

Community Services Committee – 8 January 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **8 January 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr K A Gibbs (Chairman)

Cllr R A Amner
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr Mrs L Hungate
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R G S Choppen, T E Goodwin and C C Langlands.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllrs A J Humphries and C A Hungate.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Clarkson	- Head of Revenue and Housing Management
G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
D Timson	- Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the report of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on recommendations relating to the existing programme of playspace refurbishment for this year, made by the Playspace Sub-Committee at its meeting held on 20 November 2003.

Members noted that the wording of the final line of the second recommendation on page 8.1 of the report should be amended to read "during 2003/04".

Resolved

- (1) That the existing 2003/04 budgeted programme be carried out.

- (2) That the programme for 2004/05 be on the same financial basis as the 2003/04 programme; ie, the total capital and revenue expenditure should not exceed expenditure during 2003/04. (CD(F&ES))

6 RAYLEIGH WINDMILL HERITAGE LOTTERY BID

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) providing Members with information relating to an initial bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, to obtain up to £50,000 to employ resources to develop the main bid for the Windmill.

It was the general consensus of the Committee that the words “without any real benefit to the Community” should be deleted from paragraph 4.1 of the report and the words “without any real function” should similarly be deleted from paragraph 4.2 of the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the pre-planning bid, as presented in this report, be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide resources to develop the Council’s bid for the Windmill refurbishment and creation of the museum.
- (2) That Members decline the offer of providing a representative to attend board meetings of the Museums in Essex Service at this stage. (CD(F&ES))

7 PROPOSED ST JOHN AMBULANCE HQ – HOCKLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) advising Members of an application received by the St John Ambulance to erect new headquarters to the south west of Hockley Community Centre.

Responding to Members’ concern that the report did not include sufficient details about whether the proposal would necessitate the garaging of vehicles on the site and the frequency of vehicle movement on the site and whether it would have an effect on the existing football pitch, officers advised that all such issues would need to be included in any future planning application.

It was the general consensus of the Committee that the proposal was one that would positively benefit the community and that the location was, accordingly, well conceived.

Resolved

That, subject to the grant of planning permission and the release of the land by Hockley Community Centre, a lease for a term of 21 years be granted to St John Ambulance for the use of the land on the south western side of the

community centre to construct a headquarters, the lease to be at market value and such other terms as the Head of Legal Services considers appropriate. (CD(F&ES))

8 INTERMEDIATE CARE SCHEME

(**Note:** Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being the County Council's Deputy Portfolio Holder for Community Care.)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management advising Members of the progress towards using an empty Scheme Manager's flat in Spa Court for the provision of intermediate care, working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust. (PCT)

The Committee commended officers for their work on this scheme and felt furthermore that a press release and item in *Rochford District Matters* should be issued publicising it.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That a press release and article in *Rochford District Matters* be issued about the scheme. (HRHM)

9 VOID POLICY FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management seeking Members' agreement to adopt a Void Policy for Social Housing.

Resolved

That the Void Policy for Social Housing be adopted. (HRHM)

10 AMENDMENT TO TENANCY AGREEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management asking Members to consider the removal of certain rights from the tenancy agreement in order to reduce maintenance costs.

Responding to a Member enquiry, officers advised that, in the event of tenants failing to agree to the revised agreement, the matter would need to be further referred to Members.

Responding to a further Member enquiry relating to tenants being encouraged to purchase contents insurance, officers confirmed that the Authority only worked with insurance companies that offered weekly or monthly direct debit payment schemes.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed in principle that glazing should become the tenant's responsibility.
- (2) That it be agreed that the internal re-decoration of communal areas in OAP schemes be amended to 'being at the Building Surveyor's discretion, but not less than every seven years'.
- (3) That it be agreed that the internal re-decoration of common parts of other dwellings be undertaken 'as often as necessary and as circumstances dictate'.
- (4) That it be agreed that the priority of repairing fences and gates be moved from a responsive to a planned repair with patch repairs undertaken if necessary to make safe.
- (5) That the responsibility for blockages to waste pipes inside the property be moved from a tenant's responsibility to the landlord's responsibility.
- (6) That the provision and maintenance of loft insulation be made the responsibility of the landlord. (HRHM)

11 SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management advising Members of the results of the interim survey of tenants in Sheltered Accommodation to ascertain their views on the revised management arrangements.

The survey results indicated that tenants would prefer to have a caretaker/handyman than a warden. The Committee accordingly felt that there would be merit in including a specific question about whether tenants would prefer to have a caretaker service or part warden/part caretaker service in the final survey due out in March.

Resolved

- (1) That interim management arrangements be continued, with scheme managers working a 37-hour week supervising paired schemes.
- (2) That 'Out of Hours' calls continue to be referred to Basildon Careline.
- (3) That new working arrangements be finalised following the survey at the trial period and that a report come back to this Committee in April 2004. (HRHM)

12 REDUCING THE AGE FOR OAP DESIGNATED BUNGALOWS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management asking Members to consider lowering the age of admission to OAP designated bungalows from 60 to 55.

Resolved

That the age of admission to one-bedroom bungalows be reduced from 60 to 55. (HRHM)

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraph 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

13 CARAVAN SITE LICENSING – UPDATE

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care providing an update on licence condition breaches at two residential caravan parks.

Resolved

- (1) That progress on Crouch Caravan Park and Hockley Mobile Homes be monitored and a further report be made in twelve months.
- (2) That the application for deferment in respect of the outstanding distance breach at Hockley Mobile Homes be granted until there is a change of occupier or mobile home and the site licence holder and resident be informed accordingly. (HHHCC)

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm.

Chairman

Date