

# Community Services Committee – 1 December 2004

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **1 December 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr R A Amner (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs L Hungate (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn  
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley  
Cllr S P Smith

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

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs K A Gibbs, G A Mockford, and J M Pullen.

## **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Clarkson	- Head of Revenue and Housing Management
G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
D Timson	- Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
A Coulson	- Housing, Client and Strategy Officer
M Martin	- Committee Administrator

## **ALSO ATTENDING**

S Appleton	- Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust
N Booth	- Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust
G Pryor	- Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust

## **501 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **502 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins declared a personal interest in those items on the Progress on Decisions schedule that related to Great Wakering, by virtue of being a Member of that Council.

## **503 ESSEX AMBULANCE SERVICE CARE TRUST – CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which invited Members to consider proposals from the Essex Ambulance Service for the establishment of an Emergency Care Trust.

The Chairman welcomed the representatives from the Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust to the meeting. During the presentation, the following key points were noted:-

- There has been a major increase in demand over recent years for the ambulance service.
- At present all emergency calls to the ambulance service invoke a “blue light” response, however, only 20% of those calls actually require an emergency response.
- This may be the appropriate response, however, increasingly the service is about skilled staff who are able to carry out diagnosis and treatment as well as providing transport.
- The system is currently fragmented because of lack of choice and lack of capacity, which lead to poor patient outcomes.
- General Practitioners can now opt out of offering an out-of-hours service, which has increased the pressure on the ambulance service.
- Feedback from patients has indicated that a service is required which provides convenience, personal involvement with choices, speed and consistency.
- The solution is to ensure that the response is appropriate to the need by providing the right care at the right place, as soon as it is clinically required and by ensuring that the patient is fully involved in the choice.
- This would make more efficient use of other NHS staff.
- This will involve increasing the responsibilities of staff and introducing new staff roles, such as Emergency Care Practitioners and Community Paramedics, who are trained to higher levels.
- It would be fully funded and staffed by the NHS Trust and would aim to deliver an appropriate response, using a combination of emergency ambulances, rapid response vehicles and the air ambulance.
- The Essex Ambulance Service now manages and hosts health emergency planning for the whole county.
- The establishment of such a trust would enable the setting of clinically based targets in addition to meeting the Government’s targets.

In response to Member questions/concerns, the following was noted:-

- The NHS will continue to operate its patient transport scheme.
- The intention is to work with the Acute Trust from the outset in the plans for Diagnostic and Treatment Centre to be sited at Fossets Way, Southend-on-Sea.
- The aim of the trust will be to determine the right response and supply the right type of transport.
- This may mean the provision of a car to take the patient to hospital.
- The Trust were of the opinion that people are generally put at ease provided the person who responds to them is able to take control of the situation, regardless of whether they attend in an ambulance.
- If a patient objected, the vehicle could be upgraded to an ambulance.

- A line of communication is always maintained with the caller until the ambulance personnel arrive.
- A high level of expertise exists at the Communications Centre in Chelmsford together with a securely backed up telecommunications system. Staff are fully trained to deal with distressing calls.
- The Essex Ambulance Service would be the first in the United Kingdom to introduce an Emergency Care Trust. The proposal has been through the health overview and scrutiny process and all the Primary Care Trusts are supportive.
- No request for extra funding would be necessary.
- If a patient had a carer present at the time of the call, a response would still be made and the line of communication kept open with the carer.
- The Air Ambulance is used as an additional vehicle and deployed along with others when it is the most appropriate for the situation. It's running costs are funded by voluntary contributions, although the emergency care staff are employed by the NHS Trust.
- The Trust has recently completed an audit of calls relating to alcohol abuse and is working with the Police and other appropriate partners to give greater publicity to the dangers. For the ambulance service, the safety of their crews is always paramount when dealing with a response of this nature.
- A significant number of doctors are employed in the call centre who would be able to talk directly to a caller and attend the patient should it be considered necessary.
- If when attending a patient it became clear that an x-ray or other diagnostics were required then the patient would be taken to hospital.

Members thanked the representatives from the NHS trust for their excellent presentation. They were pleased to note that the proposals were patient-led and that the service would not concentrate solely on Government targets.

However, concern was expressed around the importance of the initial assessment of a patient and that staff below the level of a doctor may be making clinical judgements.

A representative from the Ambulance Service advised Members about the First Responder Schemes that exist in various parts of the country whereby responders are trained to attend emergency calls received by the ambulance service and provide care until the ambulance arrives. The aim is not to replace the ambulance service, but ensure that in circumstances such as during cardiac arrest, defibrillation and other time-critical life-saving techniques can occur as soon as possible, maximising the chance of the casualty's survival.

The Committee was further advised that a scheme does not currently exist in the Rayleigh area and it was agreed that publicity should be given to this through Rochford District Matters.

