

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 18 March 2014

Time: 18.00 hrs.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: S Walker (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), L Bell, L Harrington, C Latif and P Stuart

Start/End Time: Start Time: 18.00 hrs.
End Time: 19.10 hrs.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Mead and the Youth Mayor, ABK Mboho.

There were no declarations of interests.

2. MINUTES – 3 MARCH 2014

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee had not been available for circulation with the agenda. The Chair accepted that it was appropriate that they be circulated at the meeting on this occasion.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. 2014-2015 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

The Constitutional Services Manager introduced the report the purpose of which was to approve a workplan for the coming year. The report detailed suggestions for scrutiny studies that had been received from Members and Community Groups that were in the remit of the Committee.

An additional suggestion for consideration as a potential scrutiny study, submitted by the World Forum, was circulated at the meeting.

The Strategic Director (Community) then referred to section 7.4 of the report and highlighted some of the issues that the Committee should be aware that might emerge during 2014/2015 and that may influence its consideration of its workplan for the forthcoming year. With reference to the study on Community Transport that had recently been completed, the Strategic Director suggested that the Committee

might want to undertake further work on the proposal to establish a single provider as without the Committee pursuing this option it was unlikely to be progressed.

Concerning the Committee's Crime and Disorder role, Members had recently considered the SoSafe Action Plan for 2014/2015 and the Committee might want to review progress made against the plan and then in early 2015 look at the draft Plan emerging for 2015/2016.

All Members had had the opportunity to attend meetings with officers to discuss arrangements for Local Community Budgets (LCBs). Arising from these meetings officers would be drafting proposals and before they are considered by the relevant Executive Members they would be submitted for consideration to this Committee. It was noted that given the timetable for this work the draft proposals could be considered at the Committee's meeting on 16 April (following the roundtable discussion on Health with the Executive Portfolio Holder).

Members considered the individual suggestions for scrutiny study that had been put forward. The discussion focussed around which of the individual organisations and community groups and charities provided which services, co-ordination of the services provided and the value of those services. The Head of Business Strategy, Community and Customer Services stated that many of these organisations were independent and only where they were in receipt of direct funding from the Council could milestones be set regarding performance. However, he reminded the Committee that a review of Community Associations was to be undertaken and the Committee would be seeing a draft of the outcome in its Policy Development role before it went to the Executive. Additionally a report concerning a new Policy for the Management of Commercial Properties that included proposals for the management of commercial properties used by voluntary and community organisations was going to the Executive on 29 April and the Committee would be invited to consider the proposals together with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before that date.

It was considered that the issue of communications for the voluntary sector was key as many people in need of help did not know which organisations could assist them. It was accepted that given the cuts faced by the Council it would not be able to directly support the implementation and maintenance of a directory or internet portal link to information regarding services provided by the numerous community and voluntary groups and charities, but it was considered that an investigation into how this might be done could prove to be very productive and possibly result in something positive and beneficial for many people. There would be a number of aspects to consider and none more so than the relevant organisations themselves buying in to the project.

Concerning reviews of recommendations arising from previous studies the Committee was of the view that it would be appropriate to revisit the outcomes of the study into the Museum. It was also noted that the Executive Portfolio Holders' response to the recommendations the Committee had made on its review of Community Transport for Older People was also scheduled to be submitted to the Committee in the near future.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That feedback from the Scrutiny Evaluation Questionnaire completed by Members be noted.
2. That having considered ideas put forward by individual Members from their Scrutiny Evaluation Survey and topics raised from Community Groups following canvassing of the groups through January and February 2014 it be agreed that the Scrutiny Study for 2014/2015 focus on investigating options for the provision of a local communications hub/on-line directory of services provided by the voluntary sector, community groups and other agencies.
3. That the Committee, in its capacity as the Council's statutory Crime and Disorder Committee undertakes a review of progress on the activities in the 2014/2015 SoSafe Action Plan (November 2014) and consideration of the SoSafe draft Action Plan for 2015/2016 (February 2015).
4. That the Committee endorses the comments made in relation to those suggestions put forward for Scrutiny that for reasons either stated within the Work Programme report in section 5.8 and/or discussed at the meeting would not be appropriate at this time and that those Community Groups/Members who have put forward these ideas be informed accordingly.
5. That officers be requested to bring forward a follow-up report on the progress of the recommendations agreed in the scrutiny study of the Museum undertaken in 2012/2013.
6. That it be noted that in undertaking its Policy Development role, before the end of this municipal the Committee will be presented with draft papers on the review of the Local Community Budget arrangements and a new Policy for the Management of Commercial Properties that includes proposals for the management of commercial properties used by voluntary and community organisations. The latter paper to be considered jointly with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
7. That it be noted that policy development work in 2014/2015 will include Older People's Services and the Community Centre Review.
8. That the Chair writes to all those Groups and individuals who have put forward suggestions for study thanking them for their interest and that they be sent details of the agreed workplan and opportunities to take part in the scrutiny work to be undertaken.

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required

PART II

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None

Chair