

## MINUTES

### HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15<sup>th</sup> October 2014

**Present:**

**Councillors:**

Adeleke	Killen
Adshead	Mahmood (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs Bassadone	Marshall (Chairman)
Conway	McLean
Flint	
Hearn	R Sutton

Councillor Harden (Portfolio Holder, Residents & Regulatory Services)

**Co-opted Member:**

Mavis Cook

**Officers:**

Andy Vincent	Group Manager, Tenants and Leaseholders
Julie Still	Group Manager, Resident Services
Sue Prowse	Tenant Involvement Officer
Matt Rawdon	Group Manager – People
Trudi Coston	Member Support Officer (Minutes)
Kayley Johnston	Member Support Officer (Minutes)

**Also in attendance:** Dave Cove, Chief Executive, Sportspace

The meeting began at 7:30 pm

#### **OS/218/14 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were confirmed by the Members present and then signed by the Chairman.

#### **OS/219/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received. Tenant Involvement Officer, Sue Prowse attended on behalf of Carolyn Leech.

#### **OS/220/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Adshead declared a non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 as the Council's Trustee on Sportspace.

#### **OS/221/14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**OS/222/14 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL IN**

None.

Cllr Harden arrived at 19.45.

**OS/223/14 SPORTSPACE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/2014**

Dave Cove, Chief Executive of Sportspace presented a PowerPoint presentation on their annual review for 2013/14, the review having previously been circulated.

Mr Cove drew attention to Sportspace's vision of providing a fitter, happy and healthier society. Sportspace is a limited liability charity, run by the community for the community. All 15 trustees are from the community and include 3 DBC councillors and 1 staff member. He explained the improvements to Sportspace's facilities, such as the Functional Rig at the Hemel Hempstead gym, which was rated by Health Club Management Magazine as having the highest usage compared with other public and privately run gyms. A new Mind & Body Studio had opened in Berkhamsted. Sportspace continues to achieve very high Health & Safety Audit scores, last year achieving 78% in the new Stage 2 Audit.

The cafes have been refurbished and are rated 4 star, but anticipate 5 star at the next inspection.

Little Hay was externally assessed by a Mystery Shopper and was rated very highly. The golf course has also been assessed as being more difficult (which is beneficial). The club house at Little Hay will be extended to allow more functions to be held – presently they are turning down about 2 events a week as being too small. This will increase the income.

When XC opened three years ago, it had sixteen thousand visits in the first five weeks. Numbers for the skate park have fallen recently as the park is no longer novel but is still the highest used skate park in the country with the best facilities having two concrete bowls/pools. However the attendance for the climbing has increased, with events attracting climbers from the USA and Europe. Sportspace has also started a mini mountain course for 4-year olds.

Sportspace work with a wide range of sports clubs in the Borough was successful in obtaining funding for adult participation and it subsidizes activities in sheltered schemes schools, etc. Mr Cove said provision for the disabled amounted to 315 hours, for older people 5,016 hours and for young people 17,995 hours.

10 years ago, when Sportspace was formed, DBC's grant amounted to 20% of income. Each year, there has been a reduction in grant and, last year, the grant amounted to 6% of income. Overall, income increased in 2013/14, resulting in a year end surplus from operations of £21,474 (in 2012/14, the year end result was a loss of £14,289).

Overall, attendance had increased (with the highest decrease in Tring and the highest increase in Berkhamsted) and accidents had reduced (probably because of a lower use of the skateboard park at XC). Sportspace was rated the second highest in the country by H & S inspectors.

Staff accidents stayed the same at twenty minor accidents; these were mainly small incidents which happen in the kitchen.

Future plans include improvements to Little Hay club house and course, looking to provide stand-alone, low cost gym facilities and looking to invest in the Berkhamsted and Tring facilities.

Cllr Conway expressed her concerns regarding the state of Tring's facilities and asked how we are going to improve this.

Mr Cove explained that Sportspace funds basic maintenance but it is down to DBC and Tring School to invest in improving the facilities.

Cllr Harden said Tring School had put forward four options for the site which would cost between £1.5m and £4m. DBC cannot afford this and have asked the school to come back with further proposals.

Cllr Conway also wanted clarification as to why Dacorum card holders were being charged £10 per year. Mr Cove was not in a position to explain the charge as that is a DBC decision but added that the Dacorum Card was good value, enabling customers to get a discount of £2.40 in swimming.

The Committee agreed with Cllr Marshall that the committee needs to monitor the situation with the Tring sport facilities as this had been an issue for some time. She asked that, even if there is not yet a solution, the Committee be provided with an update in about 6 months. Cllr Harden said the financing would be a matter for the Finance & Resources Committee but said an update report would be provided to this Committee in about 6 months concerning what improvements to the sports facilities are envisaged in Tring and Berkhamsted.

Cllr Adshead wanted to know how they was going to push the launch of the app which had recently been released as it only had 100 downloads since it was launched. Mr Cove advised they were the first in the country to do this and wanted to ensure the app worked without any glitches before they go out and launch it officially.

