

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES
2 JUNE 2011**

Present: Councillors Cartwright (in the Chair), Dowling, Gurney
(until 8.00pm), Stevens, Turner and Wilson

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Chowney, Kramer, Scott
and Webb (until 7.00pm)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Waite and Birch.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following councillors declared an interest in the minutes as follows:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Webb	3	Personal – East Sussex County Councillor and member of County Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
Stevens	5	Prejudicial – Indirect employee of Amicus Horizon (if discussed)

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 3 and 15 February be approved as a true record.

3. FINAL REPORT ON THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF YOUTH PROVISION LEISURE

This item was moved up the agenda with the agreement of the committee.

Councillor Westley introduced the report to members of the committee, as Chair of the review. She explained that, although the remit of the review had altered slightly, due to funding issues at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) within Children's Services, the review had been comprehensive in its findings and produced a robust set of recommendations for the committee to consider.

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The review had garnered interest from the lead member for Children's Services at ESCC, Councillor Keith Glazier. As a result, he was invited to meet with the review team and members of the Youth Council. A letter of concern was then sent to Councillor Glazier, resulting in a redistribution of funds and positive response by the lead member. Members of the committee believed that this was a positive step and applauded the review team for raising the profile of youth leisure provision in Hastings to the County Council.

Members were extremely complimentary about the review as a whole and praised all those involved for their efforts.

It was suggested that a follow-up meeting be held in six months' time to assess progress. Members agreed that this suggestion be put to the joint annual meeting on 14 June 2011 for their consideration.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. the committee's thanks be extended to the review team for an excellent piece of work;**
- 2. the development of a young person friendly web page, hosted on appropriate sites, to share information about youth activities and venues in Hastings be progressed;**
- 3. the review team's letter to ESCC's Lead Member for Children's Services explaining the particular circumstances facing young people, and the high level of NEETs (not in education, employment or training) be noted and supported;**
- 4. further research into the Government scheme 'Social Grants for Communities' be conducted;**
- 5. further work with the Youth Council, including extension of an invitation to an annual meeting between the Youth Council and ESCC Lead Member for Children's Services, be encouraged;**
- 6. the facilitation of discussions between providers of youth leisure services in Hastings, to provide a diverse selection of provision across the town, be developed;**
- 7. communications between youth service providers be improved and awareness raised with Hastings Borough Council officers of youth services available in the town, to ensure maximum take up of provision; and**
- 8. a response to Councillor Glazier's communication be drafted and extended to the new Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Elkin.**

4. FINAL REPORT ON THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY OF DERELICT BUILDINGS

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Tim Cookson, Borough Planning Officer, introduced the report to members, in the absence of the Chair of the review, Councillor Matthew J Lock.

The committee thanked everyone involved in the review for their comprehensive findings with regard to this issue.

Concerns were raised that ESCC owned a number of derelict buildings within the borough. Members asked that Tim Cookson compile a list of the known ESCC owned buildings and share with the committee. Councillor Chowney, Lead Member for Regeneration, Planning, Communications, Marketing and Tourism, was asked to contact ESCC with regard to encouraging them to maintain their buildings. This was especially important as the council would take enforcement steps with other buildings owners to maintain their properties if they fell into disrepair. Councillor Chowney was also asked to investigate the parallel use of enforcement powers.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. all concerned in the review, including Hastings Borough Council Officers and Councillors, colleagues from the Police and Fire and Rescue Services, and Officers from other local authorities who responded to requests for information, be thanked for their contribution and provided with a copy of the report;**
- 2. the Borough Planning Officer and the Council's Senior Enforcement and Litigation Lawyer be asked to carry out further research into the potential use of the power to force the sale of a property in relation to recovering debts incurred by the Council through works in default carried out to specific derelict buildings (Section 103 of the Law of Property Act 1925);**
- 3. the information outlined in Appendix Two, summarising the legal powers available to the Council and the specific Council services responsible for enforcing them, be brought to the attention of all Ward Councillors to help them determine the most appropriate Council service to contact if they have concerns about a derelict building;**
- 4. the information outlined in Appendix Two, summarising the legal powers available to the Council and the specific Council services responsible for enforcing them, should also be brought to the attention of all of the Council Officers working within the different enforcement services, to help them to understand the powers available to colleagues in other parts of the Council, and to promote a joined up and more effective approach to tackling the issues arising from derelict buildings;**

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- 5. a section on derelict buildings be added to the Council's website, covering who to contact to complain about issues arising from such premises, and also who the owners or potential developers should contact for advice on how to redevelop such sites; and**
- 6. the Borough Planning Officer investigate the introduction a system whereby a 'Council Aware' style Notice be erected at vacant derelict buildings notifying the general public of the most appropriate Council contact details for concerns associated with specific vacant derelict buildings.**

5. CORPORATE PLAN PART III – YEAR END PERFORMANCE INFORMATION AND TARGET SETTING 2011/12

Mark Horan, Policy and Partnerships Officer, presented the Corporate Plan Part III.

The report detailed year-end actual performance by the staff in Environmental Services and Regeneration, Homes and Communities Directorates against the targets and milestones set out in Part II of the Corporate Plan for 2010/11. It noted the areas of shortfall and the actions that will be taken to improve performance during 2011/12.

Members discussed winter weather provision, Pelham Arcade Restoration and footfall figures in respect of the Information Centre. Councillor Cartwright also asked for further information relating to indicator L397, % of food establishments which were broadly compliant with food hygiene law.

The committee paid particular attention to recycling issues, especially in regard to contamination of items. Concerns were raised that, due to householders being unclear as to what items can and can't be recycled, this causes contamination which can result in the recycling bins not being emptied. Suggestions were given as to how to raise awareness, including newspaper adverts, fridge magnets and notices being displayed on community noticeboards, especially in social housing developments. Hollington had been chosen to undertake a pilot scheme for raising awareness on recycling and Councillor Scott, Lead Member for Environment and Highways promised to consider these suggestions, as well as monitor the pilot and share results with the committee.

Members also raised the issue of planning appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications (L363). Tim Cookson, Borough Planning Officer, explained that there was no obvious reason for decisions being overturned by the Planning Inspectorate. Councillor Chowney, Lead Member for Regeneration, Planning, Communications, Marketing and Tourism, also agreed with this statement and did not believe it

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to be a problem. Councillor Stevens asked if the target set was realistic. Mark Horan pointed out that this particular target would no longer appear publicly in 2011/12; however the committee could recommend its inclusion if they were so minded.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 the information that will form Part III of the Corporate Plan be noted;**
- 2. the committee's comments on the proposed performance indicator targets for 2011/12 be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 13 June 2011; and**
- 3. staff be thanked for their hard work in achieving the targets set out in the Corporate Plan.**

6. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET DECISIONS

Katrina Silverson, Scrutiny and Electoral Services Officer, submitted a report on the recent Cabinet Decisions made since the last formal meeting, highlighting areas that fell within the Committee's remit.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.26pm)