

## **Leisure, Tourism & Heritage Committee – 27 March 2007**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Leisure, Tourism & Heritage Committee** held on **27 March 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs T J Capon  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr P R Robinson

Cllr R A Amner  
Cllr J P Cottis  
Cllr T E Goodwin

Cllr C G Seagers  
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J R F Mason, Mrs M A Starke and M G B Starke

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Cllrs T G Cutmore and Mrs L Hungate

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

|           |   |                             |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| J Bourne  | - | Head of Community Services  |
| G Dawson  | - | Parks & Open Spaces Officer |
| J O'