

scrutiny

focus on performance

REPORT OF: The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

REPORT TO: Policy and Review Committee

ON: 28th April 2010

TITLE: Recommendations and Draft End of Year Report of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Purpose of the Report

This report presents to the Committee the work of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommendations on the topics in its work programme.

2. Introduction

The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work programme at the first meeting of the year following the outlining of the key issues facing each of the portfolios it covers by the Executive Members and Officers. The Committees proposed work programme was submitted to the Policy and Review Committee who agreed to the topics and asked that they be scoped and focused. This was completed and submitted to the August meeting of that Committee. This report sets out how the Committee have achieved the scope and focus and the results of their scrutiny.

3. Customer Services

The Committee agreed at its meeting in June that it would look at customer services as the current system had been in place for a number of years and this was an appropriate time to consider the progress made and way forward for the services. The Committee agreed that they would:

- Carry out a short review to look at what has been achieved so far in delivering the vision of one stop reception desks,

- Look at the next steps in taking the vision forward,
- Examine how are staff trained, retained, recruited,
- Comparisons with other authorities,

The Committee commenced their work on the topic by receiving an overview presentation on how the services had developed and progressed since the inception in 2005.

Presentation to the Committee October 2009

The Committee received the following information to assist them in their assessment of the progress so far.

- One Stop Shops were developed in 2005 and the Council operates two One Stop Shops based in Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls. They provide access to any Council service demanded by the customer and services have been added from other locations. This had led to a reduction in Council locations but more importantly ensuring that more services, often linked through customer need, could be obtained in a single visit e.g. benefits and housing needs, concessionary travel, access to welfare rights, etc..
- The environment that has been created is aimed at improving the customer experience with improved facilities, the removal of barriers e.g. glass screens, as well as providing increased choice through drop in and appointment services, courtesy phones and electronic access points.
- Partners have embraced this concept and have been eager to share facilities and access a client base which can benefit from the services they are able to provide. Darwen One Stop Shop is proving a suitable location where colocated providers are working together to provide a range of services and maximise best use of resource e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern, Twin Valley Homes all have a presence in The One Stop Shop.
- In a recent customer satisfaction survey over 80% of those approached said that they were very or completely satisfied with the outcome of their visit to the One Stop Shop.
- The Councils Advice Service (which was the subject of a Resources Scrutiny Report earlier this year) is integrated within the One Stop Shops and provides specialist advice on Welfare Rights, Debt and Housing related matters.
- With total use of resource from both internal and external parties this service is able to prioritise its workload to focus on some of the boroughs most vulnerable people. It works closely with the professional and voluntary sector as well as key Council departments

e.g. adult and children's social services to tackle the key issues linked to housing, debt, welfare and worklessness.

- On average the service is able to identify and secure in excess of 2 million pounds per year in unclaimed benefits which brings much needed money into the community, thereby relieving pressure on other services and addresses some of the key local issues e.g. poverty, worklessness.
- It provides resource for the boroughs court rota (now funded) and has a high success rate in preventing eviction and subsequent homelessness.
- The Legal Services commission will be developing legal advice services in Pennine Lancashire as part of a 5 year strategy which is likely to include the establishment of a CLAN (Community Legal Advice Network) and BWD through the Advice service has expressed their commitment to this process and are expected to play a lead role in its development.

Following the meeting of the Committee in October, Members considered that to enable an accurate reflection of the services provided and the types of issues that are dealt with at the one stop shop they would like to visit and sit in on the desk and experience issues first hand.

Visit to Blackburn One Stop Shop - 2nd February 2010

Members of the Committee were invited to visit the One Stop Shop on 2nd February 2010. The visit took place between 12:30pm and 2:30pm, preceded and followed by a discussion between Members and Officers on the issues that the Committee would wish to address.

The following points were made by Members following the visit:

- Atmosphere and appearance - Members commented on the good atmosphere at the desk - it was well lit, open, accessible and welcoming.
- Attitude of the staff - staff were helpful and willing to listen and assist in any problems or issues brought to them by customers. Staff were willing to go the extra mile to help people with their issues and problems.
- Range of enquiries - staff dealt with a wide range of enquiries displaying a wide range of knowledge of Council services and beyond.
- Confidence - staff were confident in the way they gave out advice and their knowledge. This was reflected in the attitudes of the customers.
- Training - it was established that regular training sessions were available and that these were seen as part of the job. It was important to note that temporary staff were also included in all training events to ensure that their competencies matched those of permanent staff. On

the job training was highlighted as the best way for staff to gain experience in a real environment.

