

NOTES OF ACTIONS AGREED BY EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

MEETING 6: 24th January 2013

ATTENDED BY: **Councillors:** Shepherd (Chair), Gaskell, Pacey, Sharp and Smidowicz

Officers: M. Hooper and M. Hopkins

APOLOGIES: Councillor Williams

CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING:

DOCUMENT OR MATTER	ACTIONS AGREED
Action Notes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2012 and updated Scrutiny Review Scope Document	<p>Confirmed as a true record subject to the following amendments under the 'Information Provided by Councillor Slater and Geoff Parker, Charnwood Borough Council' section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 1 of the response to question 9 be amended to read, 'By being more focussed in consultations and offering more time to respond where possible. Then to relay the decision and the reasons for the decision.' That the first sentence of Paragraph 1 of the response to question 10 be amended to read, 'Some residents associations have been started by Ward Councillors.' That paragraph 3 of the response to question 10 be amended to read. 'The role of the Ward Councillor has changed over time and the skills of Councillors vary, it would be important to invest time in Councillor Development since communities looked to their local Councillor for help. <p>It was noted that the Action Notes contained a number of typographical errors but it was agreed that it would not be a good use of the Panel's time to highlight them all.</p>
Draft/Interim Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> That the following amendments be made to Panel's report prior to submission to Scrutiny Management Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first sentence of the second paragraph

	<p>of the 'Communication and Consultation' section be amended to read, 'Shepshed Town Council raised concerns about the short timeframe that was offered for consultation responses, often not fitting in with the Town Council's decision-making procedures through its regular pattern of meetings.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final sentence of paragraph 3 of the 'Parish and Town Councils' section be amended to read, 'It was recognised that some areas suffered from a decline in community involvement.' • The following amendments be made to the 'Future Direction/Summary of Recommendations' section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 6 be amended to read, 'that the Council continue to provide development opportunities for Councillors, both internally and through external providers, and seek further opportunities to do so, including guidance specific to enabling the Ward Councillor role to be carried out effectively'. • Paragraph 7 be renumbered to 8. • A new paragraph 7 be added to read, 'that Councillors continue to be encouraged to take full advantage of the development opportunities available to them and to provide feedback on their value and effectiveness.' • That officers include reasons for each recommendation in the report to Scrutiny Management Board. • That the glossary considered at the first meeting of the Panel and attached to the Action Notes of that meeting be appended to the report of the Panel. • The second issue detailed in the table of issues identified in the Scope Document include a suggestion in the 'Options for future work' column that further work needed to be undertaken with regard to the Council's work with the voluntary sector. <p>2. That site visits be arranged to Altogether Place and the Marios Tinenti Centre.</p> <p>3. That Michael Hopkins liaise with the Improvement & Organisational Development</p>
--	--

	<p>Manager to determine the stage at which an Equality Impact Assessment would be required.</p> <p>4. That the Communications Officer be asked to draft publicity for the work of the Panel and that it be circulated to Panel Members for comment.</p>
Timetable for Review	<p>That a report of the Panel be submitted to the Scrutiny Management Board meeting to be held on 27th March 2013 detailing its findings and requesting a decision on whether the Panel should continue in its work.</p>

OTHER ISSUES RAISED/DISCUSSED AT THIS MEETING:

- The Panel recognised the difficulties the Council faced when consulting Parish and Town Councils that held meetings infrequently.
- Neighbourhood Walks were no longer a key focus of the work carried out by the Council in Priority Neighbourhoods as the majority of issues raised originally had been addressed. A more reactive approach to community concerns had been adopted but there was no reason why Ward Members could not organise such walks if they felt they were required.
- In relation to Case Studies 3 and 4, circulated with the agenda, Members discussed the pros and cons of devolving 'Champion of Place' style budgets to Ward Members. Although it was recognised that such responsibility could push Councillors and lead to innovative uses of funds, there were also concerns that not all Members possessed the required skills or experience of handling budgets and that they could be subject to the influence of local lobbying groups.
- Should SMB decide that the Panel continue in its work, there could be value in considering the work of the voluntary sector.
- The feasibility of the type of work carried out in Priority Neighbourhoods being undertaken in other Wards.

FURTHER MEETINGS OF THE PANEL:

Dependant upon Scrutiny Management Board's decision on whether the Panel should continue its work.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

No further matters were raised.