MINUTES OF CUSTOMER AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Councillors Ms Edwards (Chairman), Allen, G Francis, Mrs Garcia. Hazelton, Mrs New, Mistry (substitute for Councillor Mrs O’Rourke), and Mrs Watson

In attendance:

Anna Andrews (Warwickshire Youth and Community Service) and Nick Andrews, Morgan Hickman, and Adam Lane (Rugby Youth Council)

Councillor Coles

Officers:

Ian Davis (Executive Director), Michael Beirne (Economic Investment Officer), Debbie Dawson (Scrutiny Officer) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer)

21. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

22. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Keeling and Mrs O’Rourke.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs New declared a general non-pecuniary interest by virtue of her employment by Warwickshire County Council.

24. RUGBY WORLD CUP 2015

Secondary Schools Event

The Committee and the Executive Director thanked all the students from the four schools that took part in the Local Democracy event held earlier in the day, when they debated each school’s proposals for events that could be held in the town to mark the occasion of the Rugby World Cup 2015. Particular thanks were given to the members of the Rugby Youth Council for their hard work in facilitating the day’s events.

Members of Rugby Youth Council gave the committee a presentation on the ideas raised during the schools’ debate and highlighting the most popular ones. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

During the presentation the main points raised were as follows:
All local schools were invited to take part in an event linked to Local Democracy Week that was held prior to the committee meeting. Students from the following four schools came together to present and discuss their proposals:

Harris School
Lawrence Sheriff School
Rugby High School
Princethorpe College

Following their presentations the students discussed which of the ideas were their favourites and then debated these further to arrive at the following top suggestions:

- The big screen – Could be located at Whitehall Recreation Ground or Caldecott Park and linked to a food and beer festival. This could be expensive and funding may be reliant on advertising. This could be linked to another attraction or in partnership with local public houses.
- The time machine – A fun interactive attraction based on the unique heritage of the town, potentially at the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (as the existing rugby football museum was very small). To feature games eg. shooting different rugby balls through the years through a hoop. Could be delivered at relatively low cost and opportunities to sell photographs could be explored. This would be an attraction for all the family
- Carnival – Local schools could be included by producing floats for the countries taking part in the RWC.
- Food and beer festival – Could be linked to a carnival. If held in the evening would encourage visitors to stay longer, or involve local people.
- Reducing rent/business rates for town centre shops – Would improve the town centre street scene and encourage new businesses into pop-up shops.
- Carnival and big screen event – Celebrations could commence at Whitehall Recreation Ground and pass the Close on the way to Caldecott Park where a big screen could show the opening ceremony.

There were many other interesting suggestions that included:

- Competitions – including a scavenger hunt, poster making and world record attempts.
- Charity Dinner - to include guest speakers. Funded by sponsorship and tickets sales.
- Youth Whistlers – young people being trained by the Warwickshire Society of Referees and refereeing matches held locally to mark the occasion.
- Music Festival – incorporate local talent and raise money from food and drink donations.
- Travel – reduced prices on buses and trains, more frequent services and better promotion.
- Tour Guides – local volunteers to welcome visitors, could link to the time machine idea.
- Gamesmakers – could talk to visitors in their own language.
- Craft market – would bring in visitors and trade.

The Economic Development Officer thanked Rugby Youth Council on behalf of the world cup steering group and commented that the students had shown a real appreciation of what Rugby has to offer and how events could build on existing assets.
They had demonstrated an understanding of topical issues including vacant shop units in the town centre and consideration of business rates. They had also recognised the importance of the future legacy of the games and the importance of creating a lasting impact.

The next stage for the steering group would be to consider available resources and start putting together an action plan.

**Work of the steering Group**

The committee received a verbal report from Ian Davis, Executive Director on the work of the steering group established in relation to Rugby World Cup (RWC) events. The main points were as follows:

The steering group is made up of representatives of the Council (Ian Davis, relevant officers and the Economy Development and Culture Portfolio Holder), Rugby School, Rugby First, the Chamber of Commerce and the Member of Parliament.