- Members were encouraged to see staff walking the floor to deal with enquiries where possible to minimise queuing etc.
- The availability and close proximity of private interview facilities was noted.
- The response to the desk from staff in departments was discussed and recommendations will be made on this area.
- The use of IT was noted.
- The recording of statistics was examined and will be covered in the recommendations.
- Members also discussed the staffing structure for the section and the reporting arrangements to director level.

Did we do what we said we would do?

- Receive presentations setting out measures of progress against the vision ✓
- Review the recommendations of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this topic ✓
- Look at how staff are trained, developed and how this compares with other LAs ✓
- Review how the vision will be taken forward and to look at new developments proposed and potential outcomes ✓
- Look at how other organisations deal with the issue ✓

Recommendations

The Committee met on 24th February and considered the recommendations arising from the work of the sub-group. The Committee agreed the following recommendations for forwarding to the Policy and Review Committee with a recommendation that they be sent to the Executive Board for consideration.

1. That the accurate recording of statistics to reflect the type of enquiries received be examined to ensure that departments are aware of the services provided for them by customer services.
2. That in order to ensure that an understanding of the work carried out by the reception desk is available to all departments of the Council, the Executive Board be requested to initiate a policy whereby all Executive Members and Directors be required to sit on the front desk at the town hall for at least half a day every six months. This will also break down barriers between departments and assist in the

information flow and cooperation between service providers and customers. This request should also be extended to partner organisations such as Capita.

3. That the Executive Member be requested to outline to the Committee the value added by the tiers of management between the front line staff and Director level in relation to customer services.
4. That an analysis of the training needs of the section be undertaken and reported to the Committee early in the new municipal year and the benefits of cross team training for the advantage of customers be examined.
5. That the Executive Member be requested to implement a system whereby any issues that arise that may cause problems to the reputation and service delivery of the Council be highlighted and addressed.

4. Review of Neighbourhood Boards

The Neighbourhood Boards were introduced in 2008 and the first one met in November of that year. The Executive Board agreed that they would review the impact and success of the Boards following a period of time and this would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee were made aware that the review of the Boards was one of the key areas for the Executive to be addressed in the year.

The Committee selected the review as one of their key topics for the year and agreed that they would look at the original vision for the introduction of the Neighbourhood Boards and seek to evaluate the value added by their introduction. The Committee would seek the views of all Members of the Council and the Boards and use this information to ensure that the review addressed issues raised. The Committee agreed that they would wish to receive evidence/ Information on the workings of the Boards and the review from the following:

- The Executive Member
- Director of affected services
- Service users
- Neighbourhood Boards Chairs
- All Members of the Council

The Committee received an overview presentation on the review of the Neighbourhood Boards in October 2009 which set out the process of the review and how the findings would be implemented etc. The review was to be carried out over four stages with interviews, structured questionnaires, focus groups and presentations of the findings/ recommendations. The Committee were kept informed of progress at their meetings and the Chair of the

Committee and the Scrutiny Officer attended meetings of the Boards where the review was discussed and the input of the board made.

Following the delay in the final recommendations the Committee requested that the findings be delivered to all Members of the Council and their input sought. This request of the Committee was acceded to and a briefing for Members of the Council delivered on 19th April followed by an opportunity for Members comments to be fed into the questions of the Committee which led to recommendations.

Presentation to Members 19th April 2010

The presentation to Members outlined the methods used in the review and how the work of the boards had been evaluated and assessed. The Committee were informed that this had involved the establishment of a steering group who had carried out structured interviews and issued questionnaires. 104 responses had been received and 10 in depth interviews carried out involving a variety of people including chairs and members of boards. Discussions had been held with the political groups on the council and focus groups had met. The views of Community Associations had also been sought.

The key findings were outlined to Members. These included

- 63% of boards make a difference to their areas
- 69.7 of boards take account of local priorities for residents
- 58.5% of boards improve residents ability to influence delivery of services
- 48.3% felt that there was not enough information on how decisions were made
- 90.6% felt boards should work more with their communities.
- 89.4% felt that there should be more joint working across boards.

The Committee were informed of how the issues highlighted in the review relating to recruitment, communication, training and development and future funding would be taken forward and the next steps for the review which included how the recommendations from this Committee would be addressed and implemented.

Did we do what we said we would do?

