

Council - 24 October 2000

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **10 October 2000** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs M A Weir – Chairman

Cllr R S Allen
Cllr R A Amner
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr D M Ford
Mrs J E Ford
Cllr J E Grey

Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr V H Leach
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon
Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr Mrs L I V Phillips
Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D F Flack and Mrs J Helson

SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn

NON MEMBERS ATTENDING

Councillors R Adams and D R Helson

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
G Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
S Clarkson	Head of Revenues and Housing Management
L Lapite	Solicitor
D Timson	Property, Maintenance and Highways Manager
A Wyatt	Committee Administrator

301 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D R Helson declared a Non Pecuniary Interest in the Item "Leisure Sub Committee Minutes" (Minute 305(2)) by virtue of being a Member of Rochford Sports Council

Councillor D M Ford declared an interest in the same item by virtue of being this Authority's representative on Rochford Sports Council

Councillor C C Langlands declared an Interest in the items “Best Value Review – Housing Strategy” (Minute 306), “Best Value Review – Housing Management” (Minute 307), “Housing Investment Programme” (Minute 316) and “Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO) Campaign” (Minute 317) by virtue of being a Leaseholder of a former Council owned property.

302 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2000

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 June 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

303 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Members were satisfied that all necessary action had been taken. Minutes 27/00 and 79/00 (HHHCC) were carried forward.

304 AGE MATTERS – CONSULTATION ON SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which sought Members’ views on a consultation document from North and South Essex Health Authorities and Essex County Council on a joint strategy for services for older people in Essex.

Members welcomed Lynne Jacobs, from Essex County Council, who, with the aid of viewfoils, presented to Members the Age Matters document and its aims in providing services for the growing elderly population of the County.

Members questions were answered specifically in relation to:-

- The future for Swayne Court
- The closure of Albert Jones Court
- The existing provision of Home Care and those patients currently awaiting convalescence care
- The relationship between the proposed new PCT and Essex County Council Social Services, including budget provision and funding

In summing up, Members expressed great concern at the consultation considering that on previous occasions, the County Council had appeared not to listen to this Authority’s view. Furthermore, Members expressed concern at whether services provided would be adequate to meet demand.

On the issue of Albert Jones Court, a Member questioned how, if Essex County Council would not consider the bid from the Strathmore Homes Group, they were able to purchase bed spaces from the

company. Furthermore it was questioned whether those patients in Strathmore Homes were at risk.

Members thanked Ms Jacobs for her presentation, she then left the meeting.

Resolved

That the response to the Age Matters consultation be as set out in the appendix to the report. (HHHCC)

305 SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

(1) Housing Management Sub-Committee – 14 September 2000

Minute 113 – Capital Programme 2001/2002

Resolved

- (1) That the HIPS bid, as prepared by Officers, be approved.
- (2) That a report be submitted to the Housing Management Sub-Committee or Community Services Committee giving positive proposals for the refurbishment of the Lavers, Britton Court, Spa Court and Hardwick House. (HRHM) (CDF&ES)

Further to consideration of these Minutes Members decided that the site visit referred to in Minute 114 should be Saturday day time.

(2) Leisure Sub-Committee – 20 September 2000

Minute 85 – Great Wakering Cycle Speedway Club (Minute 798/83)

Resolved

- (1) That Officers assist the Club in applying for a grant to renew the track fencing.
- (2)
 - a) That the matter be referred to the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee to consider awarding a one-off grant of £3,700 to the Club to concrete the perimeter of the track during the 2001/2 financial year – this to be funded from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy budget.
 - (b) That the Club's use of the track be formalised by preparing a licence, the terms and conditions of which to be agreed by the Head of Legal Services.
 - (c) That the licence fee be set at a nominal amount.

- (3) That Officers assist the Club in advertising the facility in order to attract additional members. (CD(F&ES))

Minute 86 – Fairview Tennis Courts

Resolved

- (1) That the results of the consultation be noted.
- (2) That the tennis courts be retained.
- (3) That the sum of £10,800 be released from Community Services budget to enable the resurfacing of the tennis courts to proceed. (CD(F&ES))

Minute 87 – Meeting with Rayleigh Town Council and Rochford Sports Council

During consideration of this Minute, a motion put by Cllr V H Leach and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn, for the matter to be postponed, pending all parties having the opportunity to decide their representation at the meeting was lost on a show of hands.

