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## **CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 31 March 2009

Present: Councillor J Hale (Chair)

Councillors G Ellis S Taylor  
M Redfern J Williams  
P Reisdorf

Apologies Councillor T Smith

### 20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP**

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement. No such declarations were made.

### 21 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January and 3 February 2009, be received.

### 22 **MINUTES - MATTERS ARISING**

Further to minute 14 (Warrens Nursery – Petition for Allotments), the Chair asked for clarification regarding the timescale for the review of allotment provision and the options that are available for funding the development of the Allotment Strategy.

The Director of Regeneration referred to his update report on the work of the Development Officer (minute 25 post refers) and reported that a further progress report on the completion of the review would be presented to the September meeting of this committee.

Councillor Ellis asked for a legal opinion on the Council's duty under the Allotments Act to provide new allotment sites. The Director agreed to provide a written response to members regarding this matter.

Further to minute 16 (Capital Programme Bids) the Director of Regeneration gave a verbal update on the outcome of his department's capital programme bids which were listed in Appendix 2 to his previous report to the committee on 27 January. He reported that the schemes for Hoylake Golf Drainage (£400,000) and Landican Crematorium (£3m) were approved.

Members asked for further clarification regarding the application of the criteria which was used for the selection of capital programme schemes. The Director referred to changes in the criteria that affect the schemes that qualify for capitalisation. He agreed to pursue this matter with the Director of Finance and obtain a more detailed response for members.

Councillor Reisdorf asked for further information regarding funding for the improvement of play areas.

The Director reported that the Council had received funding approval for £1.2m under the "Playbuilders" scheme and a report would be presented to a future Cabinet meeting on the development of play policy. The Chair commented that this committee was responsible for play area sites and it should therefore be involved in identifying the play areas that could be improved utilising this funding.

**23 WIRRAL TOURISM STRATEGY - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE (JANUARY TO MARCH 2009)**

Juggy Landay presented a quarterly update report on the tourism element of the Destination Marketing Office (DMO) for the period January to March 2009, highlighting the particularly difficult time now facing Wirral's tourism business community due to the current economic downturn, and the strategic approach that was being taken through the Implementation Plan to market Wirral's tourism offer more effectively, help businesses increase trade by attracting more businesses to the Borough, and ultimately encouraging long-term sustainability.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding support for tourism businesses during the current recession, he reported that the DMO was supporting all of the stakeholders and it was engaged with its partners in raising the profile of Wirral's unique facilities and its fantastic coast.

Resolved – That the Committee note the contents of this update report.

**24 WEST KIRBY REGENERATION - THE SAIL PROJECT**

This item had been placed on the agenda at the request of the Chair. He referred to the Cabinet's decision (minute 390 – 19/3/09 refers) to defer a decision on Carpenter Investments' revised design proposals for the Sail Project and reported that this committee had an input regarding the sailing school element of the scheme.

The Chair reported receipt of an email from Mr Martin Harrison on behalf of West Kirby Working Group, drawing attention to defects in the outline design.

Councillor Ellis highlighted some of the issues raised in the email relating to:

- (i) no provision for disabled persons' toilets;
- (ii) the reduced size of the boatyard
- (iii) deletion of the visitors/interpretation centre
- (iv) deletion of the chandler's boat repair shop
- (v) no first aid post

The Chair commented that the public had not seen the revised plans and the parking arrangements. He had particular concerns regarding an area at the junction with Dee Lane which was currently used as an open space for boat launching, but was now shown as a car parking area within the revised plans.

Mr Simon Smith, Acting Manager of the Sailing Centre, addressed the meeting. He reported that the existing building needed replacing and Carpenter's scheme would provide significant improvements in terms of the changing rooms, office accommodation, and a larger boat storage area.

There was a general discussion regarding the design issues and it was agreed that these matters should be drawn to the attention of Cabinet.

Resolved – That this Committee recommend to Cabinet that the officers be asked to liaise with the scheme's architects to ensure that the design issues identified by Members are addressed with specific attention drawn to the need for disabled persons' toilets and the provision of a chandler's boat repair facility.

## 25 **ALLOTMENT DEVELOPMENT OFFICER UPDATE**

Further to minute 14 (27/1/09) the Director of Regeneration reported upon the work of the Allotment officer to date in carrying out initial assessments of all the allotment sites managed by the department with individual site secretaries. An audit of public open spaces (including allotments) was also being undertaken as part of the review of Wirral's Local Development Framework, in accordance with planning policy guidance, to ascertain the use made of existing facilities, access in terms of location and costs and opportunities for new open space.

He reported that funding to employ the Allotment Development Officer was part of an additional £40,000 approved as part of the budget for 2008/09 but made available over a two year period. Approximately £20,000 of this budget allocation would be available to directly fund improvements or to use as match funding for external grant applications. Priorities for the use of this funding would be decided in agreement with the Allotment Steering Group. There were no additional funding implications at this stage but, depending on the outcome of the Allotment Development Officer's work, funding was likely to be required and this would be subject to further reports.

Resolved – That the Committee note this report and note that it will receive a further progress report at the September meeting.

26 **QUARTER THREE SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Director of Regeneration submitted a report providing an overview of progress against performance indicators and key projects which are relevant to this overview and scrutiny committee.

Resolved – That the Committee note the contents of this report.

27 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair reported that this was the last meeting of the committee during the current municipal year and he thanked members and officers for their contribution to the work of the committee.