- To feed into the review of the Neighbourhood Boards ✓
- To review the findings of the review ✓
- To interview Board members ✓
- Seek the views of All Members of the Council ✓
- To look at the impact of the Boards so far ✓

Recommendations

The Committee agreed on the following recommendations for consideration by the Policy and Review Committee-

1. That the Committee's thanks be forwarded to the Executive Member and Officers for the presentation and the way in which they have involved the Committee in the process of the review.
2. That the Recommendations of the review and the process by which they have been made be noted.
3. That the Policy and Review Committee be recommended to agree the following recommendations for the Executive Member to consider-
 - a. That this Committee considers that the position of the Chair and Vice Chair be held for a maximum of two years consecutively.
 - b. That the Executive Member be requested to ensure that adequate scrutiny arrangements are put in place in relation to funding requests and that
 - i. decisions on funding are not delegated to officers
 - ii. that decisions be made by the Chair or Vice Chair in consultation with at least one other member of the Board in all cases to ensure this, and,
 - iii. that the member to be consulted with be chosen by the board.
 - iv. That all funding decisions be reported to the board.
 - c. That if a member does not attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation or apology then their membership be terminated. If this member is a Member of the Council, then the Leader of their Group be notified.
 - d. That visioning be developed as a key function and role of Neighbourhood Boards and as part of the Terms of Reference.
 - e. That the Executive Member be informed that there is a strong argument that Neighbourhood Boards should be defined on ward boundaries. The Committee asks the Executive Member to undertake a piece of work to see if this is viable.

5. Older Peoples Housing Strategy and Housing Market Renewal

The Committee were informed that the Housing Market Renewal and the Older Peoples Housing Strategy were both key areas of the portfolio that were be addressed in the municipal year. The Committee agreed to:

- Look at Housing Market Renewal and how it is progressing,
- Look at what has been achieved and delivered so far and what is still to be delivered,
- How HMR has affected the housing market in Blackburn with Darwen,
- How Housing Market Renewal had affected the provision/ availability of affordable housing,
- How, where and when the older peoples housing strategy will be delivered,
- How this will impact on the housing market.

Older Peoples Housing Strategy

The Director of Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services delivered a presentation on 'older persons housing and well being strategy 2010-2015' at the Committee's February meeting outlining the following:-

Drivers for change

The Committee were informed that the population was ageing in the United Kingdom. This was leading to an increase in the very elderly population. With this age shift in the population came a change in expectations and lifestyles. Within the borough there was also an ageing BME population which brought about different issues.

The majority of people wanted to continue living in their own homes and maintain independence of living. It was pointed out that most of the boroughs specialist accommodation was out of date and residential accommodation was relatively expensive. The majority of older people had resources to fund care and accommodation but needed good advice and information. The personalisation agenda put control in the hands of the service users.

National and Regional context

The Committee were informed of the 25 year government strategy entitled "Lifetime homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods" which set out the standards for social housing by 2010 and all new housing by 2013. A national Housing advice and information service had been established requiring a joined up approach to housing, health and care needs. The Committee were informed of the increase in the Handyperson services, HIAs and DFGs and the increased funding for Warm front. There was also an increased provision of specialist housing (e.g. extra care schemes). The publication of the document "Everybody's future: North West Regional Framework for Ageing" (2009) had identified housing as a key priority and highlighted that supply was not meeting demand. Social housing waiting lists in the North West have grown by 75% and by 2032 population increase by 7% but households increase by 21% - mainly due to single older person households

Health and Care Needs

The Health and Care needs of the population were outlined to the Committee with particular reference to the borough. Life expectancy was 8 years shorter than the best English boroughs, of 26 comparing health issues, 17 are worse than the England average. There were 17,000 hospital admissions in 2006/07 with almost 28,000 bed days being accounted for by people aged 65+. 20%

with Limiting long term illness (LLTI) compared to 18% national average. In the 50-64 age band, 56% of BME residents have LLTI compared to 34% white residents

Supply of specialist accommodation

The use of residential care is showing steady decline but still higher than the national average, 22% of 65-74 year olds and 44% of those aged 75+ were unable to manage on their own at least one self-care activity. There was a projected increase from 6,408 (2008) to 8,616 (2025) of people aged 65+ unable to managed at least one domestic task. At present there were 1508 sheltered housing units, 152 bed sits, 1066 one bed flats and only 55 two bed flats. There were also 183 one bed bungalows and 52 two bed bungalows. 80% was 1 bedroom with limited extra care provision

Objectives of the strategy

The objectives of the strategy were to-

1. Enable older people to feel safe and live in a pleasant environment
2. Enable older people to repair, improve or adapt their home
3. Enable people to live in energy efficient homes
4. Improve housing related support
5. Promote specialised and affordable housing
6. Provide appropriate housing choices and advice

What was being done to meet these objectives?

