

# STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

## 15 FEBRUARY 2011

*Present :-* Councillor Christopher Arnold (Chairman)  
Councillors Nigel Chapman, Mark Cory,  
Theresa Higgins, Nigel Offen, Gerard Oxford,  
Dennis Willetts and Julie Young

*Substitute Members :-* Councillor Pauline Hazell for Councillor Andrew Ellis  
Councillor Nick Cope for Councillor Bill Frame

*Also in Attendance :-* Councillor Tina Dopson  
Councillor Beverley Oxford  
Councillor Kevin Bentley

**Councillor Pauline Hazell and Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of being a Member of the Olympic Partnership Committee) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of her membership of Essex County Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of her spouse being an employee of the University of Essex) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Christopher Arnold (in respect of his membership of Great Horkesley Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

#### **40. Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games**

Councillor Tina Dopson, Portfolio Holder for Communities introduced the guests and officers attending the meeting for this review, including Dr Tony Rich, Registrar of the University of Essex and Chair of the Colchester Olympic Partnership, Colonel Tom Fleetwood, Commander of Colchester Garrison, Major Phil Watson, Ms. Linda Gaine, Partnerships Manager, Essex 2012 Legacy Team, Mr. Gareth Mitchell, Head of Life Opportunities, Mr. Ian Duggan, Sports Development Manager and Ms. Karen Turnbull, Enterprise and Tourism Development Officer.

#### **Presentation**

Dr. Rich gave a comprehensive presentation on the Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Partnership had been in existence for approximately four and a half years, formed from the Colchester2020 Local Strategic Partnership, with the key members of the partnership including NHS North East Essex, University of Essex, Colchester Borough Council, Colchester Garrison, Essex County Council 2012 Legacy Team, Colchester

United Community Sports Trust and Colchester Blackwater Schools Sports Partnership.

The aim of the partnership was to secure the best possible legacy for Colchester from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with the gross benefits to the East of England from the games potentially exceeding £600,000 in part due to the sub-region's capacity for international visitors. These sub-regions, like Colchester, are within the closest proximity to the games venues and therefore have the greatest potential for benefits.

The Priority Action Plan focuses on increasing physical activity and sports participation, promoting healthy active lifestyles to improve community health, improving sports performance, attracting preparation and training camps, supporting volunteer activity, developing a cultural programme, increasing tourism capacity in the area, improving the quality of the visitor experience and encouraging local business to realise opportunities.

Colchester have received the 2012 Inspire Mark for the following initiatives, the government-funded free swimming programme, Walking your Way to the Games, Urban Games, Cycle and Seek and have applied for the 2012 Inspire Mark for Cycling your Way to the Games. The adiZone sports and leisure facility has been provided at Monkwick, designed as a 2012 logo, it provides an outside gym, basketball court, tennis wall, football goal, open activity area and a climbing wall, is free to use and available 365 days a year. The scheme cost £150,000 with fifty percent funding coming from Adidas and the remaining fifty percent funded by the partnership members.

As part of Improving Sports Performance, round one of the Colchester Sporting Champions scheme saw an athlete sponsorship scheme launched in February 2010, with business invited to contribute. Sarah Claxton was appointed the Ambassador and five athletes received £500 grants in June 2010. Round two has been launched in February 2011. Other deliverables from this theme include (FANS) free access for national sportspeople, to training facilities, the Evolve Gym at the University and Living Like and Athlete, a joint Schools Sports Partnership and University project for gifted and talented young people, with a one week residential summer camp at the University.

Ahead of the games, the Partnership is actively working on attracting participating countries to consider basing themselves in Colchester for pre-games preparation and training camps. A Colchester 'Ahead of the Game' website has been launched. In partnership with the Essex County Council Pre Games Training Camp Consortia, targeted approaches to international countries and sports bodies have been made, with interest already shown culminating in delegation visits to Colchester.

The partnership supports volunteer activity at a local level with the aim of increasing volunteering locally through such schemes as the Essex Volunteers and National Games Makers, with 78% of Schools Sports Partnership pupils already actively involved in sports volunteering or leadership. A Cultural Programme was developing, with events such as the Olympic Handover event in Castle Park, the Chinese Guardians of the King exhibition at Colchester Castle Museum, Journey to the Podium and an Art Baton Relay. The Open Weekend organised in 2010, with over twenty events

organised in Colchester, at sports centres, the University of Essex, Firstsite, adiZone, The Castle Museum and local sports clubs , aims to be repeated in 2011. Details of the Torch Relay and Paralympic Torch Relay were discussed that would culminate in an 70 day long event involving over 8,000 torchbearers. An application to be part of the Torch Relay has been submitted to LOCOG. Details of the Torch Relay route will be announced in the spring of 2011.

