

Community Services Committee – 1 February 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **1 February 2005** when there were present:-

Cllr Mrs L Hungate (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr K A Gibbs
Cllr G A Mockford
Cllr J M Pullen

Cllr J Thomass
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R A Amner, Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs J R Lumley, S P Smith, Mrs C A Weston

SUBSTITUTES

C A Hungate

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
S Clarkson	- Head of Revenue and Housing Management
G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
A Coulson	- Housing, Client & Strategy Officer
S Garland	- Community Safety Officer
M Martin	- Committee Administrator

33 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins declared a personal interest in item 9 of the agenda by virtue of being a Member of the Great Wakering Parish Council.

Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in item 8 of the agenda by virtue of her work with the County's Community Care Policy Development Group and in item 12 by virtue of being a Member of the Board of the Essex Supporting People Commissioning Body.

35 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the report of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on recommendations made at its meeting held on

18 January 2005.

1 Intermediate Care Facility – Spa Court

The Head of Revenue and Housing Management advised that at a meeting with the Primary Care Trust during the previous week, Social Services had indicated that they would like to have continued the lease for a six month period and in that regard would be talking to their legal and financial teams to ascertain whether funding would be available for the rent and Council tax. Officers agreed to inform Members of the outcome of these deliberations via the Members' Bulletin.

Resolved

That the Primary Care Trust be requested to repay to the Council £9,500, which had been paid in response to the PCT's request to provide an intermediate care facility, which the PCT had subsequently failed to utilise. (HRHM)

2 Pets in Sheltered Accommodation

Members noted that tenancy agreements provide safeguards for tenants and neighbours.

Officers would reinforce the controls already in existence with the Pet Owning Tenants Contract drawn up and agreed by this Council in January 1999. The Head of Revenue and Housing Management agreed to supply Members of the Committee with a copy of this document.

Members confirmed that it would be appropriate for decisions relating to the allocation of pets to designated properties to be delegated to the Head of Revenue and Housing Management to determine.

Members noted that tenants of Francis Walk and the Crown Hill flats, which were now reserved for people of pensionable age, were able to keep pets.

Resolved

- (1) That scheme managers and tenants of communal sheltered accommodation be not allowed to keep pets, save with the prior written approval of the Council; each application for approval to be at the absolute discretion of the Council and to be considered on its individual merits having regard in particular to the suitability of the accommodation, the nature and size of the pet and the interests of its other tenants.
- (2) That pet owning applicants on the Sheltered Housing Register will be considered for tenancies of the following units:-

- 2 x bungalows at The Lavers
- 23 x flats at Chignal House
- 14 x flats at Francis Cottee Lodge
- 4 x bungalows at Spa Court. (HRHM)

3 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy & Procedures

Members agreed to retain the final two paragraphs within the section entitled 'Racial Harassment' on page 5 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy & Procedures document.

Resolved

That the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy & Procedures be agreed, subject to the following amendments:-

- The inclusion of the word 'reasonably' after the words 'children playing' in a bullet point on pages 2 and 11 of the document.
- The substitution of the words 'treated seriously' in place of 'justified' in a bullet point on page 2 of the document. (HRHM)

4 Bye Laws to Regulate Skateboarding

Members agreed that the report to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee should include information from the Police relating specifically to incidents connected to the skateboard facility in King George's Playing Field.

Resolved

- (1) That no further action be taken at the present time to introduce byelaws to regulate skateboarding. (HLS)
- (2) That a report be brought back to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2005 on the current position regarding complaints of noise nuisance associated with the use of the skateboard facility in King George's Playing Field, together with details from the Police around incidents relating to this facility. (HHHCC)

36 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions and in response to Member questions the following was noted:-

Woodland Strategy Resources

Members noted that shortlisting had taken place for the position of Arboricultural Officer and interviews would shortly be conducted.

Members noted that a report would come back to this Committee in April relating to sources of potential funding for the position of Environmental Liaison Officer. (CD(F&ES))

Skateboard Facilities – Clements Hall

Officers advised that they would try to get more detail from the County's Youth Service relating to this project and report back to Members of the Committee. (CE)

Land – Worcester Drive/Warwick Drive, Rayleigh

In response to a Member question relating to the purchase price of the land, officers advised that the details would be provided via the Members' Bulletin. (HRHM/HLS)

Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002

Officers advised that the Government guidance was still awaited. The report on the service delivery of the housing management function will be reported to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 March 2005 whether or not the guidance has been received. (HRHM)

Unfit House

Members noted that repairs are underway. (HHHCC)

Hullbridge Sports and Social Club

Officers agreed to advise Members of the latest progress. (CD(F&ES))

Housing Strategy – Update

Officers advised that this would be signed off once the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan has been clarified. (HHHCC)

Rochford Town Sports and Social Club – Application for New Lease on the Pavilion at Rochford Recreation Ground

Officers advised that a progress report would be brought to the next meeting of this Committee. (CD(F&ES))

Funding for Potential Housing Scheme

The Head of Service advised that he was due to meet with the Housing Association later in the week but that the future of the scheme now looked doubtful because of difficulties being experienced by the Housing Association in acquiring the development site.

Criminal Damage

Officers advised that verbal approval had been given to the allocation of £5,000 for the “Hyper” project at Great Wakering Sports Centre and to extend the Anti Social Behaviour Coordinator’s post over the remainder of the two year contract from 22.5 hours per week to 37 hours per week. (CE)

Tower Caravan Park: Request for Alteration of Site Licence Conditions

The Head of Service advised that a further report would be brought back to the Committee if the owner is not able to comply with the licence requirements without a change in conditions.