Resolved

That a meeting be arranged with Rayleigh Town Council (Chairman of Leisure) and Rochford Sports Council, with the Chairman of Leisure Sub-Committee and the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) representing this Authority, to discuss the Festival of Sports Finals Day on King George's Playing Field. (CD(F&ES))

Minute 88 – Urgent item of business – Fireworks Display on King George's Playing Field

Members were advised that, since consideration of this item, Rayleigh Town Council had accepted responsibility for the Annual fireworks display on King George's Playing Field, although the Town Council had requested District Council help in the post event clear up, for which they were willing to pay. Noting this, Members considered that as the event would now be taking place, that the matter should be noted and that no further action should be taken.

Resolved

That the matter be noted. (CD(F&ES))

(3) Community Safety Sub-Committee – 26 September 2000

Minute 153 – Neighbourhood Warden Funding Bid

Resolved

- (1) That the outcome of the Star Partnership bid be noted.
- (2) That another bid be prepared should the Home Office invite further bids in future. (HHHCC)

Minute 154 – Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy Update

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That update reports be submitted to future meetings of the Community Safety Sub-Committee.
- (3) That the points outlined in the Minute preamble also be noted. (HCPI)

Minute 155 – Message in a bottle

Resolved

That assistance with the funding of the scheme be agreed, with the Council providing £500 from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy budget for this purpose. (HCPI)

Minute 156 – Proof of Age Scheme

Resolved

- (1) That the Authority to continue to support the proof of age scheme for 2000/2001 and that the Council provides £863.95 from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy budget for this purpose.
- (2) That the Council continues to support the scheme in 2001/2002 and allocate a maximum of £1,000 from the Crime and Disorder Strategy budget for this purpose. (HCPI)

Minute 157 – Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Resolved

That the Council accept the principles in the draft protocol as a first step in addressing the Government's recommendations for implementing Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and, that following further consultations, a final version of the protocol be presented to the Community Safety Sub-Committee in the new year.

Minute 158 – Taxi Watch

Resolved

That approval be given to the introduction of a Taxi Watch Scheme in the Rochford District in partnership with Essex Police. (HRHM)

Minute 159 – Pooles Lane Car Park – Additional Lighting

Resolved

- (1) That funding to the sum of £6,000 be provided for the additional lighting to Pooles Lane Public Car Park from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy budget subject to the Hullbridge Parish Council providing the revenue for energy and maintenance costs for the additional lighting.
- (2) That Officers proceed with the implementation of the works outlined in the report as a matter of urgency. (HLCS)

306 BEST VALUE REVIEW – HOUSING STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) which updated Members on progress to date of the Best Value Review in respect of the Housing Strategy.

In agreeing with Officers' recommendations, a Member questioned whether the review was a legal obligation, furthermore it was requested that the cost of the reviews be brought back to Members as appropriate.

Resolved

- (1) That progress on the Best Value Review relating to Housing Strategy be noted.
- (2) That the next Housing Strategy clearly shows where the Authority currently complies with Government guidance.
- (3) That the sum of £35,000 be placed in the draft estimates for 2001/2002 for House Stock Condition and Energy Efficiency Surveys.
- (4) That Officers report back as soon as practicable in respect of homelessness and an independent housing advice service.
- (5) That Officers report back as soon as practicable on the options available to the Council in respect of its own housing stock.

- (6) That the Transportation and Environmental Services Committee be requested to determine whether or not to seek budget allocation in 2001/2002 for the provision of a 24 hour responsive noise service. (CD(F&ES))

307 BEST VALUE REVIEW – HOUSING MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) which updated Members on progress in respect of the above review and sought Members approval to amend the timetable and notify the Audit Commission, in order for them to alter their inspection requirement for the Council. Noting that the original timetable was at best ambitious, Members endorsed Officers proposal and it was

Resolved

- (1) That the limits of the current review be noted and that the Audit Commission be notified accordingly.
- (2) That the best options for housing management be considered further when the full financial implications are available.
- (3) That Officers report back on progress on the review with firm details of review dates and resource implications. (CD(F&ES))

308 BEST VALUE REVIEW – HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING ADVICE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which updated Members on progress to date of the Best Value Review in respect of homelessness and housing advice.

