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Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 15 March 2012

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 March 2012

1.30 - 4.01 pm

Present: Councillors Kerr (Chair), Al Bander, Kightley (Vice-Chair), Blackhurst, Brown, Moghadas, O'Reilley, Reiner and Todd-Jones.

Executive Councillors:

Councillor Bick, Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health
Councillor Cantrill, Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places
Councillor Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

Present for Housing Items Non-voting co-optees: Diane Best and Kay Harris

Officers Present:

Liz Bisset, Director of Customer and Community Services
Alan Carter, Head of Strategic Housing
Richard Lord, Team Leader Private Sector Housing
Paul Necus, Head of Specialist Services
Sabrina Walston, Development Officer
Debbie Kaye, Head of Arts and Recreation
Steve Bagnall, Cultural Facilities Manager
David Greening, Housing Options and Homelessness Manager
Lynda Kilkelly, Safer Communities Sections Manager
Trevor Woollams, Head of Community Development
Jackie Hanson, Operations and Resources Manager
Alistair Wilson, Green Spaces Manager
Sally Roden, Neighbourhood Community Development Manager
James McWilliams, Safer Communities Project Officer
Toni Birkin, Committee Manager

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

12/21/CS Apologies

Apologies were received from Brian Haywood.

12/22/CS Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Item	Interest
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Reiner	12/32/CS	Has been involved with the Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership
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12/23/CS Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 12th January were approved and signed as a correct record.

12/24/CS Public Questions (See information below)

There were no public questions.

12/25/CS Charging for enforcement notices or orders under the Housing Act 2004

Matter for Decision:

Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 ("the Act") gives the Council the power to recover all reasonable expenses incurred by them in taking enforcement action under part one of the Act. Preparing and serving enforcement notices can be a time consuming and costly process currently this cost is not recharged to the receipts of notices.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

Approve the policy document as detailed in Annex A of the Officer's report, Charging for Certain Enforcement Action, policy document January 2012, which will introduce a charge of £150:00 per Housing Act 2004 enforcement notice from April 2012.

Reason for the Decision:

The policy was for cost recovery purposes.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not Applicable

Scrutiny Considerations:

Not applicable.

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/26/CS New Council House Programme - Barnwell Road

Matter for Decision:

The report requested approval to redevelop City Homes properties in Barnwell Road as part of the 146 new Council House Programme. A mixed tenure scheme was proposed that would be developed with the Council's new house-builder/developer partner, Keepmoat.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- I. Approve the property mix and layout of the scheme as detailed in the Officer's report, noting that these are subject to planning approval.
- II. Approve an estimated contract value for the scheme of £940,000.
- III. Approve a further budget of £278,160 to cover Home Loss and cost consultant costs.
- IV. Approve that delegated authority be given to the Director of Customer and Community Services following consultation with the Director of Resources and the Head of Legal Services to seal a Development Agreement with our selected house-builder/developer partner, Keepmoat for the scheme.

Reason for the Decision:

Approval to take the scheme forward now would allow consultation to begin with tenants with a view to achieving vacant possession by end March 2013. This in turn allows a target date for completion of the new homes by end March 2014.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not Applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report for the Head of Strategic Housing regarding the New Council House Programme for Barnwell Road.

In response to a question from the Leaseholder Representative, the Head of Strategic Housing confirmed that the leaseholder effected by the proposal was believed to be a resident leaseholder. They would receive compensation in line with the recently agreed policy.

In response to member question, the following were confirmed:

- I. The unit sizes would mirror the Strategic Analysis of Housing Demand with approximately 50% being 1 or 2 bed units and 50% being 3 bed and larger.
- II. Local factors, such as the supply and demand of certain property types in the vicinity, would be taken into account.
- III. The overarching aim was to maximise the number of affordable properties.
- IV. The mix would vary from site to site.
- V. It was not anticipated that there would be a high demand from existing residents wanting to return following any decant.
- VI. The properties would be built to high standards.
- VII. This was the start of a four-year programme which would encourage the developer to provide a good service.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/27/CS Proposed Refurbishment Of Cambridge Access Surgery

Matter for Decision:

The report detailed the role of the Cambridge Access Surgery, a primary health care service for homeless people in the city, and its contribution to the Council's strategic response to homelessness and proposals to refurbish the building to facilitate the development of the service.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

Agree a capital grant of up to £100,000 to be drawn from the existing Renewals and Replacements fund to upgrade the facilities at the primary health care service for homeless people at 125 Newmarket Road.

