

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY
15 JANUARY 2008

SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP
26 NOVEMBER 2007

Present

Councillor M Baldwin (Chair)
Councillors Mrs Danks and Robson.

Also present

Director Community and Environment and Member Services Officer (HB)

Members examined the following six issues previously circulated.

Public Toilets

It was proposed that a methodology be formulated for deciding where new public toilets might be provided or existing ones closed and for prioritisation of any requests for new facilities. Members made particular reference to the possible need for a toilet in the Canal Basin area with additional signage also suggested. The latter issue would be addressed as improved signage within the City Centre was rolled out.

AGREED that this be processed through a working group.

Trees

Strong views were held about trees with residents pulled in different directions some wanting trees removed others trying to prevent their removal. Public consultation about a tree strategy had already been held. Members referred to the importance of TPO's to protect trees on land scheduled for development and other sites such as the University, and Schools etc. and supported the development of clear policies. The Director would speak to the Director Economy and Development as staff from Planning Services were involved in the strategy development.

AGREED that this be processed through a working group

Scores on the Doors

It was felt that the evaluation of whether the Council should publish the results of food hygiene inspections of food businesses could be progressed as a Committee report. Some

authorities were already doing this and if it was to be pursued practical issues such as how to get support from businesses would need to be examined.

AGREED that this be reported in the normal way to Committee.

Use of Incentive Schemes in Council Housing

To consider whether the use of incentive schemes (such as the one currently used to encourage tenants moving out to leave their property clear of rubbish) should be extended to other areas e.g. rents. There was good practice evidence available from a number of other landlords. These could be reviewed against areas of housing management in Exeter to examine whether additional schemes would provide value for money.

AGREED that this be reported in the normal way to Committee.

Re-cycling Policies

The re-cycling plan was due for renewal by 2010 and Members supported the involvement of a working group at an early stage. Issues to examine included use of smaller bins in areas with weekly collections, bin storage, value of a collection and return policy and pros and cons of a doorstep glass collection etc.

AGREED that this be processed through a working group.

Review of Bereavement Service and Cemeteries Operations

This had been considered at a separate working group on 14 November 2007 when a revised pricing structure had been supported together with means of obtaining better value for money from the service and exploring new ways of working. Members had also been advised of proposals for a restructuring to merge Bereavement Services and Cemeteries Operations.

Members supported the proposals set out in the report which would be reflected in the fees and charges for 2008/09. The changes in the charging structure would be put to the informal meeting of Scrutiny Committee – Community in December examining Estimates and Fees and Charges.

The Chair requested that the note of the meeting be made available to Members on request.

Of the three working groups, the following order for consideration was supported:-

- (1) Tree strategy
- (2) Toilets
- (3) Re-cycling

The Chair asked that another working group be established to review sports provision – issues to include those that were more popular, those that were declining in popularity, and whether existing facilities were adequate.

The Director stated that a review had been undertaken approximately 12 months previously to examine the value of the existing neighbourhood structure of leisure centres and as part of the preparatory work in respect of the new schools in the City. The Director would ask the Head of Leisure and Museums to prepare a brief for examining this issue, which would be relatively tightly scoped to inform a further working group. (for consideration as 4th in order)

Councillor Robson’s suggestion that cycle paths on roads could be a further issue for scrutiny fell within the remit of Scrutiny Committee - Economy.

Scrutiny Committee - Community is requested to agree to the establishment of the following working groups and to appoint Members to serve on them. A provisional date for the meeting of the Trees Working Group will be available at the January meeting of the Scrutiny Committee - Community. It is proposed that the other groups meet later in the year.

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| (1) Trees | (2) Toilets |
| (3) Re-cycling | (4) Review of Sports Provision |