

Extract from the minutes of a joint meeting of the Environment and Finance Scrutiny Committees held on 6 March 2006 to consider the consultation responses in respect of the Strategic Framework for Leisure

## **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR LEISURE**

The Strategic Director (Physical Environment) submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

John Wade explained that over a hundred comments had been received on the strategy and that the comments received had been incorporated in the final proposed strategies. He said that the main issues raised during the consultation exercise were: the future of Temple Cowley Pools, expenditure on allotments and the need to liaise with groups and clubs. Steve Holt told members that another major issue that had been raised was the maintenance and upkeep of facilities.

The Chair then invited members to comment on the document.

Councillor Susanna Pressel:-

- congratulated the officers responsible for preparing the strategies
- asked what steps would now be taken and what the timescales for action would be
- suggested that local consultation should be undertaken before changes were made
- referred to the need to monitor the strategies and suggested that this should be done by the Environment Scrutiny Committee
- made the following detailed comments concerning the contents of the strategy documents:-
- suggested that the reference to “Muslim burial services” should be changed to read “weekend burial services” as people of other than just the Muslim faith might wish to make use of such a service
- suggested that a date should be included in the entry concerning the use of section 106 agreements to direct funds towards priority needs
- suggested that reference should be made in the section relating to maintaining the green character of the city to work done to areas of green space managed by Housing
- suggested that explicit mention be made to the fact that the city centre area included Jericho

- suggested that greater emphasis should be included in the strategies to the need to raise external funds
- asked whether discussions had taken place with the County Council concerning improvements to the transport infrastructure
- spoke of the need to provide play facilities for children over the age of eight in the Jericho area
- suggested that the level of service provided by staff had a direct relationship on the level of use of facilities
- asked whether the level of funding available for sports coaching was sufficient.

Councillor Clark Brundin:-

- agreed with Councillor Pressel's comments concerning the city centre area which, he commented, also included the North Ward
- expressed concern about what he considered to be the arbitrary way in which the city had been divided into areas
- suggested that a programme and timetable for the implementation of the strategies needed to be drawn up
- spoke about the financing of the strategies, asking where new funding would come from, whether any items would no longer be funded or would be funded to a reduced level and whether capital funds would be used to fund maintenance works and, if so, whether such funding was available, and suggested that financial information should be submitted to members
- spoke of the need to ensure that facilities needed were provided either by the public or private sector and suggested that the two sectors should complement one another
- asked whether responsibility for strategies issues should be at Strategic Director level
- suggested that community centres served the community at large rather than just the area immediately around them

Councillor Bryan Keen suggested that references to "Temple Cowley" should be changed to "Cowley".

Councillor Susan Roaf:-

- referred to the fact that the documents did not address the issue of affordability

- made the following detailed comments concerning the contents of the strategy documents:-
- suggested that the cost of providing facilities, for example, energy costs, should be included in the list of indicators used to monitor strategies set out in section 5.1 of the Sport and Leisure Strategy
- suggested that the objective listed under Aim 4 of the Action Plan for Sport and Leisure should be amended to read “Measure and manage the environmental impacts of our own activities”
- in the light of comments made concerning community centres, suggested that a map be prepared showing the indicative boundaries of communities served by community centres should be prepared
- suggested that fuller financial information needed to be submitted to members.

Councillor Sid Phelps:-

- said that he believed that the Business Manager should be responsible for managing the budgets
- suggested that the SLICE card should be extended to cover services provided at community centres and asked that this be included in the proposals for the development of the SLICE card set out in Aim 1 of the Action Plan for Sport and Leisure
- referred to the “quantitative deficiency” of services provided in east Oxford
- agreed with comments made by Councillor Pressel concerning the relationship between the quality of service and the attitude of staff
- agreed that private facilities should complement/fill gaps in public sector services.

Resolved that a report be submitted to a further joint meeting, to be held in July, giving details of: how much the strategies will cost, where the funding will come from, any implications the strategies may have for fees and charges, setting out priorities, how priorities will be reviewed if it transpires that resources are not available, a timetable in relation to service delivery, how value for money and quality issues will be addressed and measured and assigning responsibility for delivering the strategies, both overall and in relation to the different aims of the strategies.