CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CULTURE, SPORT AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 4.00 P.M.

IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Bennett, Mrs D. J. (Chairman)

Allen, F. W. C.  Mitchell, C.

Grocott, M. R.  Morgan, C. W. J.

By invitation: Anne Chester-Walsh, Children & Lifelong Learning, Staffordshire County Council

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. D. M. Easton, Mrs. L. J. Pearce and Mrs. H. M. Sutton).

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman agreed that the order of the agenda could be changed to allow the Community Safety Manager to leave at an earlier time.

5. Minutes

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Outcome of Public Consultation – Cannock Park

The Committee received a presentation from the Community Safety Manager on the results of the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of Cannock Park.

He reported that large groups in the past had congregated in Cannock Park normally in the rose garden with associated noise, litter, and inconsiderate behaviour issues. However, of all reported anti social behaviour issues, those relating to the park equated to 1%, 60% of which came from a single source and one crime a month had been committed in that vicinity. The Police with partners had carried out operation Matrix from January 2009 concentrating on known hot spots in Cannock which had proven to be successful in reducing ABS with young people under the influence of alcohol being taken back to their parents. The number of incidents of ASB in the park had fallen considerably. Street Wardens and PCSOs patrolled the park and spoke to youths in that vicinity. A ‘Respect’ project in the park, had been carried out mainly involving art work, which had proven to be most successful and it was intended to undertake further projects. Football sessions had been run at the
Leisure Centre on Wednesday evenings which had proven to be popular. The possible use of the pavilion as a form of youth centre was also being explored. It was reported that Cannock Park had again been awarded the prestigious ‘Green Flag’ status.

A report would be presented to Cabinet detailing a number of options which partners considered would enhance the security of the park, together with associated costs. The Police had carried out a ‘Secured by Design’ survey the final draft of which was currently awaited.

One of the proposals to be considered would be to close the park from dusk until dawn, approximately 7 pm until 9 am depending on the time of year. The Police had considered that the fencing around the park at present was a mixture of good to worthless. A recommendation to be considered would be to replace the perimeter fencing to a recognised British standard to endeavour to keep people out when the park was closed at a cost in the region of £66 per metre. The full perimeter, including the golf course, being approximately 4.2 km, or 1.3 km for the park area only. The Police had expressed concern that the costs involved may be disproportionate to the level of problems now experienced and that the proposed new fencing may prove a problem to them gaining access to the park to reach those trespassing if the park was closed. Another option would be to employ security guards to patrol the park from approximately 4 pm until midnight as it was reported that ASB mainly occurred early in the evening.

The use of outdoor fitness equipment was being investigated as it was considered that by increasing the number of people using the park this would act as natural surveillance thereby reducing the risk of ASB. A ‘Park Watch’ scheme similar to neighbourhood watch, which was already being carried out, was to be more formulised with added support given. Work was on going in tackling under age sales by Trading Standards and the Council. Portsmouth City Council was providing information on a proxy watch trace scheme they ran to endeavour to identify those adults giving or selling alcohol to minors.

Concern was raised that at the meeting of the Children and Young People Policy Development Committee held on 5 November 2008 it was noted that funding was available to replace fencing around the park and this, as yet, had not been spent.

The Community Safety Manager explained that part of the park land had been given to the County Council to use as part of a road widening scheme for the A34. However this scheme was not now to take place and the land had been returned to the District Council. Before the fencing could be realigned near to the pavement a statutory service check had to be carried out to ensure no damage occurred to any utility.

The Director of Service Improvement explained that to secure the park and the golf course would cost approximately £300,000 and as this amount of funding was not available, this would need to be considered as part of the budget process. The Community Safety Manager reported that the Trustees of Cannock Public Recreation and Pleasure Ground Charity when considering the issue of replacement gates at Cannock Park had resolved that there be 24 hour access at the Park Road entrance to the part for the disabled and pedestrians and if it was considered that the park should be closed then this matter would need to be reconsidered by them to ascertain if they wanted the recommendation to be revoked.

The Chairman requested that a report be presented to an additional meeting of the Committee with respect to the park and the funding available.
AGREED:

That an additional meeting of the Committee be arranged.

7. National Indicator 68 – Referrals to Children’s Social Care

Anne Chester Walsh from Children & Lifelong Learning, Staffordshire County Council gave an overview on referrals to children’s social care going on to initial assessment – National Indicator 68.

It was explained that the County set the target not Central Government. It was considered that the target set at 79% was reasonable as Inspectors would raise concerns if it was set too low or high. Approximately 1,400 calls were received per month and on average approximately half of those received would be forwarded to an area team for appropriate action to be taken. The remaining half would go on to an initial assessment being carried out, this did not include those considered to be at immediate risk.

