

Community Services Committee – 1 March 2005

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

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

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

Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs J R Lumley and J Thomass.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal Services
G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
E Hanlon	- Principal Environmental Health Officer
M Martin	- Committee Administrator

80 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Members of the Committee welcomed the Chairman back after a recent operation. The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman for chairing the previous two meetings of the Committee on his behalf.

81 CHANGES TO HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTION PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care apprising Members of changes introduced by the Health and Safety Executive/Local Authorities Enforcement Liaison Committees' (HELA) circular concerning intervention programmes and an inspection rating system.

In response to Members' questions, the following was noted:-

- Officers will be monitoring health and safety issues at chemists and beauty establishments.

- The licensing authority is not responsible for security issues at pharmacies which will be dealt with by other regulating agencies within the NHS.

Resolved

That the resources required for the health and safety service are kept under review and that the annual Health & Safety Service Plan be used for this purpose. (HHHCC)

82 PARK HOMES SITE LICENSING – PROPOSALS FOR REFORM

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care inviting Members to agree the Council's response to a consultation paper issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on proposals to amend the current licensing provisions for residential mobile home sites.

Members expressed concern that the Council's duty of care ought to extend to any unauthorised gypsy/traveller sites which are set up within the District. They are not subject to the same standards of amenity, safety and inspection, despite the fact that very similar living arrangements exist as on Park Homes sites.

In response to Members' questions concerning the proposals, the following was noted:-

- It was assumed that the monthly fine referred to would also be to a maximum of £5000.
- There is an obligation on the out-going licence holder to seek approval from the Council before transferring the licence.
- The authority will be required to inspect the site with 28 days of being notified by the buyer and seller of the transfer of the site. Once notified by both buyer and seller of the date of transfer, the authority would need to make contact with the new owner in order to carry out an inspection.
- There is a need to ensure all park home residents have a right to be consulted by the site operator on terms and conditions as not all will choose to join a residents' association and on some sites no residents' association exists.
- This authority already complies with best practice guidance issued in 2000 relating to park homes site licensing. However, any new initiatives, such as consulting with every resident on every site in the event of a change to the Model Standards will take additional officer/Member time.

Members also expressed concern that on receipt of the notification of the transfer of the site, adequate time would need to be provided for a local authority to carry out all the checks as to whether the new owner is a "fit and proper person".

Resolved

That the responses detailed in the report be forwarded to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as this Council's response to the consultation, subject to additional observations that:-

- Unauthorised gypsy/traveller sites may exist for long periods of time, particularly where these arise through the planning appeal process, but they are not subject to the same standards of amenity, safety and inspection as authorised sites.
- Adequate time will be required for local authorities to check whether a new owner is a "fit and proper person" after receipt of a notification of transfer of site ownership. (HHHCC)

83 **ROCHFORD TOWN SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB – APPLICATION FOR NEW LEASE ON THE PAVILION AT ROCHFORD RECREATION GROUND, ROCHFORD**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) seeking Members' views with regard to the rental to be charged following receipt of a surveyor's valuation.

Members were pleased to note that the Rochford Town Sports and Social Club is a valued local amenity, which aligns well with this Council's core objectives.

In response to a question around whether the Club pays business rates, officers confirmed that they would advise Members of the Committee accordingly.

Members noted that over a number of years there had been some isolated incidents of nuisance in the vicinity caused, for example, when events had finished later than planned, although this had not been a problem of late.

The Committee considered that this matter might be addressed by provisions within the lease and that the situation could be reviewed as necessary prior to the renewal of the new term expiring in 2009.

Resolved

- (1) That provisions are included in the lease to address any nuisance arising from the use of the premises.
- (2) In view of the community service, the rent be set at £900 with effect from December 2001 and £1,000 from December 2004.

84 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SCHEME – TYLNEY AVENUE, ROCHFORD

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services apprising Members of progress on the development of the site at Tylney Avenue, Rochford which is the subject of an approved housing scheme.

Officers advised that Swan Housing Group were well aware of the parking issues surrounding this site and recent plans indicated that this was being addressed. Officers would continue to monitor this.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council continue to work with Swan Housing Group to develop an acceptable Housing Scheme for the site.
- (2) That, in consideration of the release of the Covenant on the former Tylney play area, the Council agree to place into Trust with The National Playing Fields Association the Doggetts Play Ground by transfer of the Council's freehold interest and leaseback of the area to be maintained by the Council and on such other terms and conditions as the Head of Legal Services considers appropriate.
- (3) That, subject to an acceptable scheme being approved by Council and Swan Housing Group securing the necessary funding for the development, the site be transferred to Swan Housing Group at nil cost and on such terms and conditions as the Head of Legal Services considers appropriate to secure the provision of the approved housing scheme. (HLS) (HHH&CC)

85 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION STRATEGY 2005/2008 AND AUDIT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive apprising Members of the new draft Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008 and Audit and seek Members' comments for the proposals outlined.

Members noted that:-

- The Home Office had specified targets to be worked towards. Whilst certain crimes, such as theft of bicycles, were not a major issue within this District, a target still needed to be specified.
- Guidance is still being received from the Home Office. Data will continue to be fed into the Strategy document prior to its finalisation. It was still a work in progress. Action Plans will underpin the Strategy.
- The Strategy makes reference to the specific problems associated with Halloween and 5th November. Members were reassured that the District is still reporting relatively low levels of crime. The key issues for residents seem to be Police presence, youth nuisance and traffic speeds.

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Resolved

That the draft Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy and Audit for the Rochford District be approved. (CE)

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Chairman

Date