

## REGENERATION AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9<sup>th</sup> January 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mead (Chair); Councillors Bailey, R J Davis, Hinkley, Hoyle and Skepelhorn

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Rutstein

### 1 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 2 GRANTS MONITORING – ALZHEIMER’S SOCIETY (REF: 9.1)

Margaret Ellis and Megan Robins of the Alzheimer’s Society (South Bedfordshire) gave a presentation on the work of the Alzheimer’s Society that supported people with Dementia and their carers (copy of the presentation attached at Appendix A to these Minutes). The Society covered the South Bedfordshire area, which included Luton, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. It was explained that the grant received from Luton Borough Council, £5,000 in the current year, was appreciated as it paid the transport costs to various social events e.g. – Carers’ Havens’ tea dances, occasional fish and chips/pub lunches and other social interactions.

A Member enquired what the annual cost of running the organisation was.

Ms Ellis replied that it was about £34,000. The Society had received an annual grant from Luton Borough Council on application each year. They also received a grant from South Bedfordshire District Council (SBDC), through a 3 year Service Level Agreement (SLA), worth £15,000 per year. The Society raised funds from various sources on an ongoing basis, including charity grants. She explained that the organisation was constantly applying for grants and would appreciate a similar SLA with Luton Borough Council as with South Bedfordshire District Council.

A Member requested that the Policy and Performance Manager be instructed to investigate the feasibility of a Service Level Agreement for the South Bedfordshire Alzheimer’s Society.

**Resolved:** (i) That the Presentation (Ref: 9.1) be noted.

(ii) That the Policy and Performance Manager be instructed to investigate the feasibility of a Service Level Agreement for the South Bedfordshire Alzheimer’s Society

(iii) That Margaret Ellis and Megan Robins be thanked for their interesting presentation.

### **3 LUTON DRUG AND ALCOHOL PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE INFORMATION INCLUDING THE FUNDING OF DRUG TREATMENT (REF: 9.2)**

Ms Glynis Allen, the Head of Strategic Development at the PCT, gave a presentation on the Luton Drug and Alcohol Partnership with performance information up to the third quarter of 2006/07. She also provided information relating to funding of local drug and alcohol treatment programmes, an issue raised by the Committee at the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006 meeting. She highlighted the strategic aims of the Partnership, i.e. to focus on young people, adult treatment, communities and tackling supply and availability of drugs and alcohol. The Partnership dealt with the full range of people who were problematic drug and alcohol users. (Presentation attached at Appendix B to these Minutes).

She went on to elaborate on each of the headings, with the following issues being of interest.

- Funding for young people services comes from different sources, including Children and Learning, Young People Substance Misuse Grant Allocation, Department of Health and charity donations.
- Funding for adult drug services also came from various ring-fenced sources but there was no ring-fenced funding for adult alcohol services, which was considered problematic, given that over use of alcohol poses a potentially bigger problem than drugs.
- Due to its 'intensive area' status, Luton was funded to run a Drugs Intervention Programme. During the period April to September 2006, around 150 individuals were taken onto caseload, exceeding the target.
- A number of enforcement operations were run, with some success, to reduce the supply of illegal drugs and alcohol related harm and tackle kerb crawlers.

Ms Allen explained that a large number of the population were drinking harmfully and that it was a national problem as alcohol was freely available.

The Scrutiny Officer enquired if young people completed their treatment.

Ms Allen replied that many young people had complex needs and other problems to cope with such as school or parents as well as alcohol and/or drugs and so they would accept treatment as and when they required it.

**Resolved:** (i) That the presentation (Ref: 9.2) be noted.

(ii) That Ms Glynis Allen be thanked for her interesting presentation.

#### **4 ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING NEW BUSINESSES – FINAL REPORT (REF: 9.3)**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the final report on Encouraging and Supporting New Businesses. On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006 the Committee requested the Scrutiny Officer carried out further work to formulate the key findings into conclusions and focussed on the gaps in the service provision.

The Scrutiny Officer had gathered the further information requested and recommended that:-

- To avoid duplication in service provision the Council could adopt the approach taken by Medway Beacon Council creating partnership arrangements with specialist agencies with service level agreements being set up.
- Funding was a barrier encountered by many businesses; the Council did not have a definitive role/resources or specialist knowledge within this remit. More information needed to be made available on the local funding initiatives available that businesses could access for help in the interim.
- A central point of contact was required where information and advice could be given to prospective businesses.
- Clearer communications and marketing strategy were required to promote Luton, as a viable location for businesses.
- Mentoring was seen as a much-needed service for businesses. The first contact for potential businesses should be at a single well-advertised location that included a meaningful assessment of their requirements by a knowledgeable individual. Some mentoring provision was provided by agencies such as Beds and Luton Business Link.
- Promotion and education of people in running their own businesses. Beds and Luton Business Link could provide educational days where they visited schools in promoting the setting up of a business as an option in addition to college or finding a job.
- There was a need for support and advice to be extended throughout all stages of a business lifecycle and not just at the initial set up stage. Adequate provision was provided at set up stage with little or no provision available thereafter.