The Member of Parliament has a dual role and is also the Parliamentary Ambassador for the RWC.

Progress is beginning to gain momentum.

There are two key external bodies the council is working with; the International Rugby Board (IRB) and Visit England.

**International Rugby Board**

The IRB is the governing body for the game of rugby and is responsible for delivering the RWC. Its recently appointed Chief Executive has brought a new approach to the promotion of the game.

The new Chief Executive has visited the town and it was clear the IRB is keen to build on the history of rugby and secure a longer term association with the birthplace of the game.

The IRB holds a bi-annual World Rugby Conference and Exhibition the next of which is due to be held in Dublin commencing on 17 November. The Council has secured a stand at this event to raise awareness of Rugby as the “birthplace of the game”. All of the major sponsors will be attending this event so there will be opportunities to make contact and start to open dialogue with them.

**Visit England**

This is the national tourism body for England. The RWC is the third biggest international sporting event, so Visit England has created a separate division to focus on the twelve RWC venues. Due to its significance Rugby is being treated in the same manner as the venues, even though it is not hosting a game.

An event was recently held with the accredited tour operators. These companies have been issued with exclusive contracts to carry out tours to the towns and cities of the venues.

Council representatives were present at this meeting. The level of interest in Rugby was beyond that expected and all the tour operators are organising trips to bring visitors to the town.
The Mayor was due to host a reception for 120 supporters of the All Blacks the following weekend, at the initiative of the council, and the tour operator had responded positively to this invitation. It was important to build on and open up similar avenues of contact with other groups and work will continue with Visit England and the IRB to cement relationships with the tour operators and link into packages to other venues.

The steering group has reached a pivotal stage and would now start to substantiate its ideas and begin the practical work.

During further discussion the following points were made:

Members commented that opportunities for the town were not realised after the Rugby World Cup in 2003. They were informed that the governing body at that time had no ability to contractually engage the players in publicity after the games had ended. That will not happen in 2015.

Members asked if there was likely to be any financial support available from Visit England and the IRB. They were informed that Visit England will offer expertise, carry out work to facilitate and bring the various organisations together and offer access to corporate sponsors. It was doubtful any financial assistance would be forthcoming and monies raised by the IRB would be fed back into the game.

At the event in Dublin the exhibition stand for Rugby would be situated next to Japan which is the host nation for RWC 2019. Meetings with the four major sponsors had been requested and there would be many other opportunities to begin building relationships with other sponsors, including significant rugby magazines, Rugby World and New Zealand Rugby.

There were two key factors: promoting the birthplace of the game to international visitors and motivating and engaging local communities. Rugby would be awash with fans that would come to look at the Close, the Webb Ellis statue and the rugby football museum and it was important to create opportunities to keep them here longer. It was also vital that the interest of local people and schools was energised.

Talks were being held with Virgin trains about advertising and promotion at Rugby train station, but the cost of this in airports and London is huge.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) the schools, and in particular Rugby Youth Council be thanked for all their hard work;

(2) the ideas put forward by the local schools be submitted to the world cup steering group for consideration; and

(3) regular feedback from the steering group should be received.

25. HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

The committee received a report (Part 1 - agenda item 6) concerning the latest developments in relation to health scrutiny.

Councillor Mrs Watson, Health Champion and the council’s representative on the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board and the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, gave the committee a verbal report.
on feedback from recent meetings she has attended and summarised the following points:

**Rugby Forum Meeting at Hospital of St Cross**
- Changes are being made that should enable Rugby patients to obtain treatment at the Macular Unit. Frail and elderly people would soon be able to access the facility, as they were being prioritised in the roll-out.
- New rules for waiting times are to be introduced.
- Patient feedback on the new nurse-led walk in centre had been favourable.
- The infection control team had received a national award.
- The bereavement room and the dementia lounge were being refurbished.
- One of the five theatres has been temporarily closed so it can be refurbished and fitted with new equipment.
- The waiting time for orthopaedic operations has been reduced to three weeks.

