

At a meeting of the SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1 of the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 28th FEBRUARY, 2012 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor S. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Errington, T. Foster, Kay, Maddison, McClennan and Smiles

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Howe, Porthouse, Rolph and Wakefield

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 17th January, 2012

Councillor McClennan referred to page three of the minutes and commented that she had suggested that the groups investigate using the Council's Procurement services to get a better deal when having to purchase equipment and asked that the minute be amended accordingly, and it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January, 2012 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to making the amendment as stated.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Building a Sustainable and Lasting Legacy in Sport and Physical Activity Policy Review 2011/12 : Mapping Exercise and Consultation Results (Incorporating Future Priority Sports / Activities)

The Chief Executive and Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided information to Members in relation to the mapping exercise undertaken as part of the review and contributed to by Ward Members.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Victoria French, Assistant Head of Community Services, gave a presentation on the headlines that had emerged from the ward audit and consultation that had been undertaken with Members which advised of the activities and clubs that were running across the city and the levels of participation from adults and children.

(for copy presentation – see original minutes)

Ms. French advised the Committee that the ward level data contained within the presentation had been accurate at the time of collecting it and may have changed since then but commented that this was a good baseline to determine and record what was currently being provided in wards around the city.

Councillor Errington referred to the activity of shooting and the fact that it was one of the more popular sports which was not provided and queried if the rifle club had been contacted as he was aware they used to offer activities. Ms. French advised that shooting was not currently provided by the Council, however it may well be the case that particular clubs are still in operation but it may be that they weren't providing the activities wanted by residents and confirmed she would check with the club directly.

Councillor McClennan referred to the dance activities and asked if the detail could be broken down further to identify which dances were being undertaken, Ms. French advised that if the person filling in the questionnaire had included that detail it could be broken down further. In response to a further question, Ms. French informed Members that the majority of the dance activities were held in community venues such as church halls or community centres.

Councillor McClennan commented that she was surprised that angling did not appear in the results and Ms. French advised that it had not been recorded as part of the consultation work but that this did not mean that clubs did not exist and activities were not taking part in the city.

Councillor Foster referred to his own experiences and the fact that he was aware that the all weather pitch at the Castle View Academy had been out of action for at least four to five months. He explained that the Academy had approached the Area Committee for funding to repair the pitch and secured an amount of SIB funding. He raised concerns that the issue had not been dealt with as a matter of urgency as there were now concerns that clubs that had used the facilities were going elsewhere.

Members having fully discussed and commended the department on the work they had carried out, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the content of the information provided within the report and presentation be received and noted.

Sport England

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided information to the Committee in relation to Sport England's emerging Strategy for Sport and the way in which market segmentation is undertaken.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Ian Thurlbeck, Relationship Manager (Local Government) and Ms. Judith Rasmusson, Sport England Strategic Lead, gave a presentation to the Committee on Sport England's Market Segmentation Interactive Web Tool and how the information would be used to help providers of sport and physical activity to better understand their market and target their offers better. The presentation also set out the overall aspiration for Sport England's creating a sporting habit for life programme including what they were promising to deliver and the impact for local authorities and partners.

(for copy presentation – see original minutes)

In response to a query from Councillor Kay regarding the market segmentation tool and the level of detail it contained, Mr. Thurlbeck advised that the tool was web based, free and interactive, and could be accessed by all. He explained it was an active database which contained a whole raft of detail, allowing analysis to be carried out to the level of identifying trends to a postcode that was input.

Councillor McClennan queried why the data only started from individuals aged 18 and was advised that a lot of the information was gathered from Experian Credit and therefore would not be available for a younger age.

Councillor Kay commented that the basic principles of the tool were useful in setting the scene in areas but had concerns over information only being relevant for those ahead 18 and over as the reality could be that younger people would have some impact on what activities adults undertook whether it be related to childcare, budget, etc. Mr. Thurlbeck advised that the data from Experian was not the only source of information used within the system and that findings from the Active People Survey were also included as well as a whole range of other data sources.

In relation to how this information would link with Sunderland as a local authority, Ms. French advised that they would use the data, along with other sources, as to how to best offer products and activities that would service the highest population in an area. She explained that the intelligence from the tool could be used with local knowledge to identify where the quickest and most positive impacts could be made for residents of the city.

Councillor McClennan reiterated concerns over the age and commented that there was a need to target young people now harnessing their ambitions. Ms. Rasmusson commented that they were aware of activities for under 18's and information was gathered in a different way but did allow them to pick up on any issues to address through other strategies of Sport England's.

In response to comments from Councillor McClennan regarding data from people with disabilities or from ethnic and minority groups and whether there was a gap in the information contained within the database, Mr. Thurlbeck advised that each

segment had alternative names and that those shown today were not necessarily indicative representatives.