Increase in tourism was a knock-on benefit of the games and increasing capacity in the area is vital as was improving the quality of the visitor experience. [www.visitcolchester.com](http://www.visitcolchester.com) was the official tourism website for Colchester, newly improved and updated and including translation in 52 languages. An enquiry had just been received this week for 6,300 bed nights in 2012 in Colchester directly connected to the Games.

Details were given of the future plans including, Towns and Cities Ambassadors Programme, Taxi Drivers and Train Station Staff Training Programme, Mobile information provision on bikes, a new Garrison Clubhouse for community sports and leisure use, consideration on how to dress the town for the biggest party in the world, Go for Gold, that would capture resident's experiences of the Olympics via the 'Ahead of the Game' website and finally, to increase the Colchester schools signed up to the Get Set Network.

Finally, Dr Rich ended the presentation by mentioning the scope and scale of activity being planned/delivered for 2012 can be difficult to communicate and spoke of the Legacy of the Games, raising the profile and improving the image of Colchester, increasing sports participation, instilling a culture of volunteering, improving health and wellbeing, increased sports and leisure facilities, increased capacity for tourism and hospitality and greater engagement with schools.

### **Visiting Councillor**

Councillor Bentley addressed the Panel, expressing thanks for an excellent presentation and disappointment that the press had not been present.

Councillor Bentley thanked former councillor Robert Davidson who as Cabinet Member saw the opportunity for a partnership and in quick time had a number of key individuals around the table and putting into motion the start of what is now the Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Councillor Bentley said he was very pleased with the content of the presentation, but without being critical had hoped more work had gone into attracting 'preparation and training holding camps', perhaps with greater promotion in getting international teams to Colchester, as was happening in other areas.

Councillor Bentley said it was vital that a post games legacy on tourism remained on-going, mentioning Barcelona as a great example of the Olympic Games being the catalyst for turning the city into one of the most vibrant large cities in Europe. He hoped that the ongoing plans would see Colchester promoted across Stratford, London like a rash, raising awareness and attracting tourism to Colchester.

Councillor Bentley concluded by thanking Councillor Dopson for fronting the excellent job done by Colchester Borough Council.

Dr Rich said in regards to preparation and Pre – Games Training Camps, the Partnership continue to work closely with Essex County Council Pre Games Training Camp Consortia and are pursuing a number of avenues of opportunity to secure a country to Colchester. Mr. Duggan said The Essex County Council Consortia are responsible for the lengthy research to identify target countries, the sports they participated in at the last Olympic Games and the potential number of athletes they may send to London in 2012. Discussions are on-going with three serious enquiries made recently by smaller countries. Mr. Duggan was hopeful that some announcements would be made in the near future.

### **General Discussion**

In response to Councillor Offen who asked what would not have happened without the Partnership, Mr. Duggan said many of the schemes or events that had been organised with the assistance of Partnership funding would not have happened, including adiZone, Urban Games, Walking Your Way to the Games, Cycling Your Way to the Games, and less funding would have materialised for, as an example, Evolve, the University of Essex Gymnasium. Colonel Fleetwood said the Partnership was the catalyst for triggering meaningful dialogue, seeing how partners could help, and making major partners look at their own facilities with a view to sharing.

Ms. Gaine responded to Councillor J. Young by saying the Colchester Partnership was one of the stronger partners on the Olympic Games within Essex, and have worked closely with the Essex 2012 Legacy Team who provide small pieces of prime funding that collectively could be spent on more meaningful projects and events that attract the attention and participation of tens of thousands of children across the county.

Dr Rich explained to Councillor Young that whilst the current economic climate had meant a substantial cut in teaching funding at the University, this would not mean a reduction in the commitment to the partnership for the forthcoming eighteen months. It was also confirmed that funds are identified for the construction of the Garrison Clubhouse. Councillor Dopson said despite the unfortunate cut backs, the view had been taken that Colchester would not reduce the internal work by officers towards the Partnership, ensuring the Partnership's legacy to the games was upheld. Later in the discussions, Colonel Fleetwood said the new Garrison Clubhouse was to be funded through an application for Section 106 money, and would include changing rooms, refreshment area and visitor/spectator seating area. It was hoped this new facility would be completed at the latest, by the start of the games, though the intention was to continue to work towards a completion by the end of 2011.

Ms. Turnbull confirmed to Councillor Higgins that officers have had contact with local taxi drivers, and will continue to do so. It is hoped there will be positive engagement with the drivers signing up to the Taxi Drivers and Train Station Staff Training Programme if the funding from VisitEssex's INTERREG EU bid is forthcoming (decision due May 2011).

In response to Councillor Higgins, Ms. Turnbull said she would find out what the position is from Licensing in regards to why taxi drivers in Colchester are the only ones in the County not to sign up to the Quality Taxi Partnership.