- Increasing Extra care
- Reviewing Sheltered housing
- Developing Care/retirement villages
- Reviewing Decent and Safe Homes initiatives (handyperson, adaptations etc)
- Improving the advice and information on housing choices and options

Visit to Spring Bank Court, Mill Hill, Elizabeth House, Darwen, Spinney Side and Davenport Court, Bank Top, 19th February and 14th April

To further the Committees understanding of the issues and the Older Peoples Housing Strategy, the Committee visited Spring Bank Court on 19th February 2010 and Elizabeth House Spinneyside and Davenport Court on 14th April 2010. The Committee toured the premises and looked at the facilities available to residents. The Committee looked at how the residents were integrated into the community within the homes and the way that the emphasis was on meeting the needs of the residents in any way this could be achieved. Members used the information obtained to measure the way other facilities matched up to this.

Recommendations

That the Policy and Review Committee be recommended to forward the following recommendations to the Executive Member for Housing -

1. That consideration be given to seeking to enhance the provision for elderly people by:
 - providing broadband to homes as standard,
 - changing designs/ colour schemes in different corridors at homes
 - by providing triggers for memory in corridors to break up the institutional feel.
 - That the use of gardens at the homes be encouraged to maximise healthy living benefits for residents.
 - That residents be encouraged to remain as active as possible for as long as possible.
2. That the overriding driver of services be that provision of housing is just that and that it is the persons house and not seen as a facility.

Housing Market Renewal

The Committee have monitored how the Housing Market Renewal Scheme was progressing throughout the year and have received an update from the Executive Member about the replacement for the Scheme. The Committee toured a number of areas being renewed under the scheme. These included an area of clearance and an area where the face lift scheme was being implemented. Members discussed the issues relating to way in which clearance affected communities and questioned how the Council would be seeking to rebuild these as sustainable viable living communities. Members would seek to examine this issue as a key area of development in the portfolio and the Neighbourhoods and Customer Services portfolio to see how this was developed and capacity built in to assist in the development of this in areas cleared and then rebuild upon by the Council and it's Partners.

Did we do what we said we would do?

- To receive an overview of the services provided ✓
- To review the scheme for HMR and progress along the key milestones ✓
- To look at inputs and outcomes ✓
- To look at neighbourhood transformations ✓
- To talk to those directly affected by the strategies ✓

Recommendations

1. That the Executive Members be requested to respond to the Committee on how they will rebuild communities in the areas affected by Housing Market Renewal.

2. That the Executive Member be requested to report back to this Committee on the way in which clearance affected communities and how they would seek to rebuild these as sustainable viable living communities.

6. Darwen Leisure Centre

This was not a major topic for the Committee however it is a major development for the portfolio and the Committee had been involved with the Darwen Leisure Centre since the planning for the replacement of the old Leisure Centre commenced. The Committee had considered the issues and progress regularly and visited the site and viewed progress on the ground at least three times. The Committee were also keen to ensure that the recently established Darwen and Rural Neighbourhood Board were given the opportunity to visit the Centre and look at how the building was being fitted out.

The views of that Board were sought and the Chair of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer attended the Board meeting in November to seek their views. These views were reported to the Sustainable Neighbourhoods OSC in November and forwarded to the Executive Member. The Committee visited the Centre within a month of opening and had a further guided tour looking at issues that were arising and how these were to be addressed. Again, Members on the visit made recommendations on a number of minor issues that were reported to the Executive Member at the Committee on 24th March 2010.

Recommendations

The Committee made the following recommendations on Darwen Leisure Centre.

1. That the completion of Darwen Leisure Centre on time and on budget be welcomed and those involved be congratulated.
2. That the future development and enhancement of the facility be continued to ensure that it meets the needs of the community.
3. That the links with the re:refresh campaign be explored further to ensure that benefit can be maximised and reported back to the Committee.
4. That the links with the Youth Facility at Knott Street be examined and how this can be enhanced be reported to the Committee early in the next municipal year.
5. That the customer attendance figures be reported to the Committee on a regular basis along with details of marketing strategies for the facility.

7. Turton Tower

The Committee visited Turton Tower early in the year. The grade1 listed building had been acquired by the Local Authority and would be managed by the Culture and Leisure portfolio. The Committee noted the way the asset would be used to enhance educational opportunities for the people in the borough. The Committee were keen to see the way the building and the grounds could be sympathetically developed to enhance the way they delivered the Council functions in the area. The Committee have kept a watching brief on the development and will look at visitor figures early in the next municipal year to see how these had been enhanced by Council stewardship.

Members enquired whether Turton Tower could be used as a venue for young and old to learn and refresh skills, to which it was stated there were many intergenerational opportunities currently available. When questioned about the use of vacant land the Committee were informed that as a starting point the Department were working with the Friends of Turton Tower group to utilise the land, from which it could be looked at getting the wider community involved.

