

# **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

## **DECISION RECORD**

19<sup>th</sup> June 2007

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. at Belle Vue Community, Sports & Youth Centre, Kendal Road, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillor Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder)

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)  
Pat Watson, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor G Lilley (as resident) and Dr Pickens were also present and were allowed to speak on minute 134.

### **1. Devolved Management of Briarfields Allotments** (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key

#### **Purpose of report**

To seek the Portfolio Holder's approval of arrangements for devolution of allotment management responsibilities at Briarfields to the Briarfields Allotments Association and to authorise the Chief Solicitor to proceed with the relevant documentation.

#### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the concept of devolved management of allotments was previously approved by Cabinet in 2002 and successfully piloted by the Woodcroft Allotment Association.

The report to the Portfolio Holder indicated that Briarfields is a re-established site with 12 plots. Under arrangements being negotiated it was proposed that responsibility for site inspections, maintenance and payment of utility costs would transfer from the Council to the Allotment Association. In exchange the Council would make the allotment rental income available to the association for use on this site. These arrangements would provide an incentive to the association to maximise

occupancy and minimise water costs. A site plan was attached to the report as an appendix. There was a high level of support from the committee and tenants of the site and the proposals had been approved at their meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

The current allotment management breakdown was included within the report and it was acknowledged that devolved management could bring a number of benefits to both the Council and to the Association, such as giving more local control, reducing labour costs and utilising volunteer resources for issues such as plot clearances and inspections.

The report contained a detailed table indicating the division of management responsibilities. This was not a definitive list and more specific responsibilities would be detailed in the agreement drawn up by the Council's Chief Solicitor.

There would be no direct financial implications involved in the proposal as income lost from returning rent to Briarfields Allotments Association would be offset by a reduction in maintenance and utility costs associated with the site. Approximate rental for 2007/08 would be £399 based on full occupancy.

In conclusion, the Assistant Director indicated that the objective of 'devolved management' of the allotment estate is one which increasingly provides self assurance and confidence to the individual allotment areas through growing community capacity and knowledge. The evidence observed from existing devolved management schemes, both here and elsewhere demonstrates an increased ability to source improvement funding unavailable to the Council, leading to more attractive and productive allotment gardening. The extension to this principle into Briarfields Allotments is to be welcomed and would hopefully be followed by other Hartlepool Allotment Associations.

The Portfolio Holder noted that such functions as clearance of hazardous fly tipping and issuing Notices to Quit remained under the Council's responsibility. Councillor Lilley indicated that the site is fully enclosed and no fly-tipping problems were envisaged. He invited the Portfolio Holder to visit the site and perhaps attend a meeting of the Association. Dr Pickens said the Association members were very enthusiastic and optimistic about self management and he, along with the Portfolio Holder, thanked the Officer(s) involved for their assistance throughout the process.

## **Decision**

- (a) The Portfolio Holder was delighted to give approval to the outline arrangements for devolution of some allotment management responsibilities at Briarfields to the Briarfields Allotments Association; he felt it would make Briarfields a showcase of constructive management by the Association;

- (b) The Portfolio Holder authorised the Chief Solicitor to negotiate final terms of devolved management and prepare agreed documentation.

## **2. Family Wood – Future of Management and Expansion of Amenity Area** (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Portfolio Holder on the future management arrangements and the proposed expansion of Family Wood.

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report to the Portfolio Holder advised that the Family Tree Scheme had been created by the Tree Council in 1981 to enable individuals, families and corporate bodies to commemorate significant events through the planting of trees at specially designated areas called Family Woods. In December 1995 Bum Valley Family Wood had been launched with successive phases being added in 1997 and 2001. The existing four phases had reached capacity for planting and there was a need to expand further with a fifth phase. An area of land had been identified as having the potential to act as the new area for commemorative planting and habitat improvement. A plan of the area was attached as an appendix to the report.

It was also proposed that the Council take over the administration and running of the Wood independent of the International Tree Foundation. This would free up any administration monies and reduce the time between the contribution and planting of any trees. The report also suggested that the Council could look to protect the woodland and raise its importance through gaining Local Nature Reserve status in the future.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved:

- (a) the integration of a new Phase (V) of Family Wood;
- (b) the implementation of the administration of a scheme for the purchase and planting of trees on behalf of the public for commemorative purposes be, and
- (c) that the longer term aspiration for the site to become a Local Nature Reserve be noted and approval given for such a designation to be pursued in the future.

### **3. Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2006/07 – Outturn Monitoring Report** *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key

#### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2006/07.

#### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report detailed the progress against actions contained in the Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2006/07 and the outturns for key performance indicators. Twenty one actions had been completed or were on target to be completed while one had been highlighted as not having met the target. Of the performance indicators eleven had hit or were expected to hit their targets while two had not. Further information and comment on the failed targets was given within the report.

Within the fourth quarter Community Services Division had completed a number of actions, including:-

- A programme of cultural and literary events in libraries and other venues;
- A programme to promote archaeology at all levels;
- Attractions of new sporting events to the town.

#### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder noted the achievement on actions and indicators.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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