**Coventry and Rugby CCG – Rugby Locality Partnership**
The latest meeting had included:
- An update on sexual health services (ref. www.respectyourself.info for more information)
- Discussion of measures to reduce attendance at the Accident and Emergency unit
- Details of a new and improved bus service (number 585) between St Cross Hospital and the UHCW site.

**Health and Wellbeing Board**
Items discussed at the latest meeting included:
- NHS England Drugs and Alcohol team.
- The George Eliot Hospital (Nuneaton) will face a change in administration, due to under performance, in 2015 but in the meantime there are some plans in place for improvement.
- An update from Healthwatch Warwickshire was received. Detailed information on this can be obtained from its website.
- The annual report from the Director of Public Health was tabled at the meeting and members should have received a copy.

**Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (WCC)**
A briefing from North Warwickshire CCG was received based on its clinical strategy. Key points included:
- Demand for urgent care at accident and emergency departments could be dealt with in different settings.
- There was a need to review GP’s and out-of-hours services and better pharmacy arrangements.

A report on Quarter 1 Performance for Adult Social Care was received covering topics such as delivering personalisation, discharge from hospital and admissions to residential and nursing care. The agenda and reports are available online on the County Council website.
A Memorandum of Understanding was ratified, setting out the relationships and accountability between the:

- Health and Wellbeing Board,
- Adult Care and Social Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- Healthwatch Warwickshire

A joint workshop was planned.

During further discussion the following points were raised:

Concerns were raised regarding the effects of budget cuts being made by WCC and whether the shortfall in costs of social care would be passed onto health service providers or individuals. Members asked about the position relating to bed blocking and the provision of onward care. Councillor Mrs Watson agreed to take this point back to future health meetings for discussion.

**Latest Data**

The committee noted the updates on the latest developments in relation to health scrutiny and discussed whether there were any specific issues it wished to focus on, or any topics it wanted to propose for further in-depth work as part of the overview and scrutiny work programme planning for 2014/15. The following points were raised:

Home testing kits are popular among young people to enable them to test for sexually transmitted diseases at home rather than having to visit a hospital department, but they are not available locally. Schools will give advice to students but won’t allow outside agencies to offer the kits.

Cllr Claire Watson offered to find out more on the position on this.

The annual update of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment covers a number of key issues which appear to be of particular concern in Rugby including sexual health, childhood obesity and hip fractures.

Members of this committee were reminded of an invitation to participate in a meeting of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board at Coventry City Council on 15 January 2014. The meeting will focus on the impact and challenges faced by the Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

At its next meeting on 30 January 2014 representatives from Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust will be present to inform the committee about the Trust’s Mental Health and CAMHS Services in Rugby.

The importance of asking the right questions was stressed and members were invited to email the Scrutiny Officer with anything they wish to raise at that meeting.

The committee reviewed the one-page strategy for the Review of Alcohol and Health in Rugby, attached at appendix 3 to the report, and discussed whether to carry this out as a light touch review or set up a task group.
RESOLVED THAT –

(1) Councillor Mrs Watson be thanked for her report; and

(2) the Review of Alcohol and Health in Rugby be carried out by a task group as a short, light-touch review.

26. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW ACTION PLANS

The committee received a report (Part 1 - agenda item 7) concerning review action plans under its remit.

**Review of Inward Investment – Recommendation 5 (The Council should keep under regular review how neighbouring local authorities are responding to the additional powers in the Localism Act to grant discretionary rate relief.)**

In Rugby different levels of business rate relief are available to organisations occupying empty properties, suffering hardship, partly occupying a property or with charitable status.

The Economic Investment Officer informed the committee that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council had recently launched an eighteen month pilot aimed at businesses that do not fall into the above categories, for which there is a set criteria.

Members were concerned that this type of action might create unfair competition, and suggested that a balance was needed to support current businesses and fill empty shop units.

Rugby compares well on a national basis for the level of empty shops and moving-in grants have proved to be a successful approach. Fourteen grants have been awarded to new businesses between 2012 and 2013, of which thirteen have continued to trade.

It was agreed that it was important to continue to monitor the situation.

