

# Agenda Item 7

## COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Monday 2 April 2012**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Campbell (Chair), Sinclair (Vice-Chair), Altaf-Khan, Jones, Khan, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Sanders, Wilkinson, Darke and Humberstone.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Lois Stock (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Angela Cristofoli (Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager) and Jackie Yates (Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services)

### **33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Altaf Khan, Baxter (Councillor Humberstone substituted) and Clarkson (Councillor Darke substituted).

### **34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **35. WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

Pat Jones introduced this item to the Committee.

In answer to a question, she clarified that the issue of community engagement would very largely be covered by items concerning young people and the progress of Area Forums.

The Chair, Councillor Campbell, reported that, accompanied by Councillors Jones and Lloyd-Shogbesan, he had attended a workshop on the emerging health structures and their possible impact upon voluntary organisation. He invited his fellow Councillors to draw attention to any themes which they had noted as important.

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan noted particularly impacts on young people and educational attainment. There was allowance in the City Council budget for extra funding for educational attainment, but this must be seen as in addition to County Council funding and not a substitute for it. Councillor Campbell replied that the Leader, Councillor Price, was fully aware of this, but even so it would be advisable to re-draw this concern to his attention. Pat Jones added that Councillor Price wished to see joint Scrutiny/Executive monitoring of the spending of this money.

Councillor Jones felt that there was, in the new health structures, potential to consider issues in a holistic way, and he was keen to see how the 3 delivery boards would work together.

The Committee noted that Councillors Jones and Sinclair would present its report on public health to City Executive Board on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

Leading on from this, Councillor Campbell observed that it would be useful for the Director of Public Health to give an annual report to the City Council, much along the lines of the Chief Constable's report. It would be important for the Council to understand the new health structures and the new boards, and the means by which the Council could feed in to them.

### **36. SELECT COMMITTEE UPDATE - YOUNG PEOPLE**

Pat Jones introduced this item to the Committee.

The select committee had decided that it needed to talk with young people before it went much further, in order to gather their views and opinions. This would be done gradually over a period of approximately 6 months.

In principle, the select committee panel had agreed:-

- To talk to as many young people as possible in a "focus/discussion group" format;
- To recognise that some groups may have particular issues that would be better discussed away from more general discussions;
- To get the most from discussions to be honest about what we can and cannot do and be prepared to "build a relationship";
- To engage young people on their patch rather than expect them to come to the Town Hall;
- To use the "Hubs" and the various area-based initiatives and programmes to supplement the views of young people.

The focus groups would be organised around the 2 "Hub Areas" within the city with a pre determined script that allows some flexibility.

Questions to be asked included:-

- What do you do with your day and time?
- What opportunities do you use or know about to support access to training and work?
- Where is your life at the moment and do you have a "plan"?
- What are the limitations on your ambitions?
- What have you done so far?
- What would help?

- What would you change if you could?
- Which support providers do you use?

For discussions organised around specific groups some time would be spent exploring the particular issues faced by the group as seen from their point of view. It was hoped to facilitate about 4 discussion groups and “getting to know you” sessions.

The population of the discussion groups still needs more thought, and the Panel would take advice from the consultation officer and officers in Housing and Communities. The initial view is that a mixture of young people would be needed, for example young people who:-

- Have worked but are currently unemployed;
- Are NEET;
- Are about to leave school or are “out of school” and so will be looking for work or training shortly.

The Panel hope to identify these young people through:

- The various programmes running in particular areas (SHOUT, Include, Blitz);
- The Positive Futures Programme;
- The Hubs;
- Programmes in the 2 Academies;
- Various cultural groups and connections

Jackie Yates (Director of Finance) reminded the Committee that Housing and Communities already carried out work with young people, and there was also the ongoing apprenticeship scheme and the funding for educational attainment issues. The Chair agreed that it was important to avoid duplication of work already in hand.

Councillor Wilkinson asked that attention be paid to ensuring (as far as possible) gender balance when establishing discussion groups with young people. The Committee agreed that this was important, but noted that it could be difficult to achieve, as much depended on who was willing to talk to the select committee. There had been no discussion about incentives to encourage young people to take part.

Councillor Gill Sanders informed the Committee that funding had been obtained for a youth club in Littlemore Community Centre.

Pat Jones pointed out that the focus/discussion groups might have a cost attached, and that scrutiny didn't have a budget any longer, therefore there was a need to be aware of this.

The Committee then resolved:-

- (1) That it wished to see this work continue, noting the need to be aware of other projects that would be going on during the next year;
- (2) To agree in principle the suggested route to young people outlined above.

### **37. HOUSING STOCK DE-DESIGNATION - 1ST YEAR REVIEW**

With the agreement of the Chair and Committee, Barrie Finch made a short statement concerning the role of a former tenant representative on the housing stock de-designation panel.

In response, the Chair, Councillor Campbell, stated that the point was noted, but that it was the responsibility of the Committee and the de-designation panel to decide who it wanted to serve on this panel.

Pat Jones the introduced this item to the Committee and explained the background to it.

In 2009, the Committee had agreed to establish a panel to consider the number and type of properties that were currently designated to be let only to those people over the age of 40. This excluded sheltered accommodation, which had been reviewed separately. The review came about because of a large mismatch between the low amount of 1 bedroom accommodation that was available to single tenants and couples under the age of 40, and the large number of such households that were in housing need.

City Executive Board agreed that de-designation of such properties should begin in April 2011, and should be phased in over 5 years with progress to be reviewed annually. This was the first such review.

Pat Jones informed the Committee that there had been no issues with re-lets, which had gone smoothly. Having said that, there had not been a large number of re-lets to date, and it might be more useful for scrutiny to become involved at the end of the second year, when properties that had been more "difficult" (for various reasons) came up for letting.

The Committee resolved to:-

- (1) Welcome the outcome of the first review, expressing pleasure that the de-designation programme had worked so well and that there had been no anti-social behaviour problems reported to CANAcT as a result of it;
- (2) Recognise that only a small percentage of properties had been re-let to date;
- (3) Ask that a further review be carried out at the end of the second year of the programme.

### **38. AREA FORUM DEVELOPMENT**

Resolved to note that the Area Forum Panel (to which all members of the Committee were invited) would meet at 6.45pm immediately following the current meeting, in order to:-

- (1) Consider the views of the Area Forum Panel;
- (2) Agree recommendations that could be made to City Executive Board and Council on this issue.

### **39. MINUTES**

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

Minute 28: It was noted that Sharon Highton worked with the Oxford Spires Academy.

### **40. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Resolved to note the list of future meeting dates.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.17 pm**

This page is intentionally left blank