



**NOTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
MONDAY 19 APRIL 2010**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

**PRESENT:**

Councillors    Mrs J A Smith    (Chairman),    S J Boote,    J E Cottee,  
Mrs R E J Godkin,    M G Hemsley,    N C Lawrence,    Mrs M M Males,  
G R Mallender and B Venes (substitute for T W Holt)

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

E Brady	CBL: Project Co-ordinator
C Caven-Atack	Performance and Reputation Manager
D Dwyer	Strategic Housing Manager
R Holcroft	Housing Team Leader
V Nightingale	Senior Member Support Officer
P Randle	Deputy Chief Executive (PR)

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Councillor T W Holt

Members were informed of Councillor Holt's recent injury and the Chairman and the Group wished Councillor Holt a speedy recovery.

**21. Declarations of Interest**

There were none declared.

**22. Notes of the Previous Meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on Monday 25 January 2010 were accepted as a true record.

With regard to the Climate Change Strategy the Deputy Chief Executive (PR) informed the Group that although this Group had felt that it would be necessary to reconvene the Member Panel this had been superseded by the Cabinet's decision of 9 February 2010. However, the Strategy and Action Plan would be presented to the Group again before implementation.

The Deputy Chief Executive (PR) also explained that the issue of public toilets in West Bridgford had not be included on the Group's agenda for this meeting, as previously reported, as Cabinet had considered a report and a consultation exercise was currently being undertaken. Members' views would be sought as part of the consultation process.

**23. Cabinet Member Questions**

There were none received.

## 24. **Draft Customer Access Strategy**

The Performance and Reputation Manager presented the Draft Customer Access Strategy to the Group. She informed Members that following comments by the Group in October 2009 the draft Strategy had been made more tangible, less wordy and included actions for the next three years. She stated that it was based around three themes, customer services, information by communications and feedback/consultation.

The Group discussed the Customer Service Centre's rural access points and were informed that, through the use of new technology, it was envisaged that advisors at the access points could offer the same service as the central Customer Service Centre. With regard to extending the opening hours and viewing planning applications these would be considered by the Customer Service Centre Partnership Working Group. Members supported these concepts and it was agreed to further clarify the work of these access points in the Strategy.

Members queried the 'Tell Us Once' initiative and were informed that all partners had agreed to this concept and that the customer would only have to inform one of the partners for this to be filtered through to the others.

The Group was informed that it was envisaged that electronic communication would grow in the next few years and that this would be advertised via the website and the telephone system, although it was acknowledged that contact via the phone was more instantaneous. Members requested that officers evaluate the resource implications of using social media tools. It was also felt that using these tools for consultation purposes could distort the results. Officers agreed that it was vital to use the correct method of consultation depending on the target audience.

With regard to the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system the Group was informed that currently the system had been developed in house over eight years ago and needed to be enhanced. Officers were at present considering alternative systems to ensure that the Council understood why people were making contact.

Officers informed the Group that the new telephone system had been introduced six months ahead of schedule due to the failure of the old system. Members expressed their concerns that the system would not involve too many barriers before people were able to contact an advisor. Members were assured that this would not be the case.

Members felt that the document did not address the needs of the rural population of the Borough, officers agreed to consider this issue before the document was finalised.

Following a discussion regarding the Council's website Members were informed that this was to be redeveloped. Some Members felt that although the site did need some development they did not wish to see a wholesale redesign.

Members were concerned that the action plan was incomplete. Officers stated that the missing information would be included before the Strategy was presented to Cabinet.

It was AGREED that the draft Strategy should be presented to Cabinet following the inclusion of the Group's comments.

25. **Choice Based Lettings Scheme and Draft Housing Allocations Policy**

The Strategic Housing Manager gave a presentation regarding the Choice Based Lettings scheme and the draft housing allocations policy. She stated that there was a government target to introduce a scheme by December 2010 for the allocation of properties. She explained that there were 2 components to the scheme, the advertising and letting of properties known as Homesearch and the Housing Allocations Policy. The Council's Housing Allocations Policy was being upgraded to ensure that it was clear and transparent and that it was consistent with both Gedling and Broxtowe Borough Councils' policies and so that it could be developed into a sub regional policy.

The Strategic Housing Manager outlined the benefits of the scheme, how the scheme was more efficient and transparent; helped to manage customers' expectations; allowed customers' more informed choice; and highlighted the more vulnerable applicants. She highlighted that the partnership had obtained funding from the department of Communities and Local Government for the scheme.

Members were informed of the many activities that had taken place during the 12 week consultation period which was due to end on 24 April 2010. A survey had been sent to all applicants across the 3 boroughs and in Rushcliffe there had been a 15% response rate. The results of the survey were very positive and the majority felt that the allocations policy was a fairer way of allocating housing and would help those in most need to be housed. With regard to homelessness it was acknowledged that a small proportion of the people surveyed felt that this issue should be given higher priority; however, officers had over the past few years been working towards preventing homelessness and felt that by giving it a higher priority this could potentially create a perverse incentive for applicants to pursue homelessness as a quicker route to re-housing as opposed to considering other housing options. The event had highlighted the perceived barriers to the scheme for vulnerable groups and possible solutions had been identified. One of the main concerns was the inclusivity of the scheme, officers explained that an Inclusion Plan was being developed to ensure that the scheme was open to all sections of the community and that this would be completed in June 2010.