Noting the background to the review and its findings so far, Members endorsed Officers' recommendations and it was

Resolved

- (1) That progress to date on the Best Value Review relating to homelessness be noted.
- (2) That the review be progressed to report finding stage together with possible solutions on the way forward no later than January 2001. (HHHCC)

309 ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRIMARY CARE TRUST – CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which invited Members to agree a response to the consultation on the proposed formation of a Level 4 Primary Care Trust to serve Castle Point and Rochford.

Members noted the background to the formation of Primary Care Trusts and were advised of a number of public meetings which had recently been held relating to the consultation document.

Noting the aims of the Trust, Members noted that there would be no new money available other than that currently available. Furthermore it was noted that although Rochford District Council had originally requested that the Primary Care Group be set up for the District of Rochford as one, it was the intention for the existing Primary Care Group to become a Primary Care Trust covering both Castle Point and Rochford.

Resolved

- (1) That the establishment of a Primary Care Trust for Castle Point and Rochford be supported; however, this Council's concerns be raised that services in the Rochford District should take into account the rural nature of the District, furthermore concerns that the Primary Care Trust will not provide an improved service for the Rochford District.
- (2) That the request from Wyre Forest District Council for direct elections to Health Authorities and Trusts be supported and that all Members of the Council be invited to sign the petition forthwith.

310 REGULATIONS OF POLLSTERS (MIN 207/00)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which advised Members of the possibility of controlling the activities of pollsters on Council owned land, buildings and open spaces.

Noting the work undertaken to date by the Legal Services Department with regard to the control of the activity of pollsters Members raised the example of Southend on Sea Borough Council who had managed to dramatically reduce the number of pollsters working within its main shopping area.

A Member brought to the Committee's attention details of the number of pollsters actively working in Rayleigh High Street on a recent Saturday. Mindful of this and questioning whether laws relating to harassment or obstruction could be appropriately used, Members requested that the issue be reported to the Community Safety Sub-Committee for further debate.

Resolved

- (1) That the market operator of Rayleigh Market be advised of the Council's concern as the activities of pollsters.
- (2) That the matter be reported on to the Community Safety Sub-Committee in order to gain the Police view on the possible issue of harassment/obstruction of shoppers within Rayleigh Town Centre by the activities of pollsters. (HLS)

311 RECYCLING BANKS AT ST JOHN FISHER PLAYING FIELD – MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which advised and updated Members on the impact of the anti-climb fence erected around the recycling banks at St John Fisher Playing Field. Noting the details of the report, the Committee was advised by a Member of a complaint log which had been received relating to the recycling banks.

In light of this information Members considered that the matter should be deferred to the next Meeting in order for Officers to fully investigate the allegations made on the monitoring log.

Resolved

That the matter be referred to the next Meeting of Community Services Committee on 21 November 2000 for further consideration. (HHHCC)

312 ENERGY ADVICE CENTRE FOR ESSEX

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which provided an introduction to the function of a possible new energy efficiency advice centre for Essex and recommended contributing towards the funding of a centre during 2001/2002.

Members agreed with the sentiment of providing an energy advice centre, although questioned whether the advice centre's work would be duplicating that already provided by some utilities' suppliers. Noting that the advice centre would provide impartial independent advice it was

Resolved

That the sum of £1,100 be included in the draft 2001/2002 estimate for this Council's contribution towards the funding of an EEAC in Essex. (HHHCC)

313 TOWER CARAVAN PARK: REQUEST FOR ALTERATION OF SITE LICENCE CONDITION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which sought Members' approval to the variation of site licence conditions for Tower Caravan Park.

Members noted that the request for the change of site licence had been brought about by the Authority's threat of prosecution in respect of the breaches of the 6 metre separation space requirement between caravans.

Members noted the proposals put forward by the site licence operator and endorsed the Officers recommendation.

Resolved

- (1) That the changes to the site licence condition 3.1 as worded in the report be approved.
- (2) That resolution 2 of Minute 206/00 be rescinded. (HHHCC)

314 CONSULTATION OF THE PARKS HOMES WORKING PARTY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which discussed the main issues arising from a consultation report published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions regarding residential park homes and suggested comments to be made in response.

Noting the details of the consultation, Members endorsed the Officers suggested responses and on a show of hands it was

Resolved

That the suggested responses as set out in section 3 of the report be given in response to the consultation document. (HHHCC)

315 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which recommended that the Council agreed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Essex Police regarding the unauthorised occupation of land by travellers.

Noting the detail of the report, and that the Memorandum backed up existing agreements between this Authority, Essex County Council and the Police, Members were of the opinion that the item should be referred to Full Council for further debate.

