

Reports of the Select Committee Chairmen

a) **ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE**

Since the last report to Council, the Committee has had two meetings.

On 14th April we heard from Bus Service users and providers. There was then a detailed examination of the Cabinet's proposals following their review of Development Services. The committee made a series of comments and recommendations to Cabinet. In addition there was consideration of the Vine and Vine Court Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

At our latest meeting on 18th June, the Committee considered the Rail services and heard from both providers and users. Further consideration was given to the Development Services Review, since few of the Committee's suggestions had been accepted by Cabinet. Accordingly a paper setting out the salient points of disagreement was approved for consideration by members of the Council before they took any decisions on the proposals. Consideration was given to two further Conservation Areas, Kippington and Granville & Eardley Roads and also to the Management Action Plan for Kent Downs AONB.

Both the Parking and Development Control Members Working Groups have continued their work and the latter produced a number of recommendations to the last meeting of the committee.

R.F.C.Walsh, Chairman 8/07/09

b) **SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE**

Report to follow.

c) **SOCIAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE**

Report of the meeting held on 2.6.09

STAG Presentation

Members of the committee welcomed Linda Larter, Chief Executive of the Stag Community Arts Centre, to talk about the up to date progress and marketing of the complex.

New initiatives had been introduced in both the Cinemas and Theatre. Wednesday Specials (two for the price of one), cinema gift vouchers and blockbuster films had resulted in ticket sales of 28,000. The Plaza Suite was being marketed more flexibly to include corporate training events, weddings and possible fine art / craft exhibitions.

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Comedy nights in the Theatre were proving to be a sell-out and bookings for events in 2010 were now complete.

Members were pleased to learn that there were 150 volunteers, undertaking a wide variety of tasks, though they sought assurance that, where relevant, appropriate training was being given. Educational tours, specifically designed for the under 11s, were being developed and curriculum based events such as the Romans have been planned. In addition, interactive shows were being taken into the schools. Youth Outreach remained an important element of their corporate plan; currently a course on film making was underway with further courses planned for the summer in Swanley and other venues to be identified. The Youth Council was canvassing colleagues on the possibility of a youth café.

Several significant challenges remained to be addressed, not least the signing of the propose 25 year lease from the District Council, obtaining charitable status and the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive. Members questioned the composition of the Shadow Board and how the accounts could be accessed for future monitoring by the Select Committee. Mrs Larter confirmed that once the Centre became a charity, these figures would be published and made available to the public. Other issues raised included the overall level of staffing, training and health and safety.

It was noted that the draft Heads of Terms for the STAG would be coming to the July meeting for consideration.

Future Business Plan

It was suggested that the lack of a local Job Centre caused difficulties and needed investigation; however under the current arrangements this fell within the Terms of Reference for the Environmental Select Committee. Subsequent to the meeting, the Chairman of that committee, Roger Walshe, agreed to include this as an agenda item for his committee's August meeting. Members of Social Affairs Select would be welcome to attend and take part in any debate.

The present Terms of Reference for all three Select Committees have been recirculated and may need to be reconsidered at some future point.

Domestic Violence

This item was prompted following an inaccurate report 'Map of Gaps' published by the Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission which implied that this Council had no specialised support services for victims of violence. Strong representations have been made to the Commission to counter this misinformation.

Members noted that due to lack of funding no Domestic Abuse Safe Schools Officer had been appointed and felt strongly that K.C.C. should address this matter.

Annual Equalities Report

The remit given to bailiffs, particularly when dealing with vulnerable people, was raised and concern expressed. Officers were asked to review the methods currently in operation.

Alison Cook

June 2009

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