

Minutes

Economic Scrutiny Panel

4th September, 2008 Mayor's Chamber, Town Hall

Present: Councillor Hopgood (in the Chair) and Councillors Bartle, Colledge, Guy, Lightley, Plews, Simpson, Smith and Stoddart

Also Present: Councillors: Cowper, Howarth, Kellett, Turnbull and Young

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marsden, Simmons, Walker and Wilkes

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th July, 2008, were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Note: 5.31 a.m. Councillor Guy joined the meeting

3. Review of Economic and Community Development

The Economic and Community Development Manager and Community Development Co-ordinator attended the meeting and gave the panel background to the work of community development/engagement.

The panel were informed that the impetus of SRB5 focused on three villages with £900,000 of funding and SRB6 focused on twelve villages with £900,000 of funding, which does not go along way.

In 2005 following a restructure of the Authority the Economic and Community Development Section was established to plug a gap that had been left following SRB6. The structure of the Community Development section is divided into areas with one Development Officer looking after three villages the officers are supported with Support Officers and Support Assistants. There is a Funding Officer and a Development Co-ordinator for the entire Section.

Community Development work with community groups and individuals, the work is capacity building to give the confidence to groups and individuals to continue the work on their own. The section work with residents' groups and have been heavily involved with the Masterplans. They have created regeneration and finance for communities and administered the flourishing communities funding.

The groups that are in place have build up a rapport with community groups, giving advice and support. Since 2005 the section has been responsible for finding £3 million of funding to community groups, they helped and supported over 300 community groups. In 2006 Community Development Officer (CDO) Activity Grants were established allowing CDOs to use their discretion to give a grant to community groups. Up to February, 2008 £91,266 had been distributed by CDOs direct to local community groups.

The Community Development Co-ordinator informed the Panel that there were no national performance indicators/outputs imposed on the section therefore they had created 12 outputs of their own. A copy of outputs are attached at Appendix 1.

Councillor Hopgood stated that it was an absolute pleasure to hear that the section was not smothered by outputs and that raising over £3 million of external funding is fantastic. Councillor Stoddart informed the panel that the work that had been carried out in the Deerness Valley was excellent and speaks very highly of the team and can confirm that regeneration does work.

Note: 5.45 p.m. Councillors Lightley and Simpson join the meeting

Councillor Howarth commented that Community Development has made a great amount of difference by starting off projects, helping with printing. The staff give support to aid people to complete forms for project funding.

Members stressed that this department should be represented at LGR work streams. The Economic and Community Development Manager confirmed that they were represented but that the structure in place at City of Durham was not replicated by the County Council. The County Council at the moment had one Community Development Officer per district area, but do not have the same 'hands on' experience as the Durham City Officers.

Councillor Plews stated that the Unitary Authority is looking for best practice and if Durham City were the best then surely this would be carried forward.

Members then discussed the best way to bring the Durham City model to the attention of the Unitary Authority as this was unique throughout the County. While other districts had Community Development officers their role was not as involved as that of the Durham City Officers.

The Chair thanked The Economic and Community Development Manager and Community Development Co-ordinator for their attendance and for the information they had supplied.

The Chair advised that the next meeting the Panel would look at what recommendations can be made.

4. Any Other Business

There was no other business to be discussed.

Meeting terminated 6.10 p.m.

Appendix 1

■ Outputs to CDO grants June 2006 – February 2008

Outputs are attached to the previously highlighted Community Development Activity Grants in order that we may effectively monitor how our grants benefit the local groups and communities we fund. Outputs as at February 2008 were as below:

Output	Definition	Actual
1A	No. of employed people trained obtaining qualifications	27
1A(i)	No. of unemployed people trained obtaining qualifications	12
1A(ii)	No. of 1A or 1A(i) who are female	20
1A(iii)	No. of 1A or 1A(i) who are from minority backgrounds	6
1B	No. of training programmes supported	13
2A	No. of young people benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development	7464
2B	No. of older people (60+) benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development	3924
3A	No. of community safety initiatives	11
4A	No. of new community health opportunities supported	46
4Ai	No. of people accessing these new opportunities	6425
5A	No. of new community sports opportunities supported	252
5A(i)	No. of people accessing these new opportunities	7702
6A	No. of new community cultural opportunities supported	1205
6A(i)	No. of people accessing these new opportunities	10794
7A	No. of voluntary organisations/community groups supported	394
8A	No. of individuals involved in voluntary work	2224

Economic Scrutiny Panel

Review of Community Development

1. Background

- 1.1 The work of the Economic and Community Development team had been brought to the attention of Economic Scrutiny Panel through their excellent SRB work this was originally scrutinised in July, 2005. SRB funding is no longer available but Economic and Community Development teams have continued to work closely with the communities within the District completing many successful projects.
- 1.2 The Community Development Team was set up following a restructure in 2005.
- 1.3 The Panel were eager to discover what is going well, what the current situation is and how the excellent practice can be continued in the new Unitary Authority.

2. Findings

- 2.1 The Community Development structure is not replicated in any of the other seven Councils in County Durham. The work carried out by the Team is unique, they with community groups and individuals on a range of projects, they help to build capacity and confidence
- 2.2 The Community Development Team have developed a 'hands on' approach and there is one Community Development Officer (CDO) for every three villages. The CDOs help groups and individuals in various ways from filling application forms for funding at the beginning to seeing a project all the way through to the end.
- 2.3 Since the team was formed in 2005 over 300 new groups have been supported this is an average of 87 groups per month being supported. The team has been directly responsible for securing approximately £3 million of funding for City of Durham District local groups and residents. This figure does not include projects where officers have had limited responsibility or where officers have just made recommendations.
- 2.4 Community Development Officer Activity Grants were established in June 2006. The grants allow CDO's to use their discretion to distribute funds to projects within their zone. Up to February 2008 a total of £91,266 had been distributed to local community groups.
- 2.5 The Community Development Team is not subject to National Performance Indicators therefore they have developed 12 outputs which are recorded. Therefore monitoring their own progress and recording how grants benefit the local groups and communities. A list of the 12 outputs is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.6 The team have also assisted with a wide range of corporate exercises relating to most departments of the Authority

3. Recommendations

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