Cllr Killen asked how widely does Sportspace get involved. Mr Cove explained that they work with clubs, sports development teams, coaches, groups etc. and if anyone wanted to get involved they would do this by coming straight to Sportspace.

Cllr Flint had questions on the low cost gym and the location.

Mr Cove said that they have found a location and work is in progress. They aim to get a low cost gym with low cost equipment and minimal staff, with customers paying for any extras. Evidence has shown they are popular and attract new people.

Cllr Flint said Bourne End residents are complaining about the proposal to bring in soil waste to Little Hay. Mr Cove said the golf course needed investment to provide a new driving range, greens and water storage to overcome any hose pipe bans. The planning application is currently with HCC, though Mr Cove suspected the application maybe withdrawn and a more modest scheme proposed.

Cllr Mahmood put forward the idea of having a room for people to come and follow a programme from a TV screen such as Insanity Workout to cut the costs of an instructor and have later opening times. Mr Cove advised that Sportspace are investing heavily in purchasing the new latest technology gym equipment for Hemel and Berkhamsted and the new low cost gym will have longer opening hours.

Cllr Hearn wanted to know if Youth Connexions at the XC building was going well.

Mr Cove advised that Sportspace is not involved in Youth Connexions but, as far as he knows, young people are using the premises.

Cllr Adeleke queried the increase in expenditure on wages. Mr Cove said there are more staff at the Hemel Hempstead gym, many part-time, as surveys have proved that customers would prefer to have a trainer teaching the classes rather than a video.

Cllr Marshall noted that there was a lack of figures in the annual reports, such as numbers of people, clubs supported etc and feared Sportspace were underselling themselves. She also thanked Mr Cove for the detail in his presentation and asked that it be sent to DBC to be circulated to the Committee.

She queried why the cafe service was still 4 stars as last year, he had assured the Committee that the fault of the one cafe which was graded 4 star had been resolved. Mr Cove explained that, at the last inspection, a different cafe was downgraded to 4 star, hence the overall rating was 4 star. He said that the fault was corrected within an hour and he anticipates 5 star rating at the next inspection.

Action:

Sportspace to send the figures referred to in the presentation and lacking in the printed report.

The Portfolio Holder to provide a report in 6 months' time on future plans for Tring and Berkhamsted.

Outcome:

The report was noted.

**OS/224/14 STAR 2014**

A Vincent introduced Sue Prowse who is taking over from Carolyn Leech.

S Prowse referred to the questions and survey results in the report and explained that the survey showed DBC tenants and leaseholders are, overall, more satisfied now. To achieve HouseMark Star status, the "Core Questions" on pages 21 and 22 were asked.

The survey showed there was low satisfaction in parking, grounds maintenance and, when tenants telephone the DBC call centre, they find it difficult to get hold of the relevant person.

S Prowse said the results of the survey had been put to the Tenants & Leaseholders Committee (TLC) to agree on action in response to the matters raised in the survey and these are incorporated in the Service Plans submitted to this Committee every quarter.

Cllr Conway said she has received good feedback on the cleaning in the communal areas of the flats.

Cllr Marshall referred to section 10 on page 19 and explained that her role was simply that she attends as an observer at the TLC.

Cllr Adshead asked, regarding recommendation 9, that ward members are advised when the walkabouts are carried out so members can attend.

A Vincent said the Department found that the walkabouts were not productive and have since stopped but would be delighted to get councillors involved in their plans.

J Still said the walkabouts is "work in progress" in her department. She anticipated Housing will work with the Street Champions scheme, probably from April 2015. They will have an

event in Highfield in February 2015, which so far has had fantastic responses from Partners and other Agencies.

Cllr Adeleke noted that the total response rate was 28.2% and asked what plans are in place to increase the response rate in the next survey.

S Prowse said the response rate target is 25%, and if this target was not hit then reminder cards are sent out. The department is conscious of value for money and if 25% is hit then they will not send reminders.

A Vincent confirmed that they will review what they do to ensure they get the highest response rate possible. They encourage people to respond by putting articles in 'News and Views' and having incentives such as draw prizes for those who respond. There was also a slogan on the envelopes.

Cllr Marshall asked if the HRA contribute to the verge hardening for car parking.

J Still said she has £300,000 for verge hardening, of which the HRA contribute £100,000.

Cllr Mahmood referred to p31, question 8c and asked how is intended to overcome the fact that a very large majority are not confident to apply for Housing Benefit on line. S Prowse said the Council are working on encouraging people to get online and all DBC sheltered schemes have internet and help to get the residents online.

Tablets are proven to be easier to use for people with hand mobility problems. A Vincent added that the Government has dropped the idea of digital by default to digital by design but said figures show that compared to other areas in the UK, the Borough has a very high percentage of digitally excluded people in the home.

Cllr Sutton asked how the Council prioritise the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms as she knew of people that had had new kitchens/bathrooms for no apparent reason.

