

**MINUTES OF MEETING
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Present: Councillors Over (Chairman), D Day, S Day, J R Fox, S Dalton and Wilkinson.

Officers in attendance: Gillian Barclay, Learning and Heritage Services Manager
Kevin Tighe, Head of Cultural Services
Heather Walton, Library and Customer Services Manager
Chris Fisher, Head of Service Children and Families
Liz Boome, Performance Scrutiny Officer
Gemma George, Governance Support Officer
Lindsay Tomlinson, Governance Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies had been received.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held 18 June 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2008 were approved as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. A Sports Strategy for Peterborough

The Panel received a report and a presentation outlining the Sports Strategy for Peterborough. Members noted that officers were exploring a recommendation to Cabinet which would include provision for a detailed feasibility study to be conducted to identify the best value solution to deliver future swimming provision across the city. It was proposed that this would be undertaken in partnership with Opportunity Peterborough in order to identify synergies between a potential city centre development (Embankment) and opportunities that could be deliverable through the Building Schools for the Future programme. The study would focus on the creation of a regional "flagship" sports and swimming facility and district swimming provision in the northern and southern districts of the city. Due regard would be given to the potential to incorporate the Lido into any Embankment development in order to secure its future and maximise its potential.

The report also outlined the Sports Strategy Action Plan which set out a programme of work that would drive sport forward over the next five years in addition to swimming and other facility development initiatives.

Members were asked to consider and comment on the report and the following issues were raised:

- Members questioned the future development of the facilities based at Jack Hunt Secondary School. Members were advised that there was no action plan in the strategy for this.
- A query was raised regarding the possibility of offering free evenings at sports facilities to encourage youth participation. Members were assured that this suggestion would be carried forward.
- Clarification was sought on the strategy's next phase in securing a 50 metre swimming pool for the city. Members were advised that the next phase would be a recommendation to Cabinet for a detailed feasibility study to be carried out.
- Members questioned the levels of funding that would be available for coaches etc. Members were informed that a sports development budget would be obtainable for these areas of funding.

ACTION AGREED:

The Panel noted the report.

5. A Library Strategy for Peterborough

A report and presentation were submitted to the Panel for consideration. Members were advised that until 2002 it was a statutory requirement to submit an annual library plan to the Department of Culture Media and Sports. These were then succeeded from 2003 to 2005 with library position statements for authorities that had not received an "excellent" overall in their CPA or a "good" and an "excellent" in their libraries and leisure score.

Since then there had been no published plan for the development of the Library Service, so the strategy would look towards modernisation and growth, building on current strong foundations such as excellence in customer service.

The Library Strategy looked at a number of challenges which would face the service in the coming years:

- Achieving the right level and quality of resources, services and facilities;
- Having the flexibility of responding to and leading on community expectations and need and the city's growth agenda;
- Developing effective and efficient skilled staff, leadership and management;
- Embedding ongoing improvement;
- Ensuring recognition of the vital importance of public libraries to personal, family and community development, and how they contribute to the priorities of the city.

Twenty one key actions for the next five years, designed to address the challenges described above, were identified within the strategy and were grouped under four key headings; the offer, the staff, the space and service developments.

Members were asked to consider and comment on the report and the following issues were raised:

- Members questioned the link between the falling numbers of visitors to libraries and the increase in accessibility to online facilities. Members were advised that the use of online resources had played a part in the decrease of visitors to libraries, but there were also other factors to take into consideration, for example temporary building works as at Orton Library. The Panel was further advised that even with the falling number of visitors, the overall number of books going out had in fact gone up.

- Clarification was sought on the methods used to attract new customers. Members were advised that new adjustments would be implemented to capitalize on existing staff members. School visits, event days and guest authors were among some of the ideas already considered plausible. A further query was raised regarding authors visiting schools directly. The Panel was informed that the schools themselves would be directly responsible for organising those visits and the libraries would play no part in arranging them.
- A query was raised regarding the scale of internet usage in the libraries across Peterborough and the whereabouts of the busiest libraries. Members were informed that across the board internet usage was decreasing slightly. It was stated that Bretton and Werrington were amongst the busiest sites in Peterborough.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

6. Promotion of Play

The Panel received a report outlining the proposed remodelling of play services across Peterborough including the allocation of 22 playbuilder sites and an application for Pathfinder funding.

The development of an exciting and imaginative play service would contribute to three major themes of the corporate plan. It would help to achieve the best possible health and well being by developing play opportunities, where healthier socially inclusive communities could be encouraged. Developing play across the city would help make Peterborough a better place to live and work. Finally, providing good play areas would help ensure children were healthy and safe.

