

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 15 March 2010

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors:-

Robin Underwood (Chairman)
Wendy Brackenbury (Vice-Chairman)
Andy Mercer (Leader of the Council)

David Brackenbury
Pauline Bradberry
Roger Glithero
Philip Hardcastle
Glenn Harwood MBE

Sylvia Hughes
Richard Lewis
Steven North
Anna Sauntson

PART A ITEMS

402. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

403. APOLOGIES

Councillors Albert Campbell and John Richardson sent their apologies.

404. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillor declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the agenda item indicated and was not present during the discussion and voting on the item:-

Councillor	Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Andy Mercer	7	Had complained about noisy neighbours.

The following Councillors declared a personal interest in the agenda items indicated but remained in the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon:

Councillor	Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Andy Mercer, Robin Underwood, Pauline Bradberry, Glenn Harwood, Richard Lewis and Steven North	6	Members of a Town or Parish Council
Roger Glithero and Pauline Bradberry	14	Knew people involved in the project and fund-raising for it.

The following Councillors declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the agenda items indicated but remained in the meeting as the item was not debated:

Councillor	Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Andy Mercer, Robin Underwood, Anna Sauntson and Richard Lewis	13	Members of a Town Council considering the adoption of public conveniences.

405. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions.

406. RURAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL

The Committee discussed the draft Northamptonshire partnership working protocol 'Delivering Affordable Rural Housing on Exception Sites'. It was noted that recent Government reports and campaigns by national housing bodies had urged Local Authorities to put in place strategies to respond to housing need in rural areas and the rural local authorities in Northamptonshire had chosen to work together to develop the protocol.

Members also considered a proposed programme of Housing Needs Surveys, which would enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to investigate housing needs and examine ways of meeting these needs.

In response to a number of questions from the Committee, Richard Mugglestone of the Midlands Rural Housing Association and the Housing Strategy Manager reassured Members that the results of the Housing Needs Surveys would ensure affordable housing properties were allocated to people with close ties to the village and a clause to that effect would be put in relevant Section 106 Agreements. Mr Mugglestone explained that the needs of the community would be the priority and Parish Councils would be involved in the development of housing needs surveys. Regarding concerns that the protocol did not distinguish between low-cost and social housing, Members were informed that the Association and officers would seek to develop either or both types of affordable housing where need was indicated by the results of the Housing Needs Surveys.

The Committee was in support of the provision of rural affordable housing but was concerned that the draft protocol was too prescriptive in relation to the role of District Councillors. It was, therefore

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the principle of the Northamptonshire partnership working protocol 'Delivering Affordable Rural Housing on Exception Sites' be endorsed and that Councillors Philip Hardcastle and Glenn Harwood be delegated to work with officers to address the Committee's concerns and make subsequent revisions.
- (2) That the introduction of the Programme of Housing Needs Surveys be agreed.

407. LOCAL COUNCILS' CHARTER

The Monitoring Officer presented the draft Local Councils' Charter, which had been produced by the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC) on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council and the District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils in the county. She highlighted key issues for consideration and asked Members to determine what response, if any, they wished to make to NCALC before the final version was submitted to the June meeting of the Committee for adoption.

Members made the following comments:

- It would be difficult to ensure all Local Councils were treated equally, regardless of their status or size (3.13)
- Principal Councils should consult Local Councils in relation to the Local Strategic Partnership and Sustainable Communities Strategy but not be obliged to involve them directly (3.14)
- The document was framed in such a way as to impose a duty on Councils to operate in certain ways, which would remove any flexibility and could raise expectations to an unreasonable level.

The Committee noted that the difficulties of managing consultation with the 51 Local Councils in the district and considered proposed changes to the Council's current arrangements for consultation with Local Councils. It was proposed that the district be split into four cluster areas based on the Safer Community Team areas and county divisions to ensure maximum commonality with partner boundaries. Representatives of the Strategic Management Team together with the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Chairmen of the Policy and Resources, Development Control and Planning Policy Committees would meet each cluster twice a year.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Monitoring Officer be delegated authority to submit a response to NALC based on the discussions at the meeting.
- (2) That, subject to the moving of Islip to the Central Area, the proposed cluster areas and future liaison meeting arrangements with Local Councils within the District for consultation be approved.

Under Rule 16.6 of the Council's Procedure Rules, Councillor Glenn Harwood requested that his vote against motion (2) above be recorded.

408. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ENFORCEMENT POLICIES

The Head of Environmental Services submitted the following policies for adoption after they had been reviewed:

- Food Safety Enforcement Policy
- Health and Safety Enforcement Policy
- Licensing Enforcement Policy
- Noise Enforcement Policy
- General Enforcement Policy
- Dog Fouling Enforcement Policy
- Waste Enforcement Policy
- Litter Enforcement Policy

- Permitted Installations Enforcement Policy
- Smokefree Enforcement Policy.

RESOLVED:

That the enforcement policies listed above be approved and adopted.

409. TOURISM STRATEGY

The Committee discussed the final draft of the Tourism Strategy, and noted the amendments that had been made in response to the comments received during the consultation process. Copies of the draft strategy had been sent to Town and Parish Councils, tourism related businesses within the district, other local authorities, voluntary and community sector organisations, the Enable Board, the North Northamptonshire Development Company and Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited for comment. The strategy was also promoted at a number of events and a public consultation workshop was held at Stanwick Lakes.

RESOLVED:

That the Tourism Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 of these minutes at pages 717 to 737, be approved.

410. SINGLE EQUALITIES SCHEME

Consideration was given to the final draft Single Equality Scheme, which combined all the equality duties expected of the Council. Consultation had been carried out over ten weeks and feedback helped to inform the Scheme. Members noted that consultation responses would also be taken into account during the development of the action plan and in planning the new programme of Equality Impact Assessments, which were a way of testing whether decisions about functions, policies and services might have a potentially negative impact upon any of the equalities strands.

RESOLVED:

That the Single Equality Scheme, as set out in Appendix 2 of these minutes at pages 738 to 756 be adopted.

411. URGENCY PROCEDURE

This item had been withdrawn.

412. EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE GREENWAY

As a bid for £300,000 of funding from the Rural Development Programme for England for the project had been unsuccessful, this item was not discussed further at the meeting and it was reported that a full report on the future of the project be submitted to the next meeting following further discussions with Sustrans.

413. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Further to minute 80, the Committee received an update on continuing negotiations with the Town Councils regarding the transfer of public conveniences and noted the position.

414. LOAN TO KINGS CLIFFE AND AREA COMMUNITY SPORTS PROJECT

The Committee considered a request for a loan of £25,000 to Kings Cliffe and Area Community Sports Project to enable the completion of the construction of the changing rooms and community room. It was reported that the Section 106 Agreement for the KC1 site in Kings Cliffe included a sum of £25,000 for the completion of the changing and community room and to drawn down funding from the Football Foundation and Kings Cliffe Environmental Association. The Project had requested that the Council allow the loan to be repaid on the release of the Section 106 monies.

Members noted the success of the Project with fundraising to date and their support of community projects.

RESOLVED:

That an interest-free leisure loan of up to £25,000 be provided to the Kings Cliffe and Area Community Sports Project, with repayments to begin after two years or when the Section 106 monies are released (whichever occurs first) and to be completed by the end of four years.

415. URGENT ITEM

The Chairman agreed that the following item be considered at this meeting because a decision was required before the next meeting the Committee.

416. STANWICK VILLAGE HALL

An urgent item that had been added to the agenda by virtue of Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 sought formal approval to transfer the land and buildings at Stanwick Village Hall to the Village Hall Trust. The Committee noted that the Council had amended the lease a number of times to allow for redevelopment of the site and the Policy and Resources Committee had awarded a grant for the new build scheme on 20 April 2009 (minute 468 refers). Although indications had been made that the land and property would be transferred, no formal decision to that effect had been made and the Trust had therefore requested that the land and buildings be formally transferred to allow the development to start and other funding streams to be accessed.

Members reaffirmed their intention to transfer the land and buildings to the Trust and favoured the inclusion of requirements in the agreement that the land only be used for community purposes and that, should the new build scheme not be delivered within two years, the land and property be transferred back to the Council.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the land and property be transferred to the Stanwick Hall Village Trust for the sum of £1.

- (2) That the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Chief Finance Officer be delegated authority to agree the final legal agreement.

PART B ITEMS

417. FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN AND THE HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLANS 2010/11

The Commercial Health Manager submitted the above two Service Plans for approval.

The Committee approved the Health & Safety Service Plan under its delegated powers. The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan was included in the Policy Framework and required adoption by the full Council.

R.17 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2010/11 (as set out in Appendix 3 of these minutes at pages 757 to 775) be approved.

Chairman