Member raised concerns around how residents without a car would get to Turton Tower, the visitor fee and the level of interest from children. It was also questioned whether funding would be taken away from other historic buildings in the borough. The Committee agreed to review on a regular basis footfall and visitor numbers at the tower.

Recommendations

1. That the acquisition of Turton Tower by the Council be noted and the development of the facilities for the benefit of residents and visitors to the borough be monitored by the Committee in the coming years to ensure that the maximum educational, promotional and tourist benefits can be obtained.
2. That the Committee receives bi-annual reports on the facility detailing developments and visitor numbers to Turton Tower.
3. That the Director of Leisure, Culture and Sport be requested to report back to this Committee on the long term future plans for the building and grounds and how they can be compared with other similar historic buildings in the county.
4. That an audit be carried out of the historic buildings in the borough from this period and through the industrial revolution to the present day and this be published through the museum service to be used to enhance the educational benefit to schools in the area.

5. That the possibility of a historic trail through the county and links to Manchester and Bolton be examined including the links to the Chethams library in Manchester.

8. Parks and open spaces in the borough.

The Committee visited Bold Venture Park where they were given the opportunity to look at work carried out to the Play area which had been funded through the Play Pathfinder Project and tour the park with Officers and the Executive Member to look at the issues that arise in maintaining and developing park facilities. The park had recently been awarded a green flag and Members were able to see the steps that had been taken over a number of years to get to this stage.

The Committee were also able to see the work that had been carried out with the assistance of the Friends of the Park Group and how they had influenced the long term development and strategies for the park.

The Committee have undertaken a number of visits to parks and open spaces in the borough and have familiarised themselves with the issues that relate to parks maintenance and development. The Committee have also visited a number of the play pathfinder sites being developed.

9. Alley Gates

The Committee heard a Call In relating to Alley gates early in the year and arising from this were a number of issues relating to consultation and implementation procedures and processes. The Committee undertook a review of these processes and procedures and looked at the consultation that is undertaken prior to the implementation of the alley gate scheme.

The Committee were informed of the consultation that is carried out prior to the installation of alley gates. This included community consultation which was undertaken following appraisal of Ward Councillors. The residents who would be affected by the installation of the gates were invited to give their thoughts on the scheme and present their evidence either for or against the scheme. To facilitate a response the letter that is hand delivered to all residents included the response form and a pre-franked envelope.

The Statutory consultation of 28 days is carried out on each of the schemes to allow the views of utilities and statutory consultees to be considered.

Members drew attention to a number of aspects of the scheme and in particular the feeling of safety this brought about for residents. Members said that they felt that the scheme had been successful, but a concern was raised that the scheme should not lead to gated communities with the resultant impact that communities are blocked off from each other. The Committee will receive progress on the number and location of schemes on an annual basis.

Recommendations

That the level of consultations set out to the Committee as that carried out in relation to Alley gating schemes be supported and used as a model for consultation on any future schemes.

10. Re:refresh Campaign

The Committee were informed that the Re:refresh campaign continued to be a key priority for the Leisure Portfolio and as such was chosen as one of the Committees topics for inclusion on the work programme. The Committee wished to look at the programme in order to assess the positive way that the scheme had influenced the health of residents of the borough.

The Committee commenced their work on the topic by receiving a presentation on how the campaign came about, its aims and objectives and other issues such as funding etc. Members were given the opportunity to look at how the scheme was delivered on a number of occasions during the year and Members took the opportunity see schemes in the community and also talk to users on how it had benefited them and improved their lives.

The Committee reviewed how the scheme had progressed at the last meeting of the year and looked at potential exit strategies and long term improvement measurements. The Committee also looked at the implications for leisure use in the borough once the scheme had finished and how the improvements in health and the progress made could be maintained and built upon.

Did we do what we said we would do?

- Look at how Re:refresh will be delivered ✓
- What has it achieved so far ✓
- What will it achieve ✓
- What has it meant? Resources etc ✓
- Exit strategy/ continuation ✓
- Impact on services ✓
- Impact when Darwen Leisure Centre comes on line ✓

Recommendations

1. That the future development of Re:Fresh and the continuation of the initiative be closely monitored by the Committee during the current

year to ensure that the health benefits delivered be maintained and built upon for the benefit of the citizens of the borough.

2. That the means to measure the outputs and achievements of the campaign be reported to the Committee along with a base line assessment of the population of the borough.
3. That the effects of the new Darwen Leisure Centre on the delivery of the campaign be reported to the Committee early in the new municipal year.
4. That the exit strategy be presented to the Committee early in the new municipal year.

