

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

5th April, 2006

Members Present:- Councillor Clifford (Substitute for Councillor Patton)
Councillor Charley (Substitute for Councillor Ridge)
Councillor Mrs. Dixon
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Field
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Williams

Other Scrutiny
Members Present:- Councillor Batten
Councillor Gazey
Councillor Kelly
Councillor Mrs. Lucas

Cabinet Members
Present:- Councillor H. Noonan (Cabinet Member (Community Services))
Councillor Taylor (Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance))

Employees Present:- P. Barnett (Chief Executive's Directorate)
J. Bolton (Director of Community Services)
C. Hinde (Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)
J. Jardine (Chief Executive's Directorate)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)

Apologies:- Councillor Patton
Councillor Ridge

253. Brandon Wood Farm

Further to Minute 244/05, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Community Services which had previously been considered by the Cabinet Member (Community Services) (their Minute 39/05 refers) and had been called in by Councillors Mrs. Lucas, Kelly and Duggins. The Committee noted that at her meeting the Cabinet Member had amended the report's recommendations by the addition of the following to the end of recommendation 2.2:-

"Such outcomes to include details of the alternative daycare facilities proposed for those service users currently attending Brandon Wood Farm for a full five day week."

The report set out the background to the position with Brandon Wood Farm, the proposals for which had been approved by Cabinet on 28th June, 2005 (their Minute 36/05 refers), and would create an "inclusive centre of excellence for training and education" at

the farm resulting in a diverse, curriculum of training courses being available for a larger number of service users.

The farm provided a service for 78 people over a range of timetables with 33 service users attending for a full five day week. Under the new arrangements approximately 1,500 hours of education and training would be provided as part of the 2004/05 budget. Members had requested officers to remove £500,000 from the budget for daycare services for people with learning disabilities; the changes to Brandon Wood Farm had contributed to these savings.

Scrutiny Board (2) had taken part in the consultation process and had since received progress reports; the Board had supported the broad vision for Brandon Wood Farm although they had expressed concerns about the alternative education and employment opportunities available to people with learning disabilities as well as the transitional arrangements.

The Director of Community Services gave a brief introduction to position with Brandon Wood Farm. The Committee noted that the Cabinet decision had been to take the farm forward as a training centre, however, it had since become clear that the level of daycare provided by the farm had been under estimated; if the farm was run along the lines of a training centre the Learning and Skills Council had an expectation that users would progress through training programmes and that those with ability would be expected to move on to further training, education and work. The Director indicated that consideration needed to be given to the services offered at the site, it was likely that if the farm was run as a daycare centre additional costs would be payable by the City Council as there would be no entitlement to Learning and Skills Council funding and the proposed Henley College investment would be lost. The Director believed that the concerns of the Brandon Wood Carers' Support Group had been taken into account and felt that this was, in part, why this situation had been reached.

The Committee noted that the provision of daycare services for people with learning disabilities was not consistent across the city; the Director suggested that it may be necessary to reconsider how Brandon Wood Farm fitted into the provision of daycare across the city in terms of training, work experience and support for those needing care. With regard to Henley College, the deadline for signing the agreement with them was 1st June, 2006. The Cabinet Member had made it clear that this proposal should not be taken forward at the current time; the college had indicated that whilst they were frustrated with the situation they did still wish to work with the City Council at Brandon Wood Farm if it was the right option for all parties.

Members questioned the Director and Cabinet Member on aspects of the report, in particular the position for carers and users whilst the evaluation process was taking place and the timetable for the evaluations; Members were disappointed at the points being raised by the carers had previously been raised by Scrutiny Board (2) and felt that if these concerns had been taken on board then the situation may have been avoided. A representative of the carers indicated that they believed that the initial consultation process had misled the carers who had believed that the decision was a joint venture with Henley College with educational programmes running alongside daycare provision, she was concerned that, instead of working in partnership, Henley College were taking over the day to day running of the farm leaving vulnerable people without daycare.

The Director of Community Services accepted that adequate arrangements had not been made for the 34 people currently using the farm with daycare needs. He emphasised that there was still a need for changes to be made at Brandon Wood Farm but that in doing this there was a need to distinguish between training provision and daycare. The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee noted that the Brandon Wood Farm proposals, outlined in the report considered by the Cabinet Member, would be evaluated as part of a city wide review of daycare/training services. The Cabinet Member confirmed that, in line with this, the report which she had considered at her meeting on 14th March, 2006 and was the subject of this call-in, had therefore been withdrawn.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the proposals in relation to Brandon Wood Farm described in the reports considered by the Cabinet Member (Community Services) are to be re-evaluated as part of a city-wide review of day care/training services and that a further report would be submitted to Cabinet in June 2006.**

- (2) That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee requests that the Cabinet Member (Community Services) ensures that Scrutiny is kept involved on the progress of the review and, in particular, any proposals to change the existing arrangements and services that apply at Brandon Wood Farm.**

254. Call-In Stage 1

The Committee noted that no call-ins had been received yet this week. The deadline for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made during the week commencing 27th March, 2006, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday 7th April, 2006. Any call-ins received after this meeting and before that deadline would be considered for validity by the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Paragraph 5.4.5.25.4 of the City Council's Constitution refers).

255. Forward Plan for the Period 1st April 2006 to 31st July 2006

The Committee considered the forward plan of key decisions for the above period in order to identify any issues for further scrutiny.

RESOLVED that no items be identified for scrutiny from this issue of the Forward Plan.

256. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Birmingham International Airport Consultative Committee

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Lee which set out the details of work of the Birmingham International Airport Consultative Committee over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representative at meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that the City Council continue to appoint to the Birmingham International Airport Consultative Committee.

257. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Sir Charles Barrett Memorial Foundation

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Crookes which set out the details of the work of the Sir Charles Barrett Memorial Foundation over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Foundation.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that the City Council continue to appoint to the Sir Charles Barrett Memorial Foundation.

258. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Tom Mann Centre Trust Management Committee

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Harrison which set out details of the work of the Tom Mann Centre Trust Management Committee over the previous 12 months.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that the City Council continue to appoint to the Tom Mann Centre Trust Management Committee.

259. Outstanding Issues

The Committee considered and noted a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services which identified those issues on which further reports had been requested in order that Members could monitor progress.

260. Work Programme 2005/2006

The Committee considered and noted the Work Programme for the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for 2005/2006.