Reason for the Decision:

The grant would ensure that the building is fit for purpose to deliver enhanced health care with services expanding to include:

- I. Enhanced substance misuse, mental health and alcohol treatments
- II. Improved access to dental services foot care and eye tests
- III. In house management and treatment of Hepatitis C

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Housing Options and Homelessness Manager regarding a grant request for the refurbishment of the Cambridge Access Surgery.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 9 votes to 0 (unanimous).

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/28/CS Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Framework Delivery Agreement (FDA)

Matter for Decision

In July 2011 Cambridge City Council was successful in securing grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to build and manage Affordable Housing through a national bidding scheme. The Council was awarded £2,587,500 grant to deliver 146 dwellings before the end of March 2015. This equates to £17,500 per dwelling. The Council are now required to enter into the Framework Delivery Agreement (FDA) with the HCA to receive

this grant funding on a dwelling-by-dwelling basis. Within the FDA are obligations the Council must adhere to.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- I. Delegate authority to the Director of Customer and Community Services to execute the HCA's Framework Delivery Agreement, committing the Council to the obligations under that agreement.
- II. Give approval for the Head of Strategic Housing to act as the Grant Recipient's Representative within the meaning of the HCA's Framework Delivery Agreement.

Reason for the Decision:

As detailed in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Development Officer regarding the HCA's Framework Delivery Agreement.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 9 votes to 0 (unanimously) .

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/29/CS Empty Homes Policy 2012

Matter for Decision:

Making best use of existing homes is a key objective in the Council's Housing Strategy. The Council has a strong commitment to bringing long-term empty homes back into use.

The aims of the Empty Homes Policy are to review existing options and introduce measures that will:

- I. Return long-term empty homes back into use.
- II. Make positive improvements to housing conditions and to the environment.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

The Executive Councillor for Housing resolved to:

Approve the policy document as detailed in Annex A of the Officer's report, *Empty Homes Policy 2012*.

Reason for the Decision:

There is a shortage of residential accommodation available in the City in particular a shortage of family accommodation available to buy or rent. Each empty home denies a household somewhere to live and returning empty homes to use has social, environmental and financial benefits.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

The Council recognises that there are different options available to owners of empty homes to bring them back into use. The Council will initially work informally with owners to re-use homes however formal enforcement options are available when the informal approach fails.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Team Leader of Private Sector Housing regarding the Empty Homes policy.

The committee made the following comments in response to the report.

- I. Concern was expressed about the resources needed to work with up to 80 property owners at any one time.
- II. Identifying empty homes when full council tax was being paid and the property was furnished would be difficult.
- III. Members had concerns about the differences between owners who were unable, rather than unwilling, to return a property to use.
- IV. The policy appeared to be resource intensive and members questioned it's value for money. The Officer confirmed that there was no dedicated officer and that decisions would have to be taken regarding priorities. However, some quick wins were expected.

- V. Members questioned what happened to any properties that were acquired using this policy and the officer confirmed that they were usually sold on as quickly as possible to enable them to be brought back into use.
- VI. Members requested further information from the Legal Department regarding any profits made from the resale of properties.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/30/CS Guildhall Improvements - project appraisal

Matter for Decision:

The project appraisal seeks to spend a proportion of the funding set aside for this wider project to improve access and facilities at the Guildhall. Stage one will involve the purchase of a removable disabled wheelchair lift and new demountable, tiered staging; this will leave £54,700 to fund stage two which will cover installation of disabled access to the Guildhall and a range of other related improvements.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

Financial recommendations

Approve the commencement of this scheme, which is already included in the Council's Capital & Revenue Project Plan (SC361).