Members agreed that the recommendations (as set out below) were excellent:

- That the Executive request the Head of Regeneration to investigate the Medway option as a possible way forward to help support and

encourage new businesses in the town to avoid duplication of service provision and identify a lead agency to take on this role.

- That the Executive recognise funding is the main barrier faced by new businesses and is an area that the Council can only act in co-operation with specialist financial agencies.
- That the Council website and other media be utilised to provide information on local initiatives to assist new businesses.
- That the Executive request the head of Regeneration to look into the viability of providing a service to help, support and encourage new businesses in the town through the Council's call centre/one stop shop facility. The Executive note that provision of a service to help support and encourage new businesses in the town could potentially have resource implications in providing specialist knowledge in certain areas and that inclusion of this as part of the Service Level Agreement be considered.

Members asked the question as to where businesses could be directed to get the advice they required a person or one stop shop they could access for information. Funding was available to businesses but they needed to know how to access it.

The Head of Regeneration explained that business support was changing but central Government advice was mixed. The Department of Trade and Industry wanted the Business Link brand to be used as the One Stop Shop. The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) had just run a tender for the operation of the Business Link contract across the Eastern Region. This had been won by Exemplas. There were other organisations involved in assisting businesses such as the University of Bedfordshire and the operator of the Innovation and Business Base.

The Head of Regeneration informed the Committee that the Butterfield site would be opening in late spring 2007. She also reported that the recent Local Economic Growth Incentive bid had been unsuccessful, and as a result the Regeneration Department were examining other means of obtaining investment for business support and growth activity.

The Head of Regeneration suggested that Basepoint and Exemplas be invited to the Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007 to do a presentation on how they and the Council could assist businesses in providing a lead to develop as an enterprise/small business support strategy as phase two of this topic.

**Resolved:** (i) That the report (Ref: 9.3) be noted.

(ii) That the Executive be recommended to accept the recommendations set out in the Final report on the Encouraging and Supporting New Businesses.

(iii) Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee recommend as a Statutory Body, the Council should provide a lead and develop with other agencies an enterprise/small business support strategy in consultation with outside organisations such as Exemplas and Basepoint.

(iv) That Exemplas and Basepoint be invited to attend the Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007 to discuss the Business Strategy for Luton.

(v) That the Scrutiny Officer be thanked for her hard work in researching and producing the final report on the topic.

## **5 RESEARCH INTO YOUTH AND LEISURE IN LUTON (REF: 9.4)**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the final report on Research into Youth and Leisure in Luton. On the 5<sup>th</sup> October Members requested the Scrutiny Officer investigated leisure activities undertaken by voluntary agencies which had now been completed.

The Scrutiny Officer explained that surveys had been undertaken with both parents and young people. Results from young people had shown that youth clubs were the most popular followed by a swimming centre and subsidised sports and leisure facilities. More specialist clubs such as boxing, yoga and rock climbing were seen as essential activities that should be made available. The cost of activities was perceived as a barrier along with the lack of efficient transport to reach such facilities.

A Member stated that the Government were instructing local authorities to provide an effective leisure service for young people and suggested that the Best Value Review of the Youth Service needed to take this into account.

The Committee were in agreement that the Scrutiny Officer had produced a very comprehensive report. Members recommended that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee should continue to monitor youth and leisure activities in Luton and to add this item to their work programme. Feedback should be provided by the Youth Service, as part of their progress report against the Best Value Review Improvement Plan on Youth Services, such a report to include a report on youth provision in the 2007 school summer holiday. The next report is due in September 2007.

**Resolved:** (i) That the report (Ref: 9.4) be noted.

(ii) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee be requested to add the monitoring of Youth and Leisure Activities in Luton to their Work Programme and report to their Committee in September once the progress report of the Best Value Review on Youth Services has been presented in September 2007, such a report to include a summary on youth provision and take up in the 2007 school summer holiday.

(iii) That the Scrutiny Officer be thanked for producing a very comprehensive report on Youth and Leisure Facilities in Luton and for her hard work in researching this information for the Committee.

## **6 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROGRAMME (REF: 9.5)**

The Scrutiny Officer updated the Committee on the details of the latest version of its work programme. It was agreed to make the following changes to the Work Programme.

- No new topic was to be discussed at the 8<sup>th</sup> February meeting.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> February meeting would deal with Grants and Performance Indicators.
- The Grants Monitoring item – Behaviour Awareness Group be deleted from the 15<sup>th</sup> March meeting.
- That Exemplas and Baseline be invited to attend the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March to continue the second phase of the discussion on Encouraging and Supporting New Businesses.
- The mapping exercise is undertaken for the Respect Agenda. Members suggested that the Committee scrutinised the parts of the Respect Agenda that the Local Authority would be responsible for. The Scrutiny Officer would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Tasking, Consultation and Commissioning Group, charged with monitoring the progress of the implementation of the Respect Agenda on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2007.
- That the draft annual report of the Committee be presented at the next meeting.

**Resolved:** (i) That the report (Ref: 9.5) be noted.

(ii) That the Scrutiny Officer be instructed to incorporate the relevant changes to the Committee's Work Programme.

**(Note: The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.)**