Resolved

That the report be referred to Full Council. (HHHCC)

316 HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which invited Members' comment on the annual update of the Council's Housing Strategy Statement.

Noting the background to the Housing Investment Programme and that the Housing Strategy was currently subject of a Best Value Review, Members endorsed Officers proposals and it was

Resolved

- (1) That the Housing Strategy Update 2000 be approved.
- (2) That Officers be authorised to work with a range of Housing Associations if necessary to develop a Purchase and Adapt scheme for a wheelchair adapted property using LASHG.

317 DO IT YOURSELF SHARED OWNERSHIP (DIYSO) CAMPAIGN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which sought Member's approval to support an Essex-wide campaign to ask Government to re-introduce Local Authority sponsored Do-it-Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO).

Noting the details of the former DIYSO scheme and the scheme currently in place, Members endorsed the proposal and it was

Resolved

That the Essex-wide campaign to re-introduce Local Authority sponsored DIYSO be supported. (HHHCC)

318 APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS FOR STREET TRADING CONSENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which invited Members to delegate the Authority to approve unopposed applications for the grant or renewal of Street Trading Consent to the Corporate Director (Finance and External

Services). It was noted that the procedure for determining unopposed street trading applications had been resolved some years ago, however that the Terms of Reference for the Street Trading Panel, as agreed at Annual Council, had in effect taken back responsibility for all applications.

A Member wished it included in the protocol for dealing with street trading consents that, should consultation with Ward Members not be undertaken, that in future, this should be considered as a necessary part of the scheme.

Resolved

That authority to approve applications for the grant or renewal of the street trading consent when no objections have been received be delegated to the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) (CD(F&ES)).

319 PLAYSPACE ROLLING PROGRAMME 2000/01 - PUBLIC CONSULTATION (Minute 435/99)

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) which updated Members on the consultation process that had been undertaken in respect of the play areas at Elsenham Court, Rayleigh and Rowan Way, Canewdon and further updated the consultation work carried out on the Glebe/Morrins Close Playspaces. Noting the information provided and the proposed way forward, it was

Resolved

- (1) That the proposal to relocate the Rowan Way Playspace on the village green in Canewdon does not proceed.
- (2) That the proposed playspace refurbishment in Elsenham Court, Rayleigh proceed.
- (3) That the results of the second consultation conducted by Canewdon Parish Council be agreed
- (4) That the revised proposal of minor upgrading work at Rowan Way and a skating facility at Althorne Recreation Ground Phase I be agreed.
- (5) That the results of the Glebe Close/Morrins Close consultation be accepted and that Officers be authorised to proceed with Glebe Close immediately and Morrins Close once the land is acquired. (CD(F & ES))

320 MEMBERS ITEM OF BUSINESS

The Committee were advised by a Member of the current situation with regard to the management of the Careline system, previously passed on to RAVS who had undertaken the management of the scheme on behalf of Rochford District Council.

It was noted that in May, RAVS had passed the management of the scheme back to Rochford District Council due to operational difficulties and that Officers were undertaking negotiations with Chelmsford Borough Council in order for the scheme to be brought back into their administrative arrangements. Concern was expressed by Members at the length of time it had taken to be appraised of the situation and considered that the matter should be reported fully to the next Community Services Committee in order for the scheme to be re-implemented without delay.

Resolved

That the administration of Carelines be subject of a report to a future Meeting of Community Services Committee as outlined above. (HRHM)

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraphs 9 and 12(b)(ii) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

321 MILL HALL CRECHE

The Committee considered and noted the exempt report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which outlined the details of the arrangements in relation to the operation of the new creche facility at Mill Hall.

322 SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which highlighted issues with regard to the upgrading of units of sheltered accommodation where there were still shared bathrooms.

Noting the current situation with regard to the Sheltered Accommodation and the Authority's current financial situation with regard to refurbishment of these units, Members endorsed Officers proposals and it was

Resolved

- (1) To approach Housing Associations operating in the area to submit proposals as outlined in the report in respect of developing the property identified in the report.
- (2) That the Finance and General Purposes Committee be requested to provide financial resources in the current year for a survey of frail elderly needs to be undertaken.
- (3) That a report on similar proposals in respect of the other properties identified in the report be brought to Committee at the appropriate time. (CD(F&ES))

The Meeting closed at 10.45pm

Chairman

Date