

**At a meeting of the SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Watson in the Chair

Councillors M. Dixon, Ellis, Errington, Rolph, Wares and Wilson.

**Also Present:-**

Councillor Tate – Chairman of the Management Scrutiny Committee

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Foster, J. Scott and L. Walton.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny  
Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2010**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:-
  - i) Paragraph 4, page 3 – ‘...most of the City’s migration...’ be amended to read ‘...most of the Coalfield’s migration...’
  - ii) Paragraph 4, page 3 – it be clarified that Councillor Rolph believed that Private Landlords needed to be part of the sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

**Declarations of Interest**

Item 6 – Sport, Wellness, Aquatics and Play Update

Councillor Errington declared a personal interest in the item as an employee of City Hospitals Sunderland, NHS Foundation Trust.

## **Local Area Agreement Delivery Plans**

Sal Buckler, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, presented a report of the Attractive and Inclusive Delivery Partnership (copy circulated) which briefed the Committee on the Delivery Plan for services delivered by the partner Members of the Attractive and Inclusive Delivery Partnership.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Buckler, in conjunction with Sam Palombella (Chair of the Partnership) and Neil Cole (Manager, Planning Policy) advised the Committee of the following key aspects detailed in the report.

- i) the background and context to the Partnership;
- ii) its purpose and key aims;
- iii) those organisations comprising the Partnership;
- iv) its progress to date and key achievements;
- vi) key improvement activity to be undertaken during 2010/2011.

In response to an observation from Councillor Rolph, Ms. Buckler advised that while the importance of heritage had been omitted from the report, it was a vital part of the Legible City and Place Shaping agenda. With regard to the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Joint Committee, Ms. Buckler advised the Partnership was not a closed group. Contact had been made with the Joint Committee and it would be possible to invite a representative to join the Partnership.

With regard to the Delivery Plan, Councillor Rolph stated that every key action listed should also clearly indicate how and why it related to the respective priority and how it would deliver the required outcomes. This was not the case for many of the key actions listed on page 18, one of which simply stated 'Hudson Road Development'. An example on the type of Key Action Councillor Rolph was looking for could be found on page 19.

'Further development of the Citizens' panel including improved representation and more interactive forms of engagement and capacity building to enable panel members to have a greater influence over decision making.'

Ms. Buckler replied that the report before the Committee was an extract/synopsis of a larger delivery plan and it had been hoped that the format would be the most appropriate way to present the information to Members within the confines of a Committee meeting. The Delivery Partnership had its own narrative which Ms. Buckler offered to share with the Committee.

In response Councillor Rolph contended that in order for the Committee to effectively scrutinise the plan and to fulfil its role as a critical friend then it should have access to the whole document.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Errington regarding the key action which stated 'Develop a young people's community cohesion project based around place shaping agenda', Mr. Palombella advised that the proposal was a result of a collaborative approach from the City Council, Groundwork and Gentoo. The project

only had guaranteed funding for one year and the first area to be targeted using a community philosophy approach would be Moorsley. Should additional funding become available it was hoped to extend the project to Pennywell and Southwick.

There being no further questions the Chairman thanked the officers for their report, and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Accommodation With Support – Design Guide**

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with a copy of the above design guide which outlined:-

- Good practice relating to designing accommodation with support;
- The Council's aspirations relating to the standards expected within future supported housing developments;
- The Council's expectations relating to new development design responses to sustainability and energy conservation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Alan Caddick, Head of Housing, presented the report advising Members of the background to the guide and placing it in context, why it had been decided to produce a design guide, the relevant consultations undertaken together with the current position.

Councillors Wilson, Dixon, Rolph and Wares all congratulated Mr. Caddick on an excellent and extremely welcome piece of work with particular reference to:-

- Its clarity and ease of reading;
- Its clarity of reference;
- Its recognition of the importance of design and the fact that good design doesn't have to cost more;
- It would become a fantastic tool for Members and hopefully for residents.

Mr. Caddick thanked Members for their compliments and advised that these should be directed to Ann Prentice, Commissioning Manager, Accommodation, who was responsible for the Guide's production.