- I. The total cost of the project is £25,300, funded from use of Reserves.
- II. There are no ongoing revenue implications arising from the project.

Procurement recommendations

Approve the carrying out and completion of the procurement of replacement tiered staging for the Guildhall stage at a cost of £18,300 and a temporary removable wheelchair lift for the Guildhall Stage at a cost of £7,000. These

items form part of the Guildhall Improvement Project for which a capital sum of £80,000 has been allocated.

- III. Subject to the permission from the Executive Councillor being sought before proceeding if the value exceeds the estimated contract by more than 15%.

Reason for the Decision:

The aim is to ensure that the Guildhall can continue to be used as a performance space for all sectors of the community, that the facilities offered ally with best practice in terms of disability access and that improvements reflect the history and current use of the building.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable

Scrutiny Considerations:

No applicable.

The Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted).

N/A

12/31/CS Replacement of Corn Exchange House Lighting

Matter for Decision:

The proposal is to replace the existing lights with a LED lighting system, which is more energy efficient and will therefore lead to a reduction in both running costs and carbon emissions.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

Financial recommendations

- I. Recommend this scheme (which is not included in the Council's Capital & Revenue Project Plan) for approval by Council, subject to resources being available to fund the capital and revenue costs.

- II. The total cost of the project is £40,000, funded from repair and renewal funding and a grant from the Climate Change Fund.
- III. There are no adverse revenue implications arising from the project. The bid to the Climate Change Fund identifies savings from lighting efficiency which when realised will be returned to the Council.

Procurement recommendations

- IV. Approve the procurement of replacement and upgraded house lighting for the Corn Exchange at a total cost of £40,000.
- V. Subject to permission from the Executive Councillor being sought before proceeding if the value exceeds the estimated contract by more than 15%.

Reason for the Decision:

The general house lighting system in the Corn Exchange auditorium needs replacing. The existing system was installed over 15 years ago and is rapidly becoming life expired.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

As an alternative, the existing lighting system could be replaced on a 'like-for-like' basis, for example with metal halide fittings and tungsten halogen floodlights. This option would be cheaper (est. cost of around £14,000) but would not deliver the ongoing cost and carbon savings that will be achieved through a LED lighting solution.

Scrutiny Considerations:

Not applicable.

The Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/32/CS Review of Neighbourhood Community Planning projects in Abbey, Arbury and Kings Hedges Wards**Matter for Decision:**

The council established 3 Neighbourhood Community Planning (NCP) projects in Abbey, Arbury and Kings Hedges in the late 1990s. The idea behind this approach was to try and address the lack of opportunity for residents in wards with lower levels of income and higher levels of deprivation, to improve

communication, consultation and participation and build a stronger sense of local ownership within these wards.

The report made recommendations about the future funding of the three NCPs for consideration.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- I. To acknowledge the achievements of the 3 NCP projects;
- II. To note and support the progress and direction for the projects described in paras 5.1 to 5.5 of the Officer's report.
- III. To request officers to consult on and agree with each project a practical development plan which respects the differential positions from which each starts, and safeguards - and if possible expands – their capacity to deliver.
- IV. To report back to the scrutiny committee in the October cycle.

Reason for the Decision:

The project as an entity has not been formally reviewed since its inception. This report summarised the work of each NCP project since it began, highlighting their considerable success, key achievements and identifying how each NCP aims to continue delivering work in the future.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Head of Community Development regarding the review of Neighbourhood Community Planning Project in Arbury, Abbey and Kings Hedges.

In response to the report the committee made the following comments.

- I. The good work achieved to-date was recognised.
- II. The review was not intended to save money.
- III. The three groups would be encouraged to seek independent funding in the future but it was recognised that this might be a long-term aspiration.
- IV. It was recognised and applauded, that the Kings Hedges group had made progress towards independence.