### Resolved

- (1) That Member comments form this Council's response to the proposals for an Emergency Care Trust.
- (2) That publicity be given through Rochford District Matters to the need for volunteers within the Rayleigh area to form a First Responder Scheme in conjunction with the Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust. (HHHCC)

### 504 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

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

#### **Proposed Designation of Public Places in terms of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 and Local Authorities (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Regulations 2002**

Members requested confirmation, via the Members' Bulletin, of when the Police would be in attendance at a meeting to report back on the evaluation of the Dispersal and Alcohol Exclusion powers. (CE)

#### **Woodland Strategy Resources**

The re-graded post has been advertised. Members wished to thank the Parks and Woodlands staff who are continuing to work under pressure in the interim period. (CD(F&ES))

#### **Skateboard Facilities – Clements Hall**

This project would not be funded by the Council. (CD(F&ES))

#### **Disposal of Commercial Premises – 126 High Street, Great Wakering**

Officers would continue to pursue this matter. (HRHM/HLS)

#### **Housing Needs Study**

This will be reported to Members during the January cycle of meetings. (HHHCC)

#### **Conversion of Studio Apartment to Warden's Office – Britton Court**

The conversion of Flat Number 10 is close to being completed and the outstanding work is in the hands of the link radio operator. (HRHM)

### **Unfit House**

A report would be brought back to Members sooner than the agreed 12-month period, should satisfactory progress not be made with the demolition of the property. (HHHCC)

### **Catering Franchises on Open Spaces**

The conditions of the franchises have not yet been finalised by the Council's Legal Services officers. Officers agreed to bring a progress report back to this Committee in February, with a view to any franchises being taken up by June 2005. (CD(F&ES))

### **Public Open Space Land and Play Space Areas in Rochford District owned by the Council**

The Head of Legal Services is working in conjunction with the Playing Fields Association to find an appropriate form of trust. Officers confirmed that it should be possible to report back to this Committee by June 2005.

The Parish Liaison Sub-Committee, at its next meeting in February, would continue to address the issue of trust arrangements for those spaces currently leased to them, in order to protect them from future development. (CD(F&ES))

### **Proposed St John Ambulance Headquarters – Hockley Community Centre**

Members were concerned that lives were being endangered by the decision of the Hockley Community Centre Association and requested the following information before their next meeting of this Committee:-

- Who were the original trustees?
- How many of them are still in place?
- How are the trustees appointed?

Members requested that the Trustees be invited to a meeting of the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee to explain their decision. (CD(F&ES))

### **Petition for Skateboarding Facility – Great Wakering**

Members requested an update on the consideration of a bye-law in respect of skateboarding, which they had understood had been deferred pending decisions around proposed facilities at the King Georges playing field. (HLS)

Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

### 505 RAYLEIGH WINDMILL – OUTCOME OF THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX (TGSE) BID

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which advised Members of the final outcome of the Bid submitted to the Thames Gateway South East (TGSE) for funding to refurbish the Rayleigh Windmill and create a sensory garden on the adjacent land as part of the necessary landscaping of the area.

Members expressed their gratitude to Mark Francois, MP, for his support in this matter, together with the work carried out by Cllr Mrs M J Webster, the Chairman, and other Members of the Windmill Sub-Committee.

Members noted that the money needed to be spent by March 2006, with the bulk being claimed by November 2005.

A pre-meeting had been held with the contractor, who would be present on site from the 13 December. No works would be visible over the Christmas period and scaffolding would be erected in January.

Officers and Members wished to express their gratitude to the Rayleigh Historical Society who had worked hard to ensure that the commencement of building work at the Windmill would not be held up.

Members were pleased to note that the Member of Parliament had undertaken to write a letter to the Heritage Lottery Fund expressing his disappointment at the lack of funding.

#### **Resolved**

That, subject to formal approval of funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister,

- (1) work be completed on refurbishing the Rayleigh Windmill as soon as possible.
- (2) the additional project for a sensory garden proceed on land to the rear of the Windmill, and that any necessary consents be sought.
- (3) negotiations be opened up with the leisure contractor on a possible management fee for running the Windmill and sensory garden as part of the Mill Arts and Crafts Centre and that the outcome be reported back. (CD(F&ES))

### 506 THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX (TGSE) HOUSING STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which invited Members to consider the draft TGSE housing strategy.

The Head of Service advised that there were a number of places available for Members to attend a conference to be held on 7 January 2005 in Basildon to discuss the strategy before it is finalised.

In response to Member questions, the following was noted:-

- Choice based lettings had been agreed by this Council and were referred to in the Forward Plan and the Tenant Participation Compact. A sufficiently high turnover of properties is needed; 62 changed hands last year and fewer than that this year. Local authorities and registered social landlords can work together to review and consider the impact.
- Clarification would be sought around the terms of reference of a steering group which had been formed by Castle Point and Rochford, the Board of TGSEP.

### **Resolved**

That, subject to the following, the draft sub-regional housing strategy be endorsed.

- (1) appropriate amendments to Appendix 3, as indicated in the report.
- (2) clarification concerning the formation of a steering group for Rochford and Castle Point to focus on delivery of Thames Gateway South Essex issues. (HHHCC)

## **507 GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR DIGITAL TELEVISION SWITCHOVER**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which invited Members to consider the implications for the Council in respect of communal housing of the Government plans for digital television switchover.

The Head of Service advised Members that:-

- Contracted Services officers would undertake a survey of every individual unit.
- This would include indicating how many tenants had already made their own arrangements for receiving digital television.
- The Britton Court Sheltered Housing scheme contains the highest number of units and this would require one digital receiver. However, the unit costs would be small, compared to maisonettes where the unit cost would be much higher.
- The Council is the custodian of the Housing Revenue Account and as such provides a landlord service, which includes making provision for an appropriate communal television licence.

## Community Services Committee – 1 December 2004

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- Some of the estimates quoted in the report may be a little on the high side as the cost reflected the purchase of an individual system, without the benefits of bulk purchase economies.

### **Resolved**

That the Head of Revenue and Housing Management prepare a fully economically costed report on the introduction of Digital Television, to be considered by March 2005. (HRHM)

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....