In response to a question regarding waiting times the Strategic Housing Manager explained that officers were in discussion with the IT providers to identify how robust the software would be and how it would assist in performance management. It was felt that the software would help to ensure that the stock was utilised to its best advantage.

As part of the survey officers had tried to assess people's views on letting properties to people from other parts, or even outside, of the Borough. The Group discussed the fact that only 12% objected to people moving into their

area, although it was recognised that 43% felt that there needed to be a local connection. Officers explained that this could help allocate the harder to let properties.

Following a question, officers explained that the right to buy scheme only applied to ex council house tenants and therefore there was only a very small proportion of tenants that could exercise this right.

Members were concerned that up to 4 people would be offered two bedroom properties. Officers agreed that this needed further clarification.

The Group thanked the team for an excellent presentation.

It was AGREED that

- a. the approach and proposed implementation timetable of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme be endorsed with a view to the scheme being fully implemented by Autumn 2010, and
- b. the revised Housing Allocations Policy be presented to Cabinet on 18 May 2010.

## 26. **Leisure Strategy Review – Interim Report**

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Smith, presented the interim report of the Member Panel. She outlined the work of the Panel and informed the Group of its findings. She explained that the Panel had considered the Borough's leisure portfolio in terms of annual usage, budgets and customer satisfaction; that it had examined the play areas, parks and playing pitches as well as the six leisure centres. It was acknowledged that the joint use site buildings were looking old and tired. The Panel had considered an audit of the current provision and had also looked at future trends for leisure and how the Local Development Framework would impact.

Following a question Councillor Mrs Smith stated that when the schools were rebuilt there would be no plans to include leisure facilities on the site. She also informed the Group that according to the Sport England Model the Borough was over provided in relation to leisure.

Following a question regarding the old Gresham site the Deputy Chief Executive (PR) explained that a report would be presented to Cabinet soon.

The Group discussed the recommendations and supported the Panel's report.

It was AGREED that the Leisure Facilities Strategy Member Panel give further consideration to the following:

- a. Finalise the role of joint use facilities in conjunction with Nottinghamshire County Council
- b. Identify good practice examples of leisure facilities being operated by community/voluntary enterprise arrangements and consider which

facilities in Rushcliffe could benefit from this type of management arrangement

- c. Consider a full audit of leisure facilities (indoor, outdoor, open space and play areas) and develop a set of minimum standards for the level of provision the Council should be aiming to ensure is provided across all leisure activities
- d. Consider the emerging issues associated with housing growth including the level of contribution and land required from developers as part of section 106 agreements to enable the Council to develop new facilities
- e. Identify how leisure facilities can be best future proofed to ensure they are adaptable to meet changes in leisure trends

To assist in these further deliberations Cabinet's views are requested on:

- f. The Council's appetite to provide capital financial support for the development of new leisure facilities together with associated revenue investment in sports, leisure and health development programmes
- g. Confirmation that the Council in the direct provision of leisure facilities should be concentrating on growing and sustaining leisure provision rather than focusing on the 'Excel' area developing sporting excellence
- h. The future direction of travel in terms of the Council's current dependence on joint use facilities

#### **27. Annual Report 2009/10**

The Chairman presented the Annual Report that provided a review of the work undertaken by the Community Development Group in 2009/10. Members were informed that reports from all four scrutiny groups would be presented to Council on 24 June 2010.

It was AGREED to forward the annual report to Council for consideration.

#### **28. Work Programme 2009/10**

The Group considered its work programme and included a review of the Choice Based Lettings scheme at its meeting in April 2011, if the scheme was given approval.

#### **29. Chairman's Remarks**

As this was the last meeting of the Group in this Municipal Year, the Chairman thanked the Members and Officers for their commitment in supporting the work of the Group during the year.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

## Action Sheet

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP - MONDAY 19 APRIL 2010

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible
24. Draft Customer Access Strategy	a) Members supported these concepts and it was agreed to further clarify the work of these access points in the Strategy.  b) Members requested that officers evaluate the resource implications of using social media tools and their use for consultation purposes.  c) officers agreed to consider the needs of the rural population of the Borough and to include the issue in the document before it was finalised.  d) The missing information from the action plan to be included before the Strategy be presented to Cabinet	Performance and Reputation Manager  Performance and Reputation Manager  Performance and Reputation Manager  Performance and Reputation Manager
25. Choice Based Lettings Scheme and Draft Housing Allocations Policy	officers to clarify the number of bedrooms people would be offered.	Strategic Housing Manager