In view of on-going discussions, Councillor Kightley proposed the following amended recommendations:

- To acknowledge the achievements of the 3 NCP projects
- To note and support the progress and direction for the projects described in paras 5.1 to 5.5 of the Officer's report.
- To request officers to consult on and agree with each project a practical development plan which respects the differential positions from which each starts, and safeguards - and if possible expands – their capacity to deliver; to report back to the scrutiny committee in the October cycle.

Members expressed support for the amended recommendations.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the amended recommendation by 9 votes to 0 (unanimously).

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/33/CS Cambridge Community Safety Partnership (CCSP) Plan 2011-2014 - 2012 Update

Matter for Decision:

A draft of the Community Safety Plan 2011-14 (updated for 2012) was presented to the January Community Services Scrutiny Committee for comment. The Community Safety Partnership Board who are the owners of the plan accepted the Committee's suggestion and have incorporated them into the final plan presented as Appendix A of the Officer's report. The final plan is presented for endorsement by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Councillor for Community Safety.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

Endorse the proposed priorities and amendments to the Community Safety Plan 2011-2014 (updated for 2012) agreed by the Community Safety Partnership and set out in section 3.2 of the Officer's report.

Reason for the Decision:

Cambridge Community Safety Partnership developed a new Plan in April 2011. That plan has been updated for 2012/13 following a Strategic Assessment by the County Research Team. The recommendations in the Strategic Assessment are that the priorities of the Community Safety Plan 2012/13 should remain similar to those in the current plan, that is, reducing:

- I. Alcohol related violent crime
- II. Anti-social behaviour
- III. Repeat victims of domestic violence
- IV. Re-offending

The amendments to the current priorities were discussed at the January Scrutiny Committee.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Safer Communities Manager regarding the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership Plan.

The committee expressed support for the priorities.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 9 votes to 0 (unanimously).

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/34/CS Restorative Justice - Neighbourhood Resolution Panels - Proposal

Matter for Decision:

“Restorative justice” (RJ) is an approach to criminal justice that provides a person who has suffered harm with an opportunity to tell the wrongdoer about the damaging effects of their actions. Some forms of RJ also give the wronged person a say in what the perpetrator can do to make amends. This report outlined a proposed RJ scheme for Cambridge based on the ‘neighbourhood

resolution panel' model . This model is one that promotes a high level of community involvement and has been shown in studies to produce high levels of satisfaction for victims, and agencies making referrals and has reduced re-offending in perpetrators.

The outline scheme proposed here had been developed in partnership with, and has the full support of, the police and other criminal justice system agencies.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- I. Note of the report attached as Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, which explains the scheme in detail, says what the scheme is intended to achieve, and provides a plan for the implementation of the scheme; and
- II. Endorse the scheme as outlined in the appendix of the Officer's report.

Reason for the Decision:

As detailed in the Officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Safer Community Section Manager regarding restorative justice. The Director of Customer and Community Services informed members that the proposal had drawn heavily on research from a similar scheme in Sheffield. This scheme had been achieving good results and impressive customer satisfaction levels.

Members made the following comments.

- I. Members were concerned that vulnerable victims might find any suggestions of meeting an offender distressing.
- II. In response to questions, it was confirmed that participation would be voluntary and that staff would be trained to identifying those cases that would be suitable for this approach.
- III. Members asked for an assurance that the new service would not be duplicating a service already provided and funding via the mediation service.
- IV. Concern was expressed over the definition of a neighbourhood. Cambridge is not comparable to Sheffield in terms of size and

interventions at a neighbourhood level could be problematic in a small City.

Officers confirmed that it was envisaged that the restorative justice approach would be used to address lifestyle clashes and low level crimes. It would be an additional tool in the neighbourhood dispute resolution toolbox. It would be solution focused and would be useful in no fault disputes, which were subtly different from cases where one party was clearly in the wrong.