11. Severe Adverse Weather

From December 09 to mid January 10 the region had to deal with disruption caused by the worst weather to hit the country for thirty years. In response to a request from the Committee, Members received a full briefing on how the services covered by their remit coped with the situation. Members found that all services had coped very well despite the conditions and many services had responded to the conditions with enthusiasm and vigour raising their game to meet the challenges they faced.

Members recommended:

1. That staff be thanked for their response to adversity above and beyond that required of them.
2. That the maintenance of services throughout the period be noted and service providers be congratulated for this.
3. That the safety of residents, staff and others remain the priority for service provision in future instances.
4. That the need for an overall strategy for dealing with such adversity to ensure that prioritisation of service provision to meet resident's needs are met.
5. That lessons learned from the period be recorded and submitted to the Committee for information.

12. Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme

The Committee continued to monitor progress of the Selective Landlord Licensing scheme and the implications for housing in the borough. The Committee have noted and supported the positive effects this was delivering on the housing for private rented tenants. The Committee agreed that they

would continue to monitor the scheme and support its implementation borough wide.

At the end of the year a visit was made to an area that had a scheme and received an update at the Committee on progress. It was noted that there were considerable improvements from the way the area had appeared prior to the implementation of the scheme. The Committee would continue to monitor the scheme and how it was taken forward in the borough.

Recommendation

That the Committee keep under review the progress of the Landlord Licensing Scheme and would welcome the extension of the scheme to cover other areas of the borough.

13. Celebrate Blackburn 2009

The Committee reviewed the progress in the delivery of the Celebrate Blackburn Festival. Members were given open access to visit and partake in all the events for the festival. The Committee had reviewed the transition from the Arts in the Park and Mela festivals since it had been proposed. The Committee received a presentation on the success of the festival at its meeting in August and looked at how the success of the first year had been built upon, how the recommendations of the Committee had been implemented and what difference they had made. There was concern that the events started early and were held during the day, when people would be at work, and that the number of people allowed in the town centre meant that 300 people, as stated in the figures, was not a true account

The Committee received a presentation providing an update on Celebrate Blackburn. Questions were put to the Deputy Director on comparisons of those who had attended the Arts in the Park, the age ranges of those that attended Celebrate Blackburn and the benefits for local businesses. The Committee were informed that there were no breakdowns of attendances for Arts in the Park. The Committee were informed that various ages attended however the impact on businesses was currently unknown, but there had been a positive impact on the Market and this had been assessed. Attendances at The Final Night of the Proms were known and the impact on the borough culturally was significant but that it was difficult to measure value.

Members stated that there was a need to assess if certain things were failing to work in order for the Committee to make appropriate recommendations. Members reiterated the need for openness and honesty around the success and/or failings of the festival. This assessment would be made in the planning for next year's event.

The Chair commented that Officers should be commended on the work that had taken place over the festival but added that in his view he felt the festival had consisted of segregated events and lacked cohesion. He expressed

disappointed that the recommendation made by this Committee in the previous year in relation to the final event was not realised and that more experienced staff were required to run the festival

Members raised a number of further issues that should be considered in planning for next year's event. These included the following recommendations-

1. That the lack of advance signs in place for the cycling event to indicate that an event was taking place in the town centre or of any diversion should be improved in future.
2. That efforts be made to ensure that events did not appear to be elitist as there was a perception that cross sections of the community attended different events and there was no mixing.
3. There was a need to increase publicity for the festival and events.
4. There was still a view that a compromise was needed, incorporating elements of Arts in the Park and the Mela into Celebrate Blackburn, culminating in a big weekend festival as in the case of the Mill Hill festival and Darwen Live.
5. There was a need to consider what local people actually wanted and to emphasise local talent and the Director of Leisure and Culture be requested to demonstrate how this was being addressed.
6. That plans for next summers events be submitted to this Committee to allow Members to input into the festival.
7. That Officers be commended on the work that had taken place over the festival.
8. That the Committee receives information relating to income generation targets and how these were to be met in the future given the failure to meet these targets this year.

14. Call Ins

The Committee has heard a number of Call Ins during the year necessitating a number of extra meetings and causing disruption to the agreed work programme for the Committee. These Call Ins were on the following topics:

- Alley gates
- Community Associations Funding
- Griffin Neighbourhood renewal Area
- Housing Regeneration Programme
- Reposition and evictions prevention fund

15. Articles in the Shuttle

The Committee has had a number of articles appear in the shuttle. These have included details of the consultations on Darwen Leisure Centre with the Darwen Neighbourhood Board, the visit to Turton Tower and the tour of Bold Venture Park.

