

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 16 December 2004

**PRESENT:** Councillor Glynane (Chair); Councillor Miah (Deputy Chair); Councillors M Hoare, Lane, Malpas and Yates

### ALSO ATTENDING:

S Silver	Community Leadership Manager (item 5)
S Wade	Head of Organisational Development & Improvement
Councillor Hill	Community Leadership Portfolio Holder
M Hunter	Head of Overview and Scrutiny
T Feltham	Scrutiny Officer

### 1. APOLOGIES

None.

### 2. MINUTES

Subject to the following amendment, the minutes of 4 November 2004 were signed by the Chair:-

#### **6 CONSULTATION UPDATE**

*... 200 residents would represent each of the other **six** districts .....*

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

### 4. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

None.

### 5. EQUALITY STANDARDS

S Silver, Community Leadership Manager, gave a short presentation on the NBC Equal Opportunities Policy adopted in 1996 that needed updating. The Equality Standards Policy tabled had been circulated to all Forums and GARDS Teams for comment. The general feedback was that the new Policy covered the equalities elements that should be acknowledged. The document had been enhanced and improved by the process, taking up suggestions with only minor changes needing to be made. The Equalities Standards Policy would be presented to the Executive on 10 January 2005 for adoption.

The Committee discussed aspects of the policy regarding:

- The reason for New Age Travellers not being defined as an minority ethnic group being because only groups having a history going back centuries could be defined this way. The Committee felt the legal definition should be included in the policy. It was noted that Scots and Welsh had been defined as ethnic groups this year.
- The consultation process was questioned and it was agreed that the Council needed

to standardise how it collected such data, bench marking against other local authorities. It was essential to be accurate in discovering what the customers need and want.

- The means of evaluating the implementation and effects of the policy would include ensuring it was part of any performance management assessments. It would not be enough to have the document but not enforce implementation.
- Scrutiny would want to know the impact on services. The Corporate Equalities Plan (part of the policy) would provide objectives and the Audit Commission would assess our achievement (self-assessed as level 1).
- The Corporate Equalities Plan would set out objectives that had to be met. It would be assessed through the self-assessment process via the Audit Commission. NBC would indicate that it perceived itself as Level 1.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the Equality Standards Policy be noted.  
(2) That the Committee monitors its progress, implementation and effect.

## 6. BUDGET PREPARATION

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised of the Financial Strategy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee approach to the draft budget. They had selected approximately four issues to consult on, two of which also came under the remit of this Committee:

- Community Centres
- Advice Service Options

They had suggested that this Committee be invited to join Finance Scrutiny Committee's budget meeting to jointly work on these issues.

The Executive's budget consultation leaflet was circulated. D McKintosh advised that at last year's budget meetings the Federation of Residents' Associations had suggested that future leaflets should be much more user friendly. The Federation had found it impossible to provide meaningful comment last year on such sketchy information. J Warlow had confirmed that this year's budget proposals leaflet would be compiled in consultation with the Federation, but this had not taken place. The Chair suggested that an extract from last year's minutes to this effect be emailed to R Bowmer for comment

**RESOLVED:** An extract from last year's budget minutes highlighting that this year's budget consultation leaflet would be compiled in consultation with the Federation of Residents' Associations, to be forwarded to R Bowmer, Head of Financial Strategy and Acting Chief Finance Officer for comment.

## 7. CONSULTATION

Simone Wade advised the Committee that the Executive had, on 6 December, approved the future Framework for consultation. There were four main elements to the Framework:-

- **Strategy** - Once a year a 'state of the nation' consultation would take place. A pledge would be made to the residents about what was going to be done, how and when. It would state how residents could become involved. There would be links to

the Equalities Standards Policy. Consultation results would be communicated.

- **Citizens' Panel** – The Panel would comprise 1,800 residents across the County, of which 600 would be from Northampton. NBC and NCC would share procurement, administration and maintaining the Panel costs. The results of the Opinion Survey about NBC and NCC's Services are needed by February 2005.
- **Practitioners' Network** – The development of a network attended by all Service Practitioners involved in consultation exercises, would enable co-ordination of efforts across the Council and would allow the sharing of information, best practice and learning and would reduce duplication and costs.
- **Software** - Consultation software would be utilised to help the process work well.

The Committee discussed the report and its concerns:

- How the questions would be formulated for the panel by NBC and NCC. As the questionnaire would be countywide, only some questions would be applicable to both authorities. Some would relate to access and the access strategy.
- Of 1800 county residents forming the panel, 600 would be from Northampton with an additional minority ethnic booster of 200 representatives. The results would be split into Area Partnership localities.
- The software purchased would need to be compatible with the council's systems and licenses for various consultation practitioners would need to be bought, so not all officers would have access.
- Not all Parish councils would be consulted as total inclusion would need additional resources. The committee voiced concern at this and wanted recommendations taken up, that information from the survey must be shared with Parish Councils, and in future, they should all be included in consultations with some of the questions relating to them.
- A draft set of questions had been devised and included satisfaction, image and access. The Chair was keen to see these and S Wade agreed to email a copy to him.
- The Committee discussed the public confusion over the responsibilities of the two councils and heard that there would be no detail in the questionnaire that would help identify different remits. It was expected the two could work together to provide seamless services.
- The Chair referred to the committee's working group set up to scope how it would review consultations. S Wade offered to work with that group beginning with a briefing prior to the scoping meeting.
- The Committee was adamant that a toolkit was needed for the Council's departments to ensure consistency and that the consultation was robust.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the consultation information be noted.  
(2) That S Wade give the Consultation Working Group a short briefing prior to its initial meeting in the New Year.

- (3) S Wade to email a copy of the questions to Councillor Glynane.
- (4) The comments regarding Parish Councils be taken up for the future.

## **8. REPORT BACK FROM WORKING GROUPS ON SCOPING**

### **(a) YOUTH ISSUES**

The Group would meet on Wednesday 12 January 2005 at 4.45pm

### **(b) TRAVELLERS**

The first meeting was set for Monday 10 January 2005 at 5.30pm

### **(c) CELEBRATIONS**

The Group had met recently. Councillor Miah commented that the Working Group had discussed the underlying aim of the motion that was passed at the last Council meeting regarding celebrations, to recognise the contribution that people made to the town. He had looked at other town's examples and investigated how NBC could organise a celebrations event, timings of the event, who could be involved and resources. Councillor Miah advised that he would liaise with Shrewsbury to ascertain how the Authority carried out its Celebrations event and how it engaged with its citizens.

The Committee commented that:-

- There was a need to involve the youth of Northampton.
- Caution needed to be applied so not to make the event too large.

Councillor Miah advised that one or two members of the Youth Forum would be involved in the process. The Working Group would submit a report to the next meeting.

### **(d) CONSULTATION**

S Wade would give the Consultation Working Group a short briefing, prior to its initial meeting, to be convened in the New Year.

## **9. FORUM MINUTES**

Members were advised that no issues had arisen from the Forum minutes for the attention of this Committee.

## **10. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair reminded Members that Consultation, Youth Issues, Travellers and Celebrations was the Committee's main Work Programme for the remainder of the year.

The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.