

Community Services Committee – 2 October 2001

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **2 October 2001** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn – Chairman

Cllr R S Allen

Cllr P A Capon

Cllr J E Grey

Cllr Mrs J Hall

Cllr Mrs J Helson

Cllr C C Langlands

Cllr R A Pearson

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr Mrs M A Weir

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs R Brown, T G Cutmore, Mrs J Ford, K A Gibbs, V H Leach, Mrs L I V Phillips and Mrs W M Stevenson

SUBSTITUTES

Councillors Mrs J M Giles, T Livings, C R Morgan, M G B Starke and P D Stebbing.

VISITING

Councillor D R Helson (also representing Rayleigh Association of Voluntary Services)

OFFICERS PRESENT

P. Warren

G Woolhouse

S Clarkson

L Lapite

D Timson

A Wyatt

Chief Executive

Head of Housing, Health and Community Care

Head of Revenues and Housing Management

Principal Solicitor

Property Maintenance and Highways Manager

Committee Administrator

317 MR S ADGER

The Chairman advised Members of the recent passing of Mr Steve Adger, Rayleigh Tenants Association, who had served on the Community Services Committee and Housing Management Sub-Committee for many years. It was the Committee's wish that the Council send its condolences to the family.

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318 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs J M Giles declared an interest in the Item 10 “Housing Management Sub-Committee – Sheltered Housing Scheme Upgrades” (Minute 322(2)) by virtue of her mother’s residency in one of the sheltered schemes.

Councillor Mrs M S Vince declared an interest in the item “Albert Jones Court – Update” (Minute 325), Councillor D R Helson declared an interest in the same item by virtue of his association with RAVS.

Councillor Mrs M S Vince declared an interest in the item “Communities against Drugs Initiative”. (Minute 330)

Councillor D R Helson declared an interest in the item “Celebrating Essex – Draft Consultation Strategy” (Minute 334) by virtue of his association with RAVS.

319 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

320 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Committee received the schedule relating to decisions made since the previous meeting. Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

321 REPORT OF URGENT ACTION

The Committee noted the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which advised of the appointment of Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn to attend the inaugural meeting of the Essex Learning Disability Partnership Board.

322 SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

(1) Leisure Sub-Committee – 11 September 2001

Minute 117 – Leisure Connection Management Report

It was reported that reports on the cinema and the lift at Mill Hall were being brought to a Special Meeting of the Leisure Sub-Committee scheduled for 9 October 2001.

Members concurred with the Officer’s view that Leisure Connection should be asked to put in place a noise limiting device before taking further bookings for Castle Hall.

Resolved

- (1) That Leisure Connection be instructed to install a noise limiting device at Castle Hall.
- (2) That promotions and bookings for Castle Hall be resumed after adequate means of controlling noise have been put in place.
- (3) That polite notices relating to noise be displayed inside Castle Hall.
- (4) That a report monitoring progress should be brought to the next scheduled meeting of the Leisure Sub-Committee. (CD(F&ES))

Minute 120 - Working Together for the Arts – Consultation from the Arts Council of England

Resolved

That the report considered by the Sub-Committee forms this Authority's response to the document "Working Together for the Arts", subject to the change to 4.2.1 noted in the Minutes. (CD(F&ES))

(2) Housing Management Sub-Committee – 12 September 2001

Minute 136 – Racial Harassment Policy in Rented Housing

Resolved

- (1) That paragraph 4.3 in the report to the Sub-Committee be referred back for detailed assessment with a view to introducing balance, to allow for the possibility of false accusation (taking account of other existing policies, including those relating to staff).
- (2) That a revised document incorporating all the changes suggested in the Minutes be submitted to the meeting of the Sub-Committee scheduled for 7 November 2001. (HRHM)

Minute 137 – Council Housing Stock

Resolved

That no change be made to the designated arrangements at the current time and an update report be submitted to the Sub-Committee in six months time. (HRHM)

Minute 140 – Housing Allocation Policy

Resolved

That subject to further investigation into the possibility for including the term 'unintentional' in front of references to homelessness, the Housing Allocation Policy and Points Scheme, as revised and appended to the Minutes of the Housing Management Sub Committee, be approved. (HRHM)

(3) Community Safety Sub-Committee – 13 September 2001

During consideration of these Sub-Committee Minutes, Members referred to the lack of Ward Member notification in respect of a recent site meeting in Hullbridge. The Chief Executive reminded Members of the need for each party to supply its nomination in respect of a further meeting planned at Hullbridge with the Parish Council, Youth Service and the Police. Members also requested that the Police be asked to provide update crime statistics reports to future meetings of the Community Safety Sub-Committee as had happened previously.

Minute 191 – Emergency Planning National Review

Resolved

That the views stated in the Minutes be considered as this Authority's response to the National Emergency Planning Review. (CEX)

Minute 192 – The District Emergency Plan (Minute 132/01)

Resolved

That the draft District Emergency Plan be approved, published and distributed in accordance with the distribution list. (CEX)

Minute 193 – Update on Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy

Noting Members' recommendations for the matter of speed reduction to be carried forward to the next Crime and Disorder Schedule, Members requested that the specific issue of motor-cycle speeding be brought to Police attention as a matter which should be considered in line with any other proposals on speed reduction.