Councillor Naushad Surve

Chair - Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Karimeh Foster

Vice Chair - Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Background Documents: Agenda for Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings 2009/10, Minutes of meeting 2009/10, Reports to Policy and Review Committee 2009/10

Recommendations

Customer Services

1. That the accurate recording of statistics to reflect the type of enquiries received be examined to ensure that departments are aware of the services provided for them by customer services.
2. That in order to ensure that an understanding of the work carried out by the reception desk is available to all departments of the Council, the Executive Board be requested to initiate a policy where by all Executive Members and Directors be required to sit on the front desk at the town hall for at least half a day every six months. This will also break down barriers between departments and assist in the information flow and cooperation between service providers and customers. This request should also be extended to partner organisations such as Capita.
3. That the Executive Member be requested to outline to the Committee the value added by the tiers of management between the front line staff and Director level in relation to customer services.
4. That an analysis of the training needs of the section be undertaken and reported to the committee early in the new municipal year and the benefits of cross team training for the advantage of customers be examined.
5. That the Executive Member be requested to implement a system whereby any issues that arise that may cause problems to the reputation and service delivery of the Council be highlighted and addressed.

Severe Weather

6. That the staff be thanked for their response to adversity above and beyond that required of them.
7. That the maintenance of services throughout the period be noted and service providers be congratulated for this.
8. That safety of residents, staff and others remain the priority for service provision in future instances.
9. That the need for an overall strategy for dealing with such adversity to ensure that prioritisation of service provision to meet resident's needs are met.

10. That lessons learned from the period be recorded and submitted to the Committee for information

Alley Gating

11. That the level of consultations set out to the Committee as that carried out in relation to Alley gating schemes be supported and used as a model for consultation on any future schemes.

Celebrate Blackburn 2009

12. That the lack of advance signs in place for the cycling event to indicate that an event was taking place in the town centre or of any diversion should be improved in future.
13. That efforts be made to ensure that events did not appear to be elitist as there was a perception that cross sections of the community attended different events and there was no mixing.
14. There was a need to increase publicity for the festival and events.
15. There was still a view that a compromise was needed incorporating elements of Arts in the Park and the Mela into Celebrate Blackburn culminating in a big weekend festival as in the case of the Mill Hill festival and Darwen Live.
16. There was a need to consider what local people actually wanted and to emphasise local talent and the Director of Leisure and Culture be requested to demonstrate how this was being addressed.
17. That Plans for next summers events be submitted to this Committee to allow Members to input into the festival.
18. That Officers be commended on the work that had taken place over the festival.
19. That the Committee receives information relating to income generation targets and how these were to be met in the future given the failure to meet these targets this year.

Turton Tower

20. That the acquisition of Turton Tower by the Council be noted and the development of the facilities for the benefit of residents and visitors to the borough be monitored by the Committee in the coming years to ensure that the maximum educational, promotional and tourist benefits can be obtained.
21. That the Committee receives bi-annual reports on the facility detailing developments and visitor numbers to Turton Tower.

22. That the Director of Leisure, Culture and Sport be requested to report back to this Committee on the long term future plans for the building and grounds and how they can be compared with other similar historic buildings in the county.
23. That an audit be carried out of the historic buildings in the borough from this period and through the industrial revolution to the present day and this be published through the museum service to be used to enhance the educational benefit to schools in the area.
24. That the possibility of a historic trail through the county and links to Manchester and Bolton be examined including the links to the Chethams library in Manchester.

Review of Neighbourhood Boards

The Committee agreed on the following recommendations for consideration by the Policy and Review Committee-

25. That the Committees thanks be forwarded to the Executive Member and Officers for the presentation and the way in which they have involved the Committee in the process of the review.
26. That the Recommendations of the review and the process by which they have been made be noted.
27. That the Policy and Review Committee be recommended to agree the following recommendations for the Executive Member to consider-
 - a. That this Committee considers that the position of the Chair and Vice Chair be held for a maximum of two years consecutively.
 - b. That the Executive Member be requested to ensure that adequate scrutiny arrangements are put in place in relation to funding requests and that
 - i. decisions on funding are not delegated to officers
 - ii. that decisions be made by the chair or vice chair in consultation with at least one other member of the Board in all cases to ensure this, and,
 - iii. that the member to be consulted with be chosen by the board.
 - iv. That all funding decision be reported to the board.
 - c. That if a member does not attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation or apology then their membership be terminated. If this member is a Member of the Council, then the Leader of their Group be notified.

- d. That visioning be developed as a key function and role of Neighbourhood Boards and as part of the Terms of Reference.
- e. That the Executive Member be informed that there is a strong argument that Neighbourhood Boards should be defined on ward boundaries. The Committee asks the Executive Member to undertake a piece of work to see if this is viable.

Landlord Licensing Scheme

- 28. That the Committee keep under review the progress of the Landlord Licensing Scheme and would welcome the extension of the scheme to cover other areas of the borough.

