

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 November 2016

Present: Councillor Hastrick (Chair)
Councillors Fahmy, Joynes, Asif Khan (for minute numbers 49 to 60),
Martins, Rindl, Shah (for minute numbers 45 to 52), Walford and
Williams

Also present: Councillor Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services (for minute
numbers 48 to 60)
Councillor Barks, Chair of the Leisure Management Contract Task
Group (for minute numbers 45 to 51)
Councillor Cavinder, Chair of the Neighbourhood Forum Task Group
(for minute numbers 45 to 53)

Officer: Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head (for minute
numbers 45 to 51)
Contract Monitoring Officer (for minute numbers 45 to 51)
Partnerships and Performance Section Head (for minute numbers 45
to 52)
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

53. Neighbourhood Forum Task Group – Final report

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer including the final report of the Neighbourhood Forum Task Group.

Councillor Cavinder, the Chair of the task group, explained the task group's remit and how it had undertaken its work. During the review officers had been tasked with providing information about historic spend since 2011, how other local authorities carried out similar schemes and to develop a survey which was circulated to all councillors. He outlined each of the recommendations agreed by the task group and the reasons for those suggestions.

Councillor Joynes said that she had also been on the task group. She asked whether councillors would be able to help people to complete an online application.

Councillor Cavinder said that it had not been the intention for councillors to divorce themselves from the neighbourhood forum process.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer highlighted that the recommendation proposed that officers looked into the feasibility of this recommendation. There

Extract of the minutes for Cabinet from Overview and Scrutiny Committee

would still be a need for agreement from at least two ward councillors to any potential application.

Following a comment from Councillor Williams about expenditure on local projects, Councillor Cavinder replied that the task group had had long discussions about this recommendation and it was felt that expenditure on the planting of new trees in the local community should be able to continue.

The Chair said that she had also been on the task group. She had spoken to local residents about neighbourhood forums. She was of the opinion that the funds should be spent on local projects and not given to larger organisations. These larger charities, although worthy causes, were able to access funds from a number of other sources which were not open to smaller groups and therefore should not be given locality funding.

Councillor Cavinder stated that this had been part of the reason for the suggestion of pooling funding at a certain point during the year. This suggestion would ensure that the funds were spent and not lost.

Councillor Khan commented that he was unsure about this suggestion. A number of wards spent their funds later in the financial year, but they were spent.

Councillor Cavinder responded that if projects were known about in advance but were due to take place later, those funds could be set aside and not added to the central pot.

Councillor Khan responded that there were occasions that projects were known about late in the year and could not be anticipated.

Councillor Martins suggested that the proposed date of mid-December may be too early. This would need to be considered further.

Councillor Rindl said that she welcomed this recommendation. Her ward was reasonably affluent and often the funds were not completely spent. She would be happy for other wards to use the remaining available funds. She suggested that it might be made a voluntary arrangement.

Councillor Cavinder confirmed that if agreed officers would still need to look at the feasibility of the recommendation. He reminded the scrutiny committee that the task group had comprised councillors from both groups on the council.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer informed the scrutiny committee that the report would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 5 December 2016. Cabinet's response to the recommendations would be reported to the scrutiny committee in January 2017.

Extract of the minutes for Cabinet from Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED –

1. that the final report and recommendations of the Neighbourhood Forum Task Group be forwarded to Cabinet.

Action: Committee and Scrutiny Officer