The Chairman having congratulated Mr. Caddick and Ms. Prentice on the development of the Guide and thanked them for the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

## **Sport, Wellness, Aquatics and Play Update**

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an overview for the Committee regarding work relating to sport, wellness, aquatics and play undertaken during 2009, highlighting projects that had been recently updated, currently being delivered or those in the planning process.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Julie Grey, Head of Community Services, presented the report advising that this was the first such annual report to be brought before the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee having been formally presented to the old Culture and Leisure Review Committee.

Members were advised that the directorate were working towards the delivery of a City wide 'core offer' to all residents which was also referenced in the Corporate Improvement Plan. All residents would have the opportunity to participate in four core areas of physical activity comprising sport, wellness, aquatics and play.

Ms. Grey introduced Julie Russell, Sport and Leisure Partnership Manager, Victoria French, Wellness Manager and Alison O'Neil, Assistant Head of Community Services, who provided Members with a comprehensive briefing on each of the four core areas, together with the various connecting schemes and projects operating at a local level and the numerous shorter term targeted services to inspire adults and young people to participate in physical activity to improve overall health and wellbeing.

In addition Members also received a presentation from Paul Power, Sports Development Delivery Manager, on proposed priorities in relation to the Football Investment Strategy and enjoyed a screening of a DVD depicting improvements made to various play areas in the City.

Members made the following comments and observations with regard to the report and presentations:-

- The desire to see Ryhope Recreation Park supported.
- The importance of developing greater cross border working with Durham County.
- The likely effect of changes in 16-19 educational provision – currently schools with sixth forms had a guarantee of 2 hours sports per week, there was no such guarantee at post 16 colleges;
- The need to ensure talented athletes received the right funding at the right time to keep them within the City rather than chasing bursaries at Northumbria and Teesside Universities.
- Concern that assessment of play areas was subjective rather than via an independent check list.

- The excellence of the service provided by the Council's wellness centres. Not only the tailor made programmes and brilliant equipment but the customer care provided by the staff to enable people to get the best out of them.
- The excellence of the link between the Lifestyle Activity and Food Programme with the school food agenda.
- A need to increase the number of the 'Walk in the Parks' within the Coalfield area.
- The need to follow up the progress of customers on the Exercise Referral and Weight Management Programme after the completion of the course.
- Concern at the ability of the City to provide adequate accommodation for the 2010 UK School Games.
- Appreciation for the new Hetton Pool and the news that anti natal classes would be provided from April 2010.
- Concern at comments from the public that the temperature of the pool at the Aquatic Centre was too cold. Specific examples had been received in relation to a baby and a profoundly autistic adult.

In conclusion Ms. Grey thanked Members for their input over the previous 12 months on the possible next steps for play development in the City. She advised that draft proposals would be presented for Members' comments at the next round of Area Committees.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Grey and her colleagues for their presentations, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

### **Access to Housing Policy Review – Progress Report**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which advised Members of progress on the Committee's policy review around access to housing in Sunderland together with a copy of the presentation provided by Stephen Rudge of Coventry City Council on Choice Based Lettings at an event held on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report and advised that the next meeting of the focus group would be held on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2010.

Councillor Dixon having expressed his thanks to Mr. Cummings for his hard work in facilitating the review, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

## **Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2010**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February – 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2010 which related to sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Lancaster, Assistant Scrutiny Officer, having drawn Members' attention to the most recent version of the plan (copy tabled) published following the dispatch of the agenda, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

## **Work Programme 2009-10**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching for Members' information the Committee's current Work Programme for the 2009-10 Council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Helen Lancaster, Assistant Scrutiny Officer, invited the Committee to note the work programme.

Councillor Rolph stated that she had asked on at least three occasions that a report on built heritage be added to the work programme for the Committee, together with a report on local studies.

Mr. Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, advised that a report on local studies would be submitted to the March meeting. He was still endeavouring to ensure that the appropriate officers would provide a report on the City's built heritage at the earliest opportunity.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Rolph, Mr. Cummings advised that a report on the Committee's review of Access to Housing would need to be presented by the municipal year end. He acknowledged Councillor Rolph's point that the Committee had yet to investigate Affordable Social Housing in the Private Sector and therefore the scope of the review was more truncated than originally envisaged.

The Committee having expressed the opinion that this was an extremely important aspect of the review, it was agreed that this particular area should be investigated in a review to be undertaken during 2010/11.

7. RESOLVED that the work programme be received and noted and the additional reports as detailed above be scheduled accordingly.

There being no further business on the agenda, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) S. WATSON,  
Chairman.