Older Peoples Housing Strategy

That the Policy and Review Committee be recommended to forward the following recommendations to the Executive Member for Housing-

- 29. That consideration be given to seeking to enhance the provision for elderly people by
 - i. providing broadband to homes as standard,
 - ii. changing designs/ colour schemes in different corridors at homes
 - iii. by providing triggers in corridors to break up the institutional feel.
 - iv. That the use of gardens at the homes be encouraged to maximise healthy living benefits for residents.
 - v. That residents be encouraged to remain as active as possible for as long as possible.
- 30. That the overriding driver of services be that provision of housing is just that and that it is the person's house and not a seen as a facility.

Housing Market Renewal

- 31. That the Executive Members be requested to respond to the Committee on how they will rebuild communities in the areas affected by Housing Market Renewal.
- 32. That the Executive Member be requested to report back to this Committee on the way in which clearance affected communities and how they would seek to rebuild these as sustainable viable living communities.

Darwen Leisure Centre

The Committee made the following recommendations on Darwen Leisure Centre:

33. That the completion of Darwen Leisure Centre on time and on budget be welcomed and those involved be congratulated.
34. That the future development and enhancement of the facility be continued to ensure that it meets the needs of the community.
35. That the links with the re:refresh campaign be explored further to ensure that benefit can be maximised and reported back to the Committee.
36. That the links with the Youth Facility at Knott Street be examined and how this can be enhanced be reported to the Committee early in the next municipal year.
37. That the customer attendance figures be reported to the Committee on a regular basis along with details of marketing strategies for the facility.

Re:Fresh Campaign

38. That the future development of Re:Fresh and the continuation of the initiative be closely monitored by the Committee during the current year to ensure that the health benefits delivered be maintained and built upon for the benefit of the citizens of the borough.
39. That the means to measure the outputs and achievements of the campaign be reported to the Committee along with a base line assessment of the population of the borough.
40. That the effects of the new Darwen Leisure Centre on the delivery of the campaign be reported to the Committee early in the new municipal year.
41. That the exit strategy be presented to the Committee early in the new municipal year.

TIMELINE 2009-10

**SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

10th June 09

Meeting

- Work of the Executive including Risks and Priorities
- Consideration of the work programme

8th July 09

Call In - Community associations

13th July 09

Call In - Alley gates

5th August 09

Visit to:

- Turton Tower,
- Bold Venture Park
- Blacksnape

Meeting

- Work of the Executive
- Report on Celebrate Blackburn
- To receive agreed Work Programme that went to P&R
- An update on the Re:fresh Campaign

18th September 09

Visit to:

- Darwen Leisure Centre

7th October 09

Call In - Reposition and evictions prevention fund

20th October 2009

Visit to:

- Darwen and Rural Neighbourhood Board

21st October 09

Meeting

- Work of the Executive
- Report on Alley Gating scheme
- Report on Customer Services
- Outline of Neighbourhoods Review
- Response to recommendations from previous year

- Update and feedback form Committee visit and Darwen Neighbourhood Board visit

4th November

Call In – Housing Regeneration Programme 2009/10

2nd December

Call In meeting - Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment Process and a Proposed Renewal Area for Griffin – replaced original meeting

2nd February 2010

Visit to:

- Blackburn One Stop Shop

3rd February 10

Meeting – postponed due to weather

15th February 10

Meeting – rescheduled

- Work of the Executive
- Progress on the Review of Neighbourhood Boards
- Customer Services sub group report
- Older Peoples Housing Strategy presentation
- Darwen Leisure Centre progress
- Response to severe weather

19th February 10

Visit to:

- Darwen Leisure Centre
- Spring Bank Court, Mill Hill (extra care scheme)

24th March 10

Meeting -

- Work of the Executive
- Culture and Leisure portfolio issues – Celebrate, Darwen Leisure Centre
- Darwen Leisure Centre progress
- Turton Tower
- Customer Services – review recommendations referred back by Policy and Review Committee

13th April

Visit to:

- HMR schemes
- Older People's Housing

19th April 2010

All Member briefing on Neighbourhood Boards Review

Followed by Special meeting -

- Work of the Executive – Neighbourhoods and Customer Services
- Progress on review of Neighbourhood Boards
- A report on the Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme
- Feedback on 13th April visit – HMR, Older People's Housing
- Annual Report and recommendations
- Report on Travellers Site

Articles in the Shuttle

The Committee has had a number of articles appear in the shuttle. These have included details of the consultations on Darwen Leisure Centre with the Darwen Neighbourhood Board, the visit to Turton Tower and tour of Bold Venture Park.