Minute 194 – The Government's report of a Review of the Sentencing Framework for England and Wales

Resolved

That the detail in the Minutes form the Council's response to the Government's report on the Review of the Sentencing Framework for England and Wales "Making Punishment Work". (CEX)

Minute 196 – Security Issues – Clements Hall Leisure Centre

Resolved

That the matter be noted and no further action be taken. (CD(F&ES))

323 PROPOSED HEALTH PARTNERSHIP BOARD FOR ROCHFORD

The Committee welcomed Mr Malcolm McCann, Acting Chief Executive from Rochford Primary Care Group and Mr Roger Sinden from Essex County Council who had been invited to attend the meeting to give a presentation on proposals to strengthen the interface between the Primary Care Group, Social Services and Rochford District Council.

With the aid of view-foils Mr McCann gave a short presentation to Members, which gave a brief resumé of the role of the Primary Care Group, its achievements to date and the next steps to progress their work.

In response to Members' questions Mr McCann and Mr Sinden gave the following responses.

- **Patient Participation**

The Primary Care Group had already started to involve patients in influencing decision making and had established a "patient voice" forum, details of which would be made available to Members. It was difficult to get active participation but there were encouraging signs that this new Forum would grow in strength.

- **Health Improvement Programmes**

The Chief Executive of the Primary Care Group stated that he hoped the PCG would influence beyond the cosmetic and direct resources in line with local demand and need, but he acknowledged the limitations on resources.

- **Funding**

Whilst it was some Members' opinion that the Health Service had been historically under-funded, the proposals put forward in the presentation were to ensure smarter working between the District Council, County Council and Health Service, in order to avoid

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duplication and overcome those areas where people currently fell through “the net”.

The funds available to the Primary Care Group were not new and were allocations from existing Health Service funds.

- **Future for the Primary Care Group**

Noting the decision which had been made previously on the formation of a joint Primary Care Trust for Rochford and Castle Point, Members were advised that the Chief Executive had visited and spoken to local GP’s outlining the two options available for the future. The GP’s would then be balloted on their preferred way forward

- (1) To continue as a Rochford Primary Care Group
- (2) To upgrade to status of Primary Care Trust in conjunction with Castle Point

The Chief Executive of the PCG advised that in his talks with GP’s there had been a wish to resubmit the application for a Primary Care Trust to be formed with Castle Point from April 2002; there was not the possibility of a Primary Care Trust being formed for the Rochford District alone, as the administrative area was too small.

After extensive debate and in summing up Mr McCann advised Members that he would be happy to talk to individual Members on these proposals, including the complicated funding mechanism for the National Health Service at any time. On a show of hands it was

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed partnership board for Rochford be supported in principle
- (2) That Members participate in the proposed workshop to agree the role and remit of the Partnership Board.

Members thanked Mr McCann for his presentation – he then left the Meeting.

324 SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE – BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which invited Members to provide comments for consideration by Essex County Council Best Value Review Team on a review of services for older people

Whilst considering the report Member raised the issue of the Best Value Review in respect of the Meals on Wheels service. It was noted

that the County Council had completed the review and new contracts, which took into account the results of a joint Social Services Inspectorate/Audit Commission joint inspection, would be let for April 2002. In the meantime meals on wheels would continue to be provided for those residents of the District that were assessed as needing. It was agreed that Mr Sinden would provide Members with the number of meals on wheels provided per head of population in the District.

Noting the background to the Best Value Review in respect of services for older people, including the methodology being used, the Committee was advised that all County owned residential homes throughout Essex were subject to the Best Value Review process. It was further noted that since the closure of The Bungalow and Albert Jones Court there had been no reduction in bed space as the County Council had bought beds in the private sector to compensate for the loss.

Resolved

That Essex County Council be requested to take into account, in their review, the comments made by Members in the debate. (HHHCC)

325 ALBERT JONES COURT – UPDATE

The Committee noted the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which advised Members of ongoing work to try to identify a viable use for the benefit of the local community for this former Old Persons Home.

It was noted that the Primary Care Group had advised that they were unlikely to consider Albert Jones Court for outreach facilities or an older persons resource centre as Members had previously wished, however it was considered that Officers should continue to investigate the possibility of the building being used for a suitable purpose, to recommend to Essex County Council.

326 REVIEWS OF HOMELESSNESS DECISIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which, following the Council's decision to strengthen the staffing of the Homelessness Team, requested Members to authorise the Residential Services Unit Manager to undertake homelessness reviews, in addition to the Head of Service.

Resolved

That the Residential Services Unit Manager be authorised to carry out reviews of homelessness applications under Part VII of The Housing Act 1996, but if he is minded not to allow the review, then the application be referred to the Appeals Panel for decision. (HHHCC)

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327 HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION BILL 2001 (Minute 218/99)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which recommended that the Council support a private Members' Bill that aims to deliver warm, safe, energy-saving homes.

