

# minutes



Meeting      COMMUNITY SERVICES STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE

Date          Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2004 (commencing at 10.30 am)

## **membership**

Persons absent are marked with `A`

## **COUNCILLORS**

Joyce Bosnjak JP (Chair)

Richard Butler (Vice-Chair)

	Mrs Sue Bennett		R Needham
	John Cottee	A	Peter D Prebble
A	Alan Davison		R S Robinson
A	Andy Freeman	A	Maureen Tewson
	John Hemsall		A Woodward
	E D W Llewellyn-Jones		

## **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Standing Select Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2004 having been circulated to all Members were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor A Davison\*

“ Andy Freeman

“ Peter D Prebble

“ Maureen Tewson

\*denotes on other County Council business

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

None.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Bosnjak informed the Select Committee that the date of its next meeting had been re-arranged to take place on Tuesday, 27 July 2004. Given that the CPA should be undertaking their review of the service, it was hoped that they might attend the meeting.

In relation to the work of the Study Group on higher education, Councillor Bosnjak reported that it was to meet with Trent University to discuss their proposal on 30 July. The outcome of which would be reported back to the Select Committee.

Councillor Bosnjak reminded the Select Committee of its need to be more challenging and probing of all the issues which they consider.

### **MEMBERS' VISIT TO COUNTRY PARKS – 20 MAY 2004**

Councillor Bosnjak introduced the report that informed the Select Committee of the outcomes of its visit to the country parks. In doing so, she said that she was pleased to note the commitment of the staff at the parks.

Mr Challans, Assistant Director, Culture and Community (Leisure and Culture) drew attention to some of the findings. In terms of Sherwood he explained that the County Council had a number of conservation measures placed upon it that included the National Nature Reserve status. The Council would be obliged to consider the relocation of the Visitor Centre to a less sensitive site by English Nature. A detailed report on the proposal would be presented to the next meeting of the Select Committee. Mr Broomhead, Head of Country Parks, explained that Sherwood had worked hard to try and bridge some of the gaps it had with the local community. Councillor Butler asked whether the cost of the relocation of Sherwood Visitor Centre would fall to the County Council. It was explained that the County Council did have a responsibility although there was no money set aside. It was agreed that a report would be brought to the next meeting setting out some of the issues faced by Sherwood.

Members had raised questions during their visit to Rufford as to whether or not the Garden Centre at the Mill End would be a viable proposition.

With regard to the Bestwood visit, Members were informed of the restoration plans for the Winding Engine House. The Select Committee raised its concern about the possible damage and disturbance caused to the park by quad bikes. Councillor Butler asked if anything was being done to deter quad bikes. Mr Broomhead Head of Country Parks said that this was a difficult area to deal with. The park were raising its awareness and highlighting the bylaws as had been recommended by the Police. Councillor Hemsall asked if anything was being done at Bestwood given its propensity to be invaded by travellers. It was suggested that this should be looked into.

The report on the outcome of the visits was noted and it was agreed that a more detailed report on the Sherwood Forest Country Park be presented to the next meeting of the Select Committee.

## **REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES AT RUFFORD AND SHERWOOD FOREST COUNTRY PARKS**

Mr Challans, Assistant Director of Culture and Community introduced the report which gave an appraisal of the car parking charges at the County Council's Country Parks, which had been based on a comparative assessment. In doing so, he explained that there were ongoing issues around the charges and the method used for collection. Mr Challans reiterated the facts set out in the report and asked the Select Committee for their comments and suggestions.

A graph was circulated to the Select Committee on the Buckinghamshire experience that suggested an increase in car park charges would have a significant effect on visitor numbers for at least 2-3 years. Mr Challans felt that an increase in the car parking charge at Rufford would be sensible once the proposed developments had taken place. Mr Broomhead explained that safety was an issue that would be looked into, in particular for lone females.

Following discussion, it was agreed to support the recommendations-

- (1) That the current practice of collection of car parking charges at the Rufford and Sherwood Country Park continue and that the practice continues to be a manual process.
- (2) That the charge per car be maintained at £1.50.
- (3) That there was a need to review car-parking charges at Rufford Country Park once the proposed developments had taken place.

## **A REVIEW OF LEISURE AND CULTURE CATERING SERVICE BASED ON A VALUATION AND QUALITY AUDIT**

Mr Challans introduced the report on the findings of two recent reports on the Leisure and Culture delivery of catering at the Rufford Country Park, Sherwood Forest Country Park and Mansfield Library Coffee Shop.

He explained that consultants had been commissioned in April this year. Christie and Co to provide a market rent to benchmark performance against and D Taylor Catering to provide a qualitative assessment of the overall offer to customers. Mr Challans also reminded the Select Committee of the CPA review of Cultural Services scheduled to commence in July 2004 which required the Department to challenge its management of catering.

The Select Committee recognised that the Savile Restaurant would benefit from enhanced promotion as a venue for evening functions and weddings. It also felt that security would need to be looked into if this was to happen.

The Select Committee:-

- (1) noted the findings of the two consultants' reports;
- (2) agreed to support the recommendation for the retention of the catering service by Leisure and Culture;
- (3) noted the 64% increase in gross contribution to the County Council made by the catering service over the last 2 years;
- (4) requested greater detail of the customer care training programme and recommended the use of a mystery shopper.

### **WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Bosnjak reported that the report on the Emergency Plan would be presented to the next meeting of the Select Committee.

The programme of work was noted.

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

### **CHAIR**

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