

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 9th July, 2014.

Present:- Councillors Nazir (Chair), Smith (Vice-Chair), Bal, Chahal, N Holledge, Malik, Pantelic, Rana and Usmani

PART I

7. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Bal declared a personal interest in that a family member was employed by Slough Borough Council.

Agenda item 5 – Aspire for You: Councillor Smith declared that he was an employee of East Berkshire College.

8. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 17th June 2014

Resolved – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 17th June 2014 be approved as a correct record, subject to Councillor Bal's apology for the meeting being noted.

9. Member Questions

None were received.

10. Leisure Services Strategy

The Assistant Director, Community and Skills, reminded Members that in March 2014, Cabinet had agreed to the establishment of a task and finish group to review the evidence and options for leisure provision within the town with the aim of bringing a strategy to Cabinet in summer 2014.

A wide range of evidence and information was considered including:

- Current evidence base on health and physical activity of the residents in Slough
- Review of the facilities available for leisure, including parks and open spaces, private and semi-public facilities including schools
- Survey and interview information from residents relevant to leisure activities
- Case studies and examples of what works and good practice in getting residents engaged and more active.

It was noted that levels of physical activity in Slough were among the lowest in the country and the review of evidence had identified three priority groups - children, young people aged 16-25 and women. Despite an adequate provision of facilities, Slough had the 10th least active population in England.

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The working group considered examples of good practice from other areas and established that the most successful interventions over the longer term maintained a strong focus on younger people and families to influence habits for life and change behaviour. Comparisons with other local authorities' found similar issues of low participation, which indicated that while good facilities were clearly important, programming activities must complement providing good facilities to reach people who were disengaged.

Members were informed that Slough had been successful in securing £195,000 funding from Sport England for a programme called Community Sport Activation Fund (CSAF). The programme would bring together the Council and other local partners to provide activity programmes for over 14s and women in priority wards across the Borough.

It was brought to Members attention that following the review of all evidence, the working group had concluded that a dispersed leisure strategy (facilities distributed around the town) was preferred to a centralised strategy (facilities all on one site). This approach would enable a greater connection between facilities and capital investment and targeted programmes to engage local people and run activities in a wide variety of venues.

It was proposed within the strategy that the ice arena be retained with improvements made to the building as the venue was successful in attracting female users and young people – two of the Council's target audiences for physical activity. The site would be extended to give it a presence on the A4 and would include additional features such as a climbing wall to improve the use of the centre and its financial viability. Refurbishment costs were estimated to be £3.5million.

Details of the next steps to implement the strategy were highlighted, with the strategy being considered at a meeting of Cabinet on 14th July 2014.

A number of points were raised in the ensuing discussion, including:

- *Future plans for the Montem Leisure Centre (MLC) site when demolished and where it was proposed that the swimming pool would be located.* It was noted that once an alternative site had been identified for the location of the new swimming pool, the Montem site would be disposed of; with the potential of housing development taking place at the site. Various locations, including the former Arbour Vale school site, were being considered as locations for the new pool. In response to specifically whether the Haymill area had been considered as an option, Members were informed that good accessibility to the site was essential both by public and private transport and that on this basis the Haymill area had not been considered as an option.
- *Factors for inactivity in the communities.* It was noted that a number of issues contributed to low participation which were linked to socio-economic and cultural reasons. A range of activities were planned to encourage greater participation by families.

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- *Funding for the proposed new leisure activities.* Members were informed that there was a potential for investment from leisure contractors as the leisure contract was due for renewal from 2017. £195,000 external funding over a period of three years was awarded by Sport England for a programme called Community Sport Activation Fund.
- *How improvements would be measured.* The key overarching measure would be an increase in the number of adults and children who were more physically active. Targets underpinning this measure would include:
 - i) 5% reduction in inactive adults (32.5% in 2018, 37.6% in 2013)
 - ii) 1% reduction in children who were reported as overweight or obese in reception and at year 6 in the highest rate wards
 - iii) 5% reduction in residents who report their day to day activities are limited by a life long illness or disability.
- *Whether the timetable for implementation of the new leisure strategy was realistic.* The Assistant Director assured Members that a location for the swimming pool would be identified by October 2014, when a report would be submitted to Cabinet. Whilst every effort would be made to adhere to the timetable for the implementation of the Leisure Strategy, procurement remained a challenge, with a new leisure contract due in 2017. An updated strategy and plan for revenue and capital investment would be considered by Cabinet in December 2014, with work starting on developing the specification for the leisure facilities operational contract beginning in January 2015.

The Committee emphasized the importance of ensuring that the new facilities catered for the needs of all communities within the Borough and the need for clarity and accuracy on the financial implications of the implementation of the strategy.

Resolved – That the report be noted and the Assistant Director, Community and Skills, to verbally report the comments of the Committee to the Cabinet meeting on 14th July 2014.

11. **Aspire For You**

Samina Hussain, Employability Development Manager, provided an overview of progress made in the delivery of the 'Aspire For you' component within the Aspire delivery model. The partnership supports residents, young people, business and employed learners to access effective training and learning solution that lead to sustained employment. A range of activities were being carried out to streamline and collaborate in the delivery of employment support, with a view to avoid duplication and unnecessary competition between providers.

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It was noted that over the last eighteen months, demand from the unemployed to have access to support in gaining employment had steadily increased. Changes in the benefits system had contributed to a change in client profile, with an increase in those with multiple barriers to employment including mental health problems, addiction or learning disabilities. Members were informed that the Council currently held weekly two hour job clubs at Slough Library, Britwell Centre, Thomas Gray Centre and Longwood Towers (Langley).

It was brought to Members' attention that innovative work was being undertaken to support business start ups with events such as three day business start up course, business skills training courses, inspirational networking evenings and business mentoring and support. Since July 2012, over 300 individuals had been supported through the work undertaken by the service's Community Business Adviser. It was noted that a number of struggling businesses had been provided with extra support which included help with business plans and organisation of networking events.

In response to how the information regarding support and advice available was communicated to residents and individuals, Members were informed that details were publicised in the Adult Community Learning Brochure, libraries and the Council's website.

A Member questioned how many individuals were successful in gaining employment having been through the various schemes. The Employability Development Manager informed Members that Key Performance Indicators were used to monitor and measure the effectiveness of schemes and that 34% of individuals had managed to secure sustainable employment. It was explained that those individuals who had been through the system and had not obtained employment were offered further advice and support, including mentoring and volunteering roles.

Committee Members welcomed the range of activities and programmes that were in place to support those with low skill levels to secure long term employment.

Resolved – That the range of activity to support the low skilled and those who are unemployed to gain new skills and secure employment and to support those who wish to start and sustain their own businesses be noted.

12. Forward Work Programme

Details of the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year were outlined. It was suggested that a joint meeting be arranged with the Health Scrutiny Panel to discuss the Childhood Obesity Follow Up item scheduled for January 2015.

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Resolved – That the Forward Work Programme be noted and the possibility of a joint meeting with the Health Scrutiny Panel in January 2015, to discuss Childhood Obesity Follow Up, be explored.

13. Attendance Record

Resolved – That details of Members attendance be noted, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Bal's apology for non-attendance for the 17th June 2014 meeting.

14. Date of Next Meeting - 11th September 2014

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 11th September, 2014.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)