Noting the private Members' Bill had all party support it was

Resolved

- (1) That a letter be sent to the local Members of Parliament asking them to be in the House of Commons on 30 November 2001 to support the Bill provided that adequate funding is made available to Authorities to meet their obligations.
- (2) That a letter be sent to Ministers asking them to support the Bill and to provide adequate funding to Authorities to enable them to meet their obligations.
- (3) That a letter be sent to Doctor Desmond Turner MP explaining that the Council supports the proposed Bill provided that adequate resources are provided to Authorities to enable them to meet their obligations. (HHHCC)

328 FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN (Minute 90/00)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which sought Members' approval to the Food Safety Service Plan.

Noting the aims of the Food Safety Service Plan it was

Resolved

That the Food Safety Service Plan and the plan to complete the production of all food law enforcement documents and implement a peer review system by April 2006 be approved. (HHHCC)

329 SKATEBOARDING

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which examined the issue of skateboarding across the District.

Skateboarding across the District: General Provision

Members noted that Officers had, following the recommendation from the previous Community Services Committee, had been in contact with local Parish Councils to seek their views on the issue of skateboarding

within their Parishes. It was noted that skateboarding facilities within Canewdon was the subject of a report later in the meeting, and also that Rayleigh Town Council had applied to the District Council for funds to provide a skateboarding facility in King George's playing field. Noting the feedback from Parish Councils and also officers' recommendation, Members considered that the establishment of a programme of new purpose-built skateboarding provision, to be funded from the Playspace Rolling Programme, should first be referred to Member Budget Monitoring Sub Committee for consideration as part of the overall budget making process.

By-laws on Skateboarding

Members noted that the Officers had received a firm response from the Home Office on how by-laws relating to skateboarding could be applied. Noting the restrictions on where by-laws could be implemented, Members considered that Officers should pursue the matter further, but also that the issue of signage should be considered within the context of any by-law provision.

Resolved

- (1) That the establishment of a programme of new purpose-built skateboarding provision to be funded in part from the Playspace Rolling Programme but with contributions also from the appropriate Town Parish Councils and appropriate grant aid; such provision to be made from 2002/2003 and to equate to £25,000 per annum, be referred to the Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee in the first instance for consideration as part of the overall budget making process.
- (2) That a suitable by-law initiative, targeting specific sites and addressing the particular issue of enforcement be developed for further consideration by Members, prior to submission to the Home Office for preliminary approval. (CEX)

330 THE COMMUNITIES AGAINST DRUGS INITIATIVE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which provided further details on the "Communities Against Drugs" initiative and sought Members' views on proposals which could be put forward to the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for consideration.

It was noted that the Council had been awarded £59,300 for 2001/2002 by the Home Office which was to be distributed through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships working in conjunction with drug action teams. Further monies were promised for 2002/3 and 2003/4 but the allocations for those years were not known at the present time.

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Members endorsed Officers' proposed way forward as set out in paragraph 4.2, although considered the following could be included in any discussions: -

Freephone line

Funding addict places at rehab clinics

More education and literature at Primary School Level

Resolved

That the proposals outlined in para. 4.2, including Members comments above, be put forward for consideration by the Crime and Disorder Partnership. (CEX)

331 MUSEUMS IN ESSEX

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) following a request from Museum in Essex asking the Council to consider becoming a member of the organisation.

Mindful that the District did not have any museums and also of the subscription amount, Members considered that Museums in Essex should be informed that this Authority does not wish to become a member of the organisation.

Resolved

That Museums in Essex be informed that Rochford District Council does not wish to become a member of the organisation. (CD(F&ES))

332 PLAYSPLACE ROLLING PROGRAMME 2001/2002 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which advised Members of the results of the further consultations carried out on the proposed skating facility at Althorne Way, Canewdon and the cost of providing a teen shelter at the same location. Noting the details relating to Fyfield Path infant playspace and Althorne Way, Canewdon playspace, Members considered that Canewdon Parish Council's proposed condition on the provision of a skateboard facility should not be agreed.

Resolved

- (1) That Members note the result of the consultation in respect of the above playspaces

- (2) That the imposition of the condition in the Canewdon Parish Council letter of 11 September relating to the provision of skateboard facilities be not agreed. (CD(F&ES))

333 INVESTIGATION OF POOL LEAK, CLEMENTS HALL LEISURE CENTRE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which advised Members of progress in detecting the loss of water from Clements Hall Swimming Pool and the next stage of investigation.

Resolved

That the next stage of investigation be agreed and a further report be made to this Committee if any repairs works identified cannot be met within existing budgets. (CD(FES))

334 CELEBRATING ESSEX – DRAFT CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which sought Members' views on the draft cultural strategy for Essex – "Celebrating Essex".

It was noted that the Appendix to the report was an earlier draft of the consultation document and it was agreed by Members that a revised version of this strategy document would be sent to all Members for consideration, with comments to be made to the Property Maintenance & Highways Manager by 11 October 2001.

The meeting closed at 10.40pm.

Chairman

Date