament

Councillor Paul Myers asked if local area information was possible.

The Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance replied that he believed so and would share what he could with the Panel.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that if the Council was moving towards area management then the data should reflect that.

Economic Update

Business Growth – 300 more businesses

Apprenticeships by Council – 40+

Employment – 74% (72.3% Nationally)

The Panel collectively felt that the information on this slide (9) should be more meaningful and refined.

The Strategic Director of Resources replied that in future updates they would look to show trends.

National Recognition

'10 in 100' shortlisted as a finalist and high commended in the Workforce Transformation category of the Municipal Journal Awards 2014 and also shortlisted

as a finalist in the Employee Engagement category in the Chartered Institute of People & Development People Management Awards 2014.

Campaign to end loneliness awarded a gold standard to our joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

The Chairman thanked the Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance for his presentation.

25 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor David Bellotti, Cabinet Member for Community Resources addressed the Panel. He said that he would happy to answer questions form the Panel.

The Chairman asked if he could give the Panel any information on the possibility of redundancies within the Libraries service.

Councillor Bellotti replied that he did not have that information to hand but was sure that if any, only a small number of staff would be affected. He added that the Council where possible will try to find other positions for staff within the authority before the need for redundancies.

Councillor Colin Barrett asked the Cabinet Member if he could inform the Panel on the Council's use of consultants and the use of agency staff and the costs associated with this.

Councillor Bellotti replied that a report on Procurement could be issued to the Panel in September and that this would include the information that Councillor Barrett was seeking.

26 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chairman introduced this item to the Panel. The Panel agreed the workplan as printed with the addition of the Procurement report offered by Councillor Bellotti for September.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services