

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2015**

Present: Councillors Khan (Chairman), J.R Fox (Vice Chairman) Rush , Day, Maqbool, Forbes and Okonkowski

Also Present: Councillor Serluca Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism

Officers in Attendance:

Adrian Chapman	Assistant Director of Communities and Targeted Services
Robin Sissons	Head of Safer, Stronger, Supportive Communities
Belinda Child	Head of Housing & Health Improvement
Jo Hodges	Senior Housing Enforcement Officer
Lisa Roberts	Strategic Client Manager
Gary Wright	Market Development Manager
Dania Castagliuolo	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peach. Councillor Rush attended as substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 January 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

5. The Mobile Homes Act 2013 Fees Policy Consultation

The report was introduced by the Head of Housing and Health Improvement to provide the Committee with an opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the proposed Mobile Homes Act 2013 Fees Policy.

The Committee was asked to scrutinise the proposed Mobile Homes Act 2013 Fees Policy and make any observations or recommendations on the content of the proposed policy

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members queried why it was necessary to introduce the Mobile Homes fees. *The Head of Housing and Health Improvement responded that there was concern with the lack of regulation*

for the mobile home sites, therefore, having the fees in place would allow Local Authority to resource powers around the sites. Regulations would be brought in which were more in line with existing housing legislation.

- *Members queried whether payment of the fees would be the responsibility of residents or the site owners. Members were advised that the owners of sites would be responsible for payment of the fees and the only fee that could be passed on to residents would be an annual inspection fee.*
- *Members queried if owners of sites could increase rent due to these charges. Members were advised that site owners could only increase the annual fee, which was restricted in line with the Council's fees. The Council was aware that this could happen therefore, mechanisms had been put in place to prevent it.*
- *Members queried whether residents would be part of the consultation. Members were informed that Council Officers would be going to homes to visit residents and explain the process to them.*
- *Members queried whether the fairground at Wittering and sites in Stanground were included in the nine sites which would be affected by the act. Members were informed that these sites did not fall within the protected sites category.*
- *Members were concerned for residents if they did not have the funds to keep their home up to standards. Members were advised that there would be means tested grants available for work to be carried out on mobile homes if necessary. If residents were renting a mobile home, the Council would enforce the owner to carry out repairs. Nobody would be made homeless at any time, action would be taken to remedy any problems.*
- *Members queried what the outcome would be if people were not willing to cooperate. Members were informed that the property would go for a warrant to ensure resident's health was not compromised.*
- *Members queried how the figures on page 9 of the report were worked out. Members were informed that these figures were based on resources required. Government gave specific guidelines on fees. The Council had looked in to all aspects of sites and actions the Government had allowed the Council to charge for.*
- *Members queried what the proportion of the fees were. Members were informed that the fees were based on the size of a site therefore, a site with less pitches would require less time allocated to it and the fees would be less. There would be a banding mechanism in place.*
- *Members were advised that a site of 1 – 4 pitches was exempt from charges.*

ACTION AGREED

The committee noted the report.

6. Review of the Consultation Results from Libraries and Community Centres

The Strategic Client Manager introduced the report for the Committee to review the responses received to the second consultation and to review the proposed approach to supporting libraries in the future, to secure a sustainable network of effective and efficient libraries.

The Committee was asked to note the report and provide comment.

- *Members were concerned that Libraries would have open access without any staff members present. The Strategic Client Manager responded that the Open Plus Assistance was a service which had one member of staff present. There had been a £45k investment to fund this service to ensure that at least one member of staff would be present at all times.*
- *The Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism advised Members that after the consultation had ended, the project would not be closed as she would be visiting libraries to monitor how Open Plus Assistance..*
- *The Strategic Client Manager added that pilots would still be running for six weeks during April to iron out any issues. Risk assessments would be carried out in conjunction with Police Community Safety Officers and the Fire Service.*
- *Members congratulated the Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism and the Strategic Client Manager for the way in which they handled the consultation.*

- Members were concerned with redundancies and queried what had been offered to staff at risk. *The Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism responded that there would be 15 job redundancies which had all come from voluntary redundancies.*
- Members queried what the cost of these redundancies would be to the Council. *The Strategic Client Manager responded that if Cabinet approved the project then the redundancy cost would be worked out.*
- Members queried what security measures would be in place for the libraries in the evenings. *Members were advised that all sites were connected to Redcare security. Libraries would continue with an open up and close down in place. There would be CCTV in the libraries monitoring activity.*
- Members queried how the evening assistants would be covered by Health and Safety. *Members were advised that libraries already had lone working staff, therefore, risk assessments had already been carried out. For the first six months after the project had been implemented, libraries would be reviewed every four weeks. All other areas would have to network and report issues in order to learn from each other.*
- Members queried what the response time would be should an incident happen in one of the libraries. *Members were advised that measures were already in place for emergencies and there had been no incidents to date, library staff were also first aid trained.*
- Members queried what the difference was between Open Plus Assistance staff and regular library staff. *Members were informed that there was no difference in pay between the staff. The difference would be that when the library was in open Plus Assistance mode, there would be no option available to print documents or access DVD's. The Open plus Assistance staff would be preparing activities and sorting shelves.*
- Members queried whether there had been a reduction in money spent on books. *Members were informed that there had not been a reduction in money spent on books as library stock was reviewed regularly.*
- *Members were informed that library users would have access to the internet during Open Plus Assistance hours.*
- Members queried what would happen if there were technical issues during Open Plus Assistance hours. *Members were informed that libraries had multiple computers therefore, users could change computer and report the issue. There was a reporting mechanism which could be used.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

7. City Market

The report was introduced by the Market Development Manager to provide Members with an overview of the City Market operation and proposed future panning regarding the following:

- Market Services
- Performance
- Expenditure/income and service costs
- Staffing numbers and staffing issues within the service
- Opportunities for service
- Service threats
- Service objectives for 2015/16

The Committee was recommended to note and comment on the work of the City Market and propose further scrutiny in relation to its business activities.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members commented that the food hall was a very good facility although they were concerned that Northwestgate's plans for a food hall went ahead this could potentially damage the market. *The Market Development Manager responded that the one concern with the Northwestgate was*

the prices of food may be higher. The Market offered affordable premises which allowed traders to make their prices slightly lower.

- *Members queried whether any consideration had been given to making the Market enclosed. Members were advised that the issue was with funding although, the contractors were looking in to installing a wind break.*
- *Members queried whether there had been any estimates of costs for the developing the Market. Members were advised that a market recovery plan was in progress which included new builds, therefore no costs had been established.*
- *Members commented that since the Market Development Manager had been in post the Market had seen major improvements, although Members would like to see the Market move to Cathedral Square. Members were informed that there may be the possibility to host temporary Markets on Long Causeway and Lincoln Road.*
- *Members queried whether Laxton Square was still going to be considered for the Market. Members were advised that the 5th Avenue new build would increase the footfall for the Market. Posters had been displayed and leaflets distributed to increase interest in the Market.*
- *Members were concerned that the Market had not been given priority previously and was in a position where its future was unsure. Members were advised that the Council was looking in to allowing the public to collect their shopping from the market on order.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

8. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked Members for all of their work over the past year and also thanked the Democratic Services Officer and Lead officer for their support.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.07pm

CHAIRMAN