Councillor Bick thanked the committee for their comments. He suggested that while this model had something extra to add to existing provision, the boundaries would be recognised to avoid duplication. Partner agencies would be involved in taking the proposal forward.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/35/CS City Centre Youth Venue - Consultation and Proposals

Matter for Decision:

The report set out a proposal to work in partnership with the YMCA to explore options with young people to look at the practicalities of providing a new venue for young people in the centre of Cambridge.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- I. Agree that the Council should work in partnership with the YMCA to explore options with young people, as set out in section 4 of this report, with the aim of providing a new facility for young people in the centre of Cambridge;
- II. Agree that £80,000 from the East Area Capital Grants Programme be provisionally allocated to the project until firm proposals have been worked up and agreed and costs have been established; and

- III. Appoint three scrutiny members who would provide a sounding board for officers as they take this project forwards with the YMCA.

Reason for the Decision:

The Council is committed to prioritising services for children and young people. This commitment was reinforced in January when the outcomes from the review of the Children and Young People's Participation Service (ChYpPS) were reported to this committee.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Head of Community Development regarding the options and practicalities of providing a new venue for young people in the centre of Cambridge.

Councillor Kerr proposed an additional recommendation to read:

- To appoint three scrutiny members who would provide a sounding board for officers as they take this project forwards with the YMCA.

Members welcomed the additional recommendations.

The committee made the following comments.

- I. Young people who are residents of the YMCA who potential have a high level of needs and young people who would be using an entertainment venue were two distinct groups.
- II. They had distinct needs and risk factors which could be problematic in a shared space.
- III. Concerns were expressed about the potential interactions of the two groups.
- IV. Crating two separate spaces, perhaps with separate entrances, was also seen as potentially problematic.
- V. Would parents want their younger teens using a mixed-use venue?
- VI. Members questioned the validity of the survey results, as most respondents were not in the target age group.
- VII. The concerns of local residents needed to be taken into account.

The Head of Community Development confirmed that his team shared the members concerns. The survey respondents were self-selecting. However, demand for this type of venue had been recoded over a long period. He

confirmed that the YMCA managed this type of venue in other locations and that the options was worth considering.

Councillor Bick stated that the proposal was potentially a good idea. However, if the issues of co-existence in the single venue could not be managed to members' satisfaction the proposal would not go ahead. He further confirmed that a dedicated facility was beyond the reach of current resources. Working with a partner agency to share an existing, staffed, facilities was the only viable option at present.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the amended recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/36/CS Refurbishment of Newmarket Road Cemetery Offices and Reception

Matter for Decision:

The Cemetery facilities are to be refurbished as detailed in the Officer's report. The refurbishment project is necessary because the area currently used for an office at Newmarket Road Cemetery will need to revert back to being residential accommodation within the Cemetery Lodge.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- I. Approve the carrying out and completion of the procurement of this project (which is included in the Council's Capital Plan) as outlined at 1.3 of the Officer's report.
- II. If the tender sum exceeds the estimated contract value of £120,000 by more than 15% the permission of the Executive Councillor and Director of Resources will be sought prior to proceeding.

Reason for the Decision:

The project aims to make effective and efficient use of Council buildings, to improve facilities for those attending funeral services that are using the Chapel, and to improve welfare facilities for staff and visitors to the Cemetery.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Head of Specialist Services regarding the refurbishment of Newmarket Cemetery.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 9 votes to 0 (unanimously).

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

12/37/CS New Allotments at Kendal Way

Matter for Decision:

The Executive Councillor is asked to agree that the land at Kendal Way edged red on the attached plan (being no longer required for housing purposes) be appropriated for allotment purposes under section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The proposed allotments are off a track from Kendal Way 2, Cambridge, which almost exactly mirrors existing allotments (Kendal Way 1) from another track the opposite side of Kendal Way.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts Sport and Public Places

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

Agree the conversion of land under Housing Revenue Account ownership into allotments.

Reason for the Decision:

To formalise the conversion of land under Housing Revenue Account (HRA) ownership into allotments.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Green Spaces Manager regarding the new allotments provision in Kendal Way

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 9 votes to (unanimously).

The Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

The meeting ended at 4.01 pm

CHAIR

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