

Minutes

Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Monday, 30th July, 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors Howarth, Crooks, Lightley, Norman, Robinson, D Smith, Taylor and Young

Also Present: Councillor Lodge
Mr Andrew Jackson, Technical Support Manager
Mr Peter Lee, Street Scene Technical Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Laverick, Mavin, Moderate and Walton

2. Review of Playing Pitch Strategy

The Chair went through the original Playing Pitch Strategy Scrutiny Report and Members agreed that the first three recommendations from the original report should be incorporated into the review. The Technical Support Manager advised that Leisure Services were currently drafting a Marketing Strategy that covered indoor and outdoor activities, and there would be opportunities to promote outdoor pitches. The Technical Support Manager went on to inform the Panel that there were strong links with Durham Sport.

The Chair asked the Street Scene Manager what the procedure was regarding the next year's usage of playing surfaces. The Street Scene Technical Officer informed the Panel that toward the end of the Season sporting clubs are asked if they will be requiring use of the pitch for the following season. However, clubs rely on sponsorship and may not be placed to advise of their intentions.

Councillor Taylor advised the Panel about the situation at Brandon United, that they had no lease therefore were unable to obtain grants that in the past Brandon United has been criticised that they were not community based, however this had changed.

The Street Scene Technical Officer advised that the situation had been appeased but a long term plan was required. A number of pitches in the district are former colliery welfare ground, there are some that the Council does own but CISWO have covenants on them and there are stipulations of use in the deeds.

Councillor Taylor advised the panel that Brandon United were a victim of their own success.

The Technical Support Manager advised that the Legal section and the Club were to get together to see what can be done. Three months has been given to see what kind of lease is available.

The Chair asked about who is responsible for the upkeep of the changing facilities. Street Scene Manager advised that it was half the responsibility of the Council and half the responsibility of the hirer. Clubs who apply are advised that there are no

attendants on site and that as hirers, they are responsible to keep the changing rooms tidy and secured. Hirers are given a telephone number to ring to advise of any problems as they occur rather than waiting until the end of the hire period.

The Chair asked Members to compare the findings from last years' playing pitch site inspection with this year.

Bearpark had improved a great deal on the inspection in 2006.

Councillor Lodge advised that the City of Durham should promote the fact of their ownership of the grounds, and that no credit was given to the good work of grounds maintenance.

Panel Members also advised about problems with trespass especially with quad bikes. The Panel agreed that a recommendation should be incorporated into the review about signage. The panel asked the Technical Support Manager if the signage time frame could be brought forward to include recreation grounds. The Technical Manager advised that Pride of Durham funding had a budget of £40,000 Which had been divided into, £10, 000 set aside for bins; £10,000 set aside from seating; £10,000 set aside for bus shelters and £10, 000 set aside for painting of play equipment.

Members were concerned about problems with drainage, again the Technical Support Manager advised that there was a Capital fund of £15,000 available to investigate the problems with drainage and advised that it was important to carry out a survey before spending. Some of the £15,000 would be used for remedial work to relieve problems in the short and mid term. Officers would decide on the priority of work to each ground.

With reference to recommendation no. 23 of the original playing pitch scrutiny report, the chair advised that the Council will continue to support partnership working, working with communities to bring additional funding, e.g., Bowburn Park. Members suggested that partnerships with the County Council should explore of the suggestion of using school playing fields during the summer holidays.

Members also suggested with reference to recommendation no.23 that more use of Durham City News be made to highlight coaching events.

The Chair and Members warmly thanked Mr Jackson and Mr Lee for their attendance at this meeting and at the site inspection.

Note: 6.30p.m. Mr Jackson and Mr Lee Left the meeting

Any Other Business

The Chair advised Members that the Review of Scrutiny of Council Garages Recommendations and the Review of Scrutiny of Permanent Site Provision for Gypsy/Travellers – Recommendations had been agreed by Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 26th July, and would subsequently going to Cabinet on Wednesday, 5th September.

Meeting Terminated at 6.45 p.m.