Rayleigh Windmill – Outcome of Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) Bid

Members congratulated officers on the work that had been accomplished so far and indicated their desire that the project might be completed this year. (CD(F&ES))

Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

37 CATERING FRANCHISES ON OPEN SPACES

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) informing Members of the progress in providing catering franchises on Open Spaces and Woodlands, at times of increased public attendance.

Members noted the details of the draft licence for the franchising arrangements, which had been sent to them separately, and noted that in seeking public expressions of interest, details around the whole season’s usage would be supplied.

In response to Member questions, officers advised that

- It was not envisaged that anyone would want to build a static structure and that any catering franchises would almost certainly relate to mobile vehicles.
- A contract would be transferable, providing the licence conditions could be fulfilled.
- The final wording of the licence would be agreed by the Council’s legal team.

Resolved

That officers seek public expressions of interest as to the franchise opportunities using the specification as set out by the Environmental Health officers. (CD(F&ES))

38 HOUSING INVESTMENT IN THE REGIONS – CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care inviting the Council to comment on the proposed regional split of funds for housing investment by local authorities and housing associations, allocated through the Regional Housing Pot.

Members agreed that it would be more appropriate if funding was allocated on a County basis and that it should match the proposals of the East of England Plan.

Resolved

That, subject to the following Members' comments, the proposal to allocate regional housing funding on a formulaic basis be supported:

- Funds could be more appropriately allocated at the County level, particularly in view of the current growth areas within Essex.
- Funding should be adequate to match the proposals of the East of England Regional Plan. (HHHCC)

39 ESSEX SUPPORTING PEOPLE – 5 YEAR STRATEGY 2005-2010

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care inviting Members to consider and comment on the draft Essex Supporting People 5 year Strategy 2005-2010.

The Head of Service advised that the consultation period had been extended and that a number of consultation events had been held. The Action Plan had only just been received and this would require further development work. It would be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee, with a final Action Plan anticipated around June/July 2005.

During consideration of the draft 5 year Strategy Members requested that:-

- greater clarification be provided around the terms 'chaotic lifestyles' and 'urgent need'.
- a representative from the Essex Supporting People Team be invited to attend a future meeting of this Committee to provide further explanation.

Members noted that:-

- the Council had produced a local priority statement which had been fed into the draft document.
- a 'ring fenced' pot would ensure that some money would be available for developing new services targeted towards unmet needs and such

services might be geographically based in one or more areas, or for specific client groups.

- the Strategy is a bidding tool and, as such, needs to be as robust as possible in order that funding is maximised.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft 5 year Essex Supporting People Strategy be endorsed, subject to clarification around the terms 'chaotic lifestyles' and 'urgent need'.
- (2) That a representative from the Essex Supporting People Team be invited to attend a meeting of this Committee to provide further explanation around the Strategy. (HHHCC)

40 RESULTS OF THE TENANTS SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Committee received the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management and noted the results of the Tenants Satisfaction Survey which is carried out every 3 years as a Government driven initiative.

Members were very pleased to note that, after second and third reminders, the eventual response rate to the survey had been 79% and that the figures had demonstrated high levels of satisfaction and agreed that these results should be publicised.

Resolved

That the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey be publicised via the local press and/or the Council's newspaper. (HRHM)

41 ST JOHN AMBULANCE – HOCKLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE – UPDATE

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) provided Members with a verbal update on the latest position relating to the withdrawal of consent by the Hockley Community Centre Association in respect of the request made by St John Ambulance to construct a headquarters on the site.

Members noted that a written response had been received from one trustee and a copy of the Association's Minutes detailing their decision. A letter in this respect had been forwarded to Hockley Parish Council.

The decision had been recorded on a number of occasions and indicated that the proposed St John Ambulance headquarters was a much larger building than the Association had originally anticipated.

Members were grateful for the work of officers but were disappointed at the apparently intransigent attitude of the Association and questioned whether

there might have been an alternative solution to suit both parties, particularly in view of the fact that the proposal itself fulfils a local public need.

Members agreed that Ward Councillors should determine in the first instance, and then report back to the next meeting of this Committee, whether there is a consensus of opinion amongst local residents in favour of a public meeting being held in respect of this issue and that consideration be given at the next meeting of Annual Council to this Council nominating representatives to serve on the Management Board of this Association.

Resolved

- (1) That local Ward Councillors determine whether there is a consensus of opinion amongst local residents in favour of a public meeting being held, to which representatives of the Hockley Community Centre Association and St John Ambulance would be invited in an attempt to enable further discussion to take place around the siting of the St John Ambulance headquarters on land leased to the Community Centre.
- (2) That Ward Councillors report back to the next meeting of this Committee on the outcome of (1) above.
- (3) That consideration is given at Annual Council to two Members being nominated as this Council's representatives to the Hockley Community Centre Association. (CD(F&ES))

42 SUTTON COURT PLAYSPACE, ROCHFORD

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive advising Members of incidents of anti-social behaviour within and around the Sutton Court Playspace and seeking Members' views on possible courses of action.

Members welcomed the report and the recommendation that the Playspace Sub-Committee should specifically address the issues emerging at Sutton Court.

Resolved

- (1) That the Playspace Sub-Committee be asked to look specifically at the issues emerging at Sutton Court and to devise a plan of action for addressing these issues, with a view to developing a working template which can be applied District-wide, including consideration in detail of the resource implications. (CD(F&ES))
- (2) To seek the written views of Rochford Parish Council in specifically addressing the problems of this playspace and seeking their suggestions. (CE)

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The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Chairman

Date