A Vincent confirmed that the Department use data from the stock condition survey and aim to renew items that fail or are likely to fail soon, so, if this means an old bathroom suite looks good but is costly to repair; it works out cheaper in the long run to replace it. However, this method of working is "pepper-potting" and the Department is considering changing so that whole streets are done at the same time, which might encourage private owners to buy in. Tenants can refuse a new bathroom or kitchen if they did not want it.

Action:

None

Outcome:

The report was noted.

## **OS/225/14 NEW ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR LEGISLATION AND THE COMMUNITY TRIGGER REPORT**

J Still handed out an amendment to the report as the implementation of some provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour; Crime & Policing Act 2014 had been delayed.

She explained that the Community Trigger is for people to have a voice and it does not replace the complaints process.

If someone has been the subject of at least three complaints of anti-social behaviour within 6 months, then a Trigger can be activated by the victim, or someone acting on his behalf with the consent of the victim, where the victim considers that the earlier complaints have not been dealt with satisfactorily.

The Community Trigger can be activated online and if anyone has questions they can speak to Julie Still or Nicola Bryant. The Community Trigger process ensures that all the relevant

bodies are involved in resolving the complaint. DBC will be the lead authority within the Dacorum Community Safety Partnership and will process the Community Trigger procedure. Draft guidance is contained in the report.

The Act also amends and simplifies the legislation relating to anti-social behaviour as detailed in the report. However, there is a new provision impacting significantly on housing, namely the introduction of an absolute provision whereby the landlord can obtain possession if certain criteria (such as conviction of certain offences including breaches of orders relating to anti-social behaviour). Where such an application for possession on these grounds is made, the courts may not refuse the application. In answer to the Cllr Marshall's question, J Still said this provision can be applied to business premises. Cllr Bassadone asked if the tenant evicted under such a measure would be considered as "intentionally homeless" and A Vincent advised yes.

Cllr Bassadone referred to P47-P48 and asked who has delegated power to seek or implement the orders referred to. J Still said certain DBC officers have the power and have been specially trained.

Cllr Adeleke asked what they would do if the first incident was serious, why would they wait for it to happen three times before they can trigger? J Still said it would be hoped that the earlier complaint was dealt with correctly the first time but, if it was not dealt with appropriately, we could be held to account.

Cllr Killen queried the discrepancies in the report relating to the number of reports for the trigger process to be activated. J Still advised that it is 3 complaints within a 6 month period, irrespective of whether those complaints have been made by one or more individuals. This is in line with the guidance.

Cllr Marshall queried how they deal with victims who are not happy with how the Community Trigger complaint has been dealt with. J Still said that part of the procedure had not yet been agreed within Hertfordshire. She added that, in the trials, the local authorities and victims involved had found the procedure to be good. All agencies are held to account but there is still much to be learnt.

J Still said that, if a Community Trigger has been activated, the key agencies will make a decision and an action plan with deadlines made, with the matter being discussed at the next Anti-Social Behaviour Agency Meeting (ASBAM). All SLAs are invited to ASBAMs. There will be a press release this coming Monday for the launch of Community Trigger and there will also be a link on the websites of both Police and Council. Landlords will be encouraged to put it on their websites. In answer to Cllr Marshall, J Still said this is something DBC needs to keep re-launching to encourage CAB, Age Dacorum UK and other agencies to be aware and involved.

In answer to Cllr Marshall's question, J Still said Designated Public Place Orders did not have a finite life but each such Order will be reviewed as they are to be replaced under this new legislation by Public Space Protection Orders. Cllr Marshall asked that ward councillors are advised when such an Order in their ward is being reviewed

Cllr Marshall also asked if hate crime is being included. J Still advised that currently it is not, but this is something her department is looking at.

Cllr Marshall said that the policies need to be polished up and asked that the draft policies are presented at the December meeting.

Mrs Cook asked if a DBC tenant would know the process of how to trigger. J Still said the tenant can do this online or by calling. The process is the same for everyone, irrespective of housing tenure.

Cllr Harden asked if there will be a list of what is classed as anti-social behaviour so we know what can be triggered. J Still said there would not be a list but if in doubt, it should be

reported and the matter will be picked up. Cllr Marshall said it would be impossible to draw up a definitive list of anti-social behaviour.

Cllr Mahmood referred to the diagram and asked how long the process should take. J Still said as quickly as possible and should not be longer than one month.

Action:

Revised policies on the Community Trigger to be presented to the December meeting.

Outcome:

The report was noted.

**OS/226/14 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee agreed with Cllr Adshead's request that the draft of the revised policy on Mobility Scooters be considered by this Committee.

The following items were added to the work programme:

December 2014 - Community Trigger draft policy J Still

June 2015 - Update on Tring and Berkhamsted Sport Centre – Portfolio Holder, Residents & Regulatory Services

To be arranged by Cllr Marshall – revised policy on Mobility Scooters

The meeting closed at 21:35