A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) which was a national assessment, could be carried out by any one involved with children who had concerns to ascertain what support was needed. Other agencies often could provide help without involving Social Services, and the associated stigma involved, who could then concentrate on the more serious cases.

The Director of Organisational Improvement explained that initially operational difficulties had proven a problem with schools undertaking CAFs, however, progress was being made and barriers overcome. Officers from the Housing and Leisure Departments were also trained to carry out CAFs to those not considered to be at immediate risk.

8. 2009/10 Quarter One Performance and Finance Report

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Organisational Improvement (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council)

It was reported that according to the Children, Young People and Families Priority Delivery Plan there were –

- 0 red areas
- 4 amber; and
- 35 green

which were on target to be met by 31 March 2010.

The 4 amber exception reports occurred for the following reasons:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur Street Play Area</td>
<td>4 week delay in despatch of tender documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elmore Park</td>
<td>Officer capacity due to being relocated to Green Flag project Ravenhill Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotswold Road (not Avenue)</td>
<td>Manufacturing problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal Griffin</td>
<td>Astra Turf Pitch – funding shortfall.</td>
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It was explained that there was a shortfall in the funding for the astro turf pitch at Cardinal Griffin High School, however, ways to overcome this were being explored and discussions were taking place with the Football Foundation. A designer for the pitch was being investigated, but until the shortfall in funding was overcome, the project could not be progressed.

Councillor Morgan expressed concern relating to the Oxford Green project and the level of consultation that had been carried out. The Director of Organisational Improvement undertook to provide this information to the Committee.

AGREED:

(A) That the Culture, Sport and Services for Children and Young People Policy Development Committee notes:

(i) The performance outturn for Quarter 1 as detailed at Annex 1;

(ii) The exception reports, as detailed at Annex 2, which describe the actions taken and actions proposed to be taken by Lead Officers for any action or performance indicator classified as Red or Amber;

(iii) The financial outturn for Quarter 1 as detailed at Annex 3.

(B) That the Director of Organisational Improvement provide information to the Committee relating to the consultation process that had been carried out with respect to the Oxford Green project.


Consideration was given to the Report of the Director of Organisational Improvement (Enclosure 6.1 – 6.11 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Leisure and Major Projects gave an overview of the key achievements by Culture and Leisure Services from July 2008 to August 2009.

It was reported that the Route to Health had been launched in September 2008 to coincide with the launch of the Cultural Olympiad and had had over 63,000 visits and that this was increasing.

In October 2009 Arts Development had raised the importance of recycling by engaging over 900 year 6 pupils in a locally commissioned ‘Bin World’ interactive performance as a means of influencing their families.

The Museum of Cannock Chase had been awarded the Sandford Award for Heritage Education for the third time.

The first Play Fair project was held on 1 August 2009 and was attended by in excess of 700 despite the inclement weather, with a shuttle bus from Rugeley to Cannock via Hednesford being provided.
Free swimming for those aged 16 and under and for those aged over 60 had been introduced and had been well attended.

Chase Leisure Centre was providing free Wednesday evening sessions for young people and it was reported that external funding was being provided by two local businessmen and a further amount would be donated through the Members Initiative Scheme. It was intended, if resources allowed, to provide more female orientated projects i.e. dance sessions, trampolining, nail art.

The Sports Development Manager reported that £50,000 of external funding had been received from the Children’s Fund to help run the ‘Chase It’ Young Persons Activity Programme. Over 4,000 young people (5-19 years) had taken part with 70% having some form of access issues, i.e. low income, special needs, physical disability.

Work had been ongoing with local groups and a Netball Club had been established with in the region of 50 affiliated members, £14,000 funding had been provided to help develop the Club.

Chase Leisure Centre had undergone an external Quest Maintenance Assessment and maintained its ‘Highly Commended’ status and Rugeley Leisure Centre Assessment had been planned for 18 September 2009.

The Cannock Chase Council Sports Development Team who deliver the Chase It Young Persons Activity Programme had been selected as one of the top finalists in the following category:-

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Service Awards 2009 – Sports, Leisure and Culture Service – Internal Service Team of the Year – Chase It.

The award had attracted over 390 submissions with in excess of 150 organisations taking part from across the United Kingdom with only eight finalists being shortlisted for this category.

The Committee congratulated the Sports Development Team on their success and the work they had undertaken and were continuing to carry out.

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CHAIRMAN