With regards to a query from Councillor Foster as to how it would be decided who would provide expertise to schools and clubs, Ms. Rasmusson advised that they would work locally in areas to establish which were the best schools or clubs to deliver each of the sports and activities. She suggested that it may be a club that is already established who has a qualified coach, who with the support of Sport England and the Governing Body of a school could work in partnership to provide activities for the community. Ms. French commented that through recommendations to the sports and leisure department officers would support collaborated working between the Children's Service Directorate and providers to ensure there was a linked up approach to where services could be accessed rather than identifying them separately.

Councillor Errington asked if clubs were to be made aware that funding was available through Sport England and Ms. French advised that the Active Sunderland Officer would support clubs and groups, signposting them to funding which was relevant for them to apply for, helping them as much as possible with the application if necessary.

In relation to queries from Councillor McClennan around the spending of funding, Ms. Rasmusson advised that clubs and groups would need to show that they were fit for purpose and what they could deliver in their locality. The funding would not operate on a 'payment by results' basis which should improve outcomes and focus resource where it is most needed. When asked if there would be any weighting put on areas to encourage spending in deprived areas of the city, Ms. Rasmusson explained that it would not be directly but they would need to show the geographical area the provision would cover and show how they would spend the funding to improve what was on offer in the area.

With regards to comments from Councillors Kay and McClennan around the resurrecting of 'iconic' buildings, Ms. Rasmusson explained that the term may seem misleading as they were referring to new and iconic ways of thinking of solutions to making services different and sustainable, rather than just iconic in design terms. Mr. Odunaiya highlighted the ongoing requirement for the Council to reduce revenue costs by working differently and more effectively.

Councillor Kay asked how far progressed the Local Authority were and Ms. French advised that they were in a unique positive place at present with the scrutiny policy review topic running in parallel to the new Sport England Strategy and recommendations from the review would link in to ensure that the direction of travel fits with the aligned strategy for Sunderland.

Having thanked Officers for their report and attendance, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the information provided within the report and presentation be received and noted.

Localism Act : Housing and Planning Provisions

The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided information to Members in relation to the 'Localism Act 2011', specifically on the details of the Planning and Housing provisions within the Act and the consequences for their implementation in Sunderland.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Alan Caddick, Head of Strategic Housing and Mr. Neil Cole, Lead Policy Officer for Planning presented the report to the Committee advising that the Localism Act looked to devolve decision making powers from Whitehall to communities and their locally democratically elected representatives and setting out a summary of the main planning and housing related changes in the Act and the implications for Sunderland.

Councillor McClennan referred to paragraph 4.4 of the report and asked for a definition of what would constitute as making a development 'economically unviable'. Mr. Cole advised that at present a scheme was defined as viable if the land acquisition plus the build costs left an acceptable level of profit margin, anything below that level would be classed as unviable. He explained that through phased builds and with the ever changing economical status developments could move from unviable to viable over time. With regards to what was classed as a 'meaningful proportion' he advised that more information was yet to be received and once this was available it would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Councillor McClennan also referred to page 20 of the report and neighbourhood forums which must be formally designated by the Council and asked in more information was available on how they would operate and their processes. Mr. Cole advised that the establishment of forums would be a lengthy process but he would circulate to Members the information he had on them to date.

In relation to comments from Councillor Kay regarding sites in the city of new developments and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Mr. Cole advised that the Council would need to be careful as you could not pinpoint individual sites around they city when setting a CIL area as they would have to take a whole host of sites around the city into account as to what is viable or not. He advised that CIL would not replace Section 106 agreements but it would impact upon what the Council could request from developers.

Councillor Watson referred to a number of applications where she was aware that Section 106 monies had been 'clawed back' by developers and asked if procedures could be put in place to stop this happening in the future. Mr. Cole advised that he did not have direct dealing with Section 106 but he was aware that once received it became the relevant directorates responsibility to ensure it was utilised accordingly. He advised that the Council had to indicate what the monies were requested for and define areas but it may be that more resources needed to be allocated from other funding before a scheme could be undertaken.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for the report, and it was :-

4. RESOLVED that the content of the report and the implications for the Council and City be received and noted.

Work Programme 2011-12

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which set out the work programme for the Committee's work during the 2011-12 Council year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Sarah Abernethy, Scrutiny and Area Support Officer, presented the report advising that any requests for future reports that had been raised at this meeting would be added to the Work Programme at the appropriate future meeting.

Councillor Kay referred to the Empty Properties Year End report that was to be submitted to the April meeting and was advised by Mr. Caddick that it would reflect on the previous year achievements, which were showing to be ahead of the targets set, and then give a breakdown of performance over each of the five Area Committee areas. The report would also include details for the future and the year ahead.

5. RESOLVED that the information contained within the Work Programme be received and noted.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1st March, 2012 – 30th June, 2012

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1st March, to 30th June, 2012 which related to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

The Committee were advised that timings would prevent the report on Local Authority Mortgages being submitted to this Committee prior to its submission to Cabinet. Mr. Caddick agreed to circulate the report to Members once it was prepared for Cabinet, and it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the contents of the Forward Plan be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and input.

(Signed) S. WATSON,
Chairman.