The Panel was asked to consider and comment on the report and the following issues were raised:

- Clarification was sought on the amount of consultation ward councillors would receive before any money was allocated to specific sites. Members were advised that 6 schemes were to be completed before the end of March 2009, and the consultation process for these particular sites had already been undertaken. The remainder of the sites were to be completed over the next 2 years.
- A query was raised regarding the number of play sites already situated across Peterborough. Members were informed that the numbers were available and that the Open Space Strategy had been referenced with regard to available play areas.
- Members questioned the need to upgrade existing sites and the guarantee of long term maintenance. Members were advised that community involvement was crucial. Encouraging a sense of ownership in the local community may assure the site is cared for and protected.
- Clarification was sought on the possibility of provision of a temporary beach next summer. Members were advised that there were no plans for this at the moment.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel:

- (i) Noted and agreed the allocation of the 22 playbuilder sites;
- (ii) Considered the application for play pathfinder funding ready for submission on October 24th, and
- (iii) Noted and commented on the proposed remodelling of play services across Peterborough.

7. City Roots Festival

The Panel received a report for consideration at the request of the Chairman. The City Roots Festival linked in to the corporate priority “Making Peterborough a better place to live and work” and the Local Area Agreement outcome of “Empowering local communities” and “Creating a vibrant City Centre”. There was no statutory requirement to provide arts and entertainment, however the City Council had, for many years, provided resources to deliver a wide range of events of an artistic nature.

At its meeting on 18th June 2008 Members of the Community Development Scrutiny Panel had endorsed a draft Cultural Strategy, it was noted in the strategy that the provision of such events as the City Roots Festival had involved significant investment of staff time and revenue resources.

Between 1999 and 2003 the City Council had delivered an event looking to promote emerging popular music. This event had evolved into the Willow Festival, which had been discontinued due primarily to health and safety issues.

The City Roots Festival had three main aims. Firstly to deliver a safe event with a good atmosphere for young people, while also providing an excellent experience for family groups. Secondly it aimed to give a platform to local musicians, giving them the opportunity to work with a professional production in a large scale setting and in doing so providing a ladder for local musical talent. Thirdly it was to act as a pilot to explore the issues relating to this kind of event.

The views of the Panel were sought on all issues relating to the event but in particular:

- The principle of repeating the event
- The issue of charging
- The principle of fencing such an event

The Panel considered the report and the following issues were raised:

- Members questioned the possible reasons behind the poor attendance at the previous City Roots Festival, and whether the bad weather conditions and the ticket prices were to be held accountable in any way. It was noted that there had been a previous event held in Itter Park where there was no charge for entry and 5000 people had turned up in one day regardless of the weather conditions. With regard to entry fees, Members were advised that unfortunately this would be essential in order to cover costs for security, health and safety, fencing etc.
- A query was raised regarding the possibilities of attracting local bands to play at the event for free. Members were informed that this had been achieved in the past at another local event, and if the format was successful then local bands would want to take part in the future.
- Members discussed the apparent lack of promotion for the event and the impact of the pricing structure on the attendance figures for families. They further discussed the location of the event, stating that the embankment was a good venue but it would be reasonable to utilise less of it in future.
- Concern was expressed regarding people bringing along their own alcohol to the event. Members were informed that alcohol would only be available inside the Festival boundaries.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

8. Cultural Services – Customer Charging Policy Review

A report was presented to the Panel for consideration. The Council's existing pricing policy for customer services was based on historical information. The rationale for charging had not been reviewed for a number of years. As part of the annual budget setting process charges were reviewed each year in accordance with budget setting guidelines approved by Cabinet. Traditionally charges were reviewed on the basis of the previous years cost, inflation, market trends, social and business impact. Whilst the charges were influenced by a number of factors the existing process did not readily align itself with corporate priorities and lead to significant variation across services. This led to:

- A variation in fees and charges across services
- A different approach adopted by service areas in setting fees

Whilst the arrangements in place had served the Council adequately, it was appropriate to establish a robust and transparent strategy that would meet the needs of the Council, assist wider inclusion and inform future investment in services.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel:

- (i) Agreed the principle of establishing a small, time limited officer/member working group to explore a pricing policy framework for the cultural services provided by the Council, and
- (ii) Nominated Councillors John Fox, Sue Day and Samantha Dalton to sit on the working group.

9. Executive Decisions

The Panel considered the following Executive Decisions made since the last meeting:

- Response to the Government's Sub National Review Consultation Paper
- Supporting People Resettlement/Floating Support Contract
- Delivery Sustainable Development – Southbank Phase 1 – Carbon Challenge Site
- Growth Area Funds 2008-2011
- Affordable Housing Fund Allocation for Woodston
- Provision and Management of Sports Facilities at Bretton Park

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

10. Forward Plan

The latest version of the Forward Plan was presented to the Panel for consideration.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the Forward Plan.

11. Work Programme

The Panel received the latest version of the Work Programme for consideration.

It was noted that the agenda for the 4th November meeting was very full and officers were requested, where possible, to defer some items to future meetings of the Panel.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the latest version of the Work Programme.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 4th November 2008.

The meeting began at 7pm and ended at 8.23pm

CHAIRMAN