Ms. Gaine said Essex County Council is working closely with all the county-wide partnerships in the organisation of the Big Event 2012 at Hylands Park in Chelmsford. Essex County Council officers are tapping into the expertise within each partnership team (district and unitary authorities) and along with County's Arts Development Team are creating very large carnival like animated creatures that will visit all towns and villages on a county-wide journey aimed at communities, having an opportunity to help design the creatures at weekend events leading up to the finale . The Colchester Free Festival could be a possible destination in Colchester.

Dr Rich, in response to Councillor Arnold said events linked to participation had made some difference. For the University it was always hoped a new swimming pool would provide the type of facility that have provided a major difference. Whilst it was disappointing not to have come to current fruition, it remained an objective and aspiration, and it was hoped to take advantage of future lottery funding to secure this facility.

Councillor Arnold applauded the opportunity of increasing the participation of local people in sport and leisure but said it was very important that in joining local groups and clubs they are made welcome when they arrive and how can we be sure this will happen. Colonel Fleetwood said facilities at the Garrison are used more by the local public than the soldiers, and the Garrison swimming pool is fully utilised with a full take-up by local schools for their allocated slots, and it is anticipated there will a greater take-up for activities such as gymnastics, hockey and athletics by local adults and children as a result of the new facilities to be provided. Dr Rich said the University aim to continue to invest and enhance sports facilities, and times are changing, with schools taking-up the opportunity to use these facilities. Mr. Duggan explained that the Garrison provided allocated time for community use and use by the Schools Sports Partnership.

Councillor Arnold asked what would happen with the 'bulge of interest' anticipated by the high interest in the Olympic Games, should the capacity at clubs already be taken-up. Councillor Dopson said it was possible that local sports clubs and facilities could be linked through the "Active Colchester" Community Sport Network, which will ascertain demand and capacity and look at pinch points. This was a piece of work to be looked at and will continue after the Games finish as part of the 'Harvesting the Afterglow for Sport' initiative. Major Phil Watson said it was important that any new investment in sports facilities provided the right option, for example, to bring everyone interested in swimming activities to a new swimming pool would require a 50 metre pool with some leisure activities, not a limiting 25 metre pool with diving boards and flumes.

Responding to Councillor Willetts, Dr Rich said at the outset of the Colchester Partnership in 2006 there was no business case developed as the partnership was built more around aspiration, and opportunity driven. The Partnership will bring together the intangibles and opportunities that will raise the aspirations. A certain amount of analysis will be done on a national level but Colchester had not done a directly related analysis.

Colonel Fleetwood said the Garrison had an infrastructure to deal with core business, and the Garrison's Partnership work was considered 'Core Business' provided at little or no cost. The Garrison sports and leisure facilities new and old whilst provided by the Garrison at no cost to the Partnership would help provide huge benefits to the local community. Councillor Offen said whilst business cases have their place in managing business, the Partnership will regardless of a business case contribute to the Council's strategy towards 'live, work and visit'. Councillor Arnold concurred with Councillor Offen. Mr. Duggan confirmed to Councillor G. Oxford that there has been a serious amount of time committed to the partnership by all partners, who at Partnership meetings alone, it was estimated, had given up 600 hours of time since 2006.

Councillor Dopson said whilst other locations with a 50 metre pool facility had not attracted a training holding camp user, having a new local pool would remain an aspiration. In regards to the Partnership, whilst it was difficult to put a cost on the process, what was not in doubt was how the synergy between all the partners had delivered more than was ever anticipated, and delivered this very well. Ms. Turnbull said, local businesses are encouraged to sign up to the "Compete For" business opportunity portal and take advantage of any Games contracts. Mr. Duggan confirmed to Councillor G. Oxford that Southend was currently the only district in Essex with a confirmed take-up on a Pre-Games Training Camp, 'Team GB Diving'.

In response to Councillor G. Oxford, Ms. Gaine said the Partnerships are encouraging all schools to sign up to the 'Get Set Network', but not just registering on the website but joining the network to open up the opportunity for getting games tickets. Councillor Arnold requested that Panel Members receive an active link to the website. Councillor Dopson said there was an opportunity for Members who are school governors to question what their school was doing and ensure the link is made and that she would be writing to all Colchester school Head Teachers to encourage them to join the Get Set Network.

Councillor Arnold concluded the discussions by thanking Dr Rich for the quality of his presentation. This had been a thorough review and those members of the partnership present at the meeting were thanked sincerely for their participation. Councillor Arnold on behalf of the Panel said he wished the Partnership the best of luck in achieving their aspirations.

It was determined that the Panel would consider at a later date whether it would wish to reconsider the progress of the Partnership closer to the commencement of the 2012 Games.

*RESOLVED* that:

- i) The Panel reviewed and noted the work and progress made by the Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- ii) The Panel requested further information on why taxi drivers in Colchester are the only ones in the County not to sign up to the Quality Taxi Partnership.
- iii) The Panel requested an active link to the 'Get Set Network' website.