A member commented on the facilities available at the Rugby Polo Club, which has been developed into a large entertainment centre that hosted the Polocrosse World Cup.

Members discussed the need to be involved and well informed on inward investment and it was suggested the portfolio holder for economic development should attend a future meeting of the committee to give an update.

**RESOLVED THAT** – the Economy Development and Culture Portfolio Holder be invited to attend a future meeting of the committee to brief members on inward investment.

27. ROAD AND PAVEMENT SURFACE MAINTENANCE

The Committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 8) concerning a proposed review of road surface maintenance.

During discussion of the item the following points were raised:
Members commented on issues with drains in rural areas including road sweepers pushing detritus into the drains and lack of maintenance resulting in grass growing from the drains.

The Scrutiny Officer informed the committee that a joint borough and parish meeting was arranged for 27 January 2014 where matters for scrutiny would be discussed. Highways drainage was likely to be a point of discussion.

It was acknowledged that overall the maintenance of roads and pavements was primarily a matter for the county council. Members felt that there was some value to be added by undertaking a review of unadopted roads and the failure of developers to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to maintenance.

RESOLVED THAT – reviews on road and pavement surface maintenance and unadopted roads be submitted to the workshop for consideration for inclusion in the 2014/15 overview and scrutiny work programme.

28. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 9) concerning the progress of task group reviews within its remit and the forward work programme.

The progress of task groups reviews within the committee’s remit and the forward work programme were agreed.

A light touch review of alcohol and health in Rugby should be included in the work programme as minuted above.

The Scrutiny Officer had written to relevant parties regarding issues raised at the previous meeting of the committee. A response had been received from the Strategic Director of the People Group at Warwickshire County Council regarding children in care, offering that an officer attend a future meeting of the committee to clarify the concerns raised. Members asked officers to undertake further background work to clarify the issue before deciding whether it was necessary to consider this further.

RESOLVED THAT – the following items be included on the forward work programme:

(1) Review of Alcohol and Health in Rugby;

(2) A briefing on inward investment by the Economy, Development and Culture Portfolio Holder.

CHAIRMAN
Rugby: an Experience not just a Sport
Today

4 Schools came together in order to discuss what young people thought would be good for the town to have on during the Rugby World Cup.

Harris
Lawrence Sheriff
Rugby High School
Princethorpe College
The Big 6
The Big Screen- Whitehall Recreation Ground, link with Food and Beer Festival. Expensive, rely on advertising: attractions in Rugby. Put near another attraction, communicate with pubs about business.

The Time Machine- Interactive, pictures, souvenirs, fun and primarily cheap! Entrance fee and extra photos add to the economy. Games, rugby balls through the years put through a hoop. Appeals to all- especially families. Unique Heritage. Voluntary donation. Modernise it and make it memorable, keep aspects but not all of it.

Carnival- Schools work on floats for the different countries.
The Big 6 continued....

Food and Beer Festival/Carnival- Link together to bring in people to the excitement income from selling food and drink. In the evening meaning people are more likely to stay the night, spending more money.

Rent on Shops- Putting the price down, legacy, looks nicer, instigates new businesses, provides employment, could end with a loss.

Carnival/Big screen- celebrating starts in the birthplace. Stimulates business. Goes from Whitehall Recreation ground to past the close and the history to finish at Caldecott Park and the Big Screen for the Opening Ceremony.
Other Ideas

Competitions around the town- Scavenger Hunt, Poster making, World Record Attempts.
Charity Dinner- Organise the key people in the town to a charity dinner to get sponsors and raise money.
Youth Whistlers- young people refereeing matches, go round schools and rugby clubs.
Music Festival- Incorporate local talent and raise money by food and drink and donations. Celebrate whatever Rugby has to offer.
Travel Arrangements- Buses and Trains, reduced prices and more frequent running or better promotions of services.
Tour Guides- Around the history and donations as well as linking into the Time Machine.
Gamesmakers- Talking to people in their own language to show Rugby in Rugby as well as what we have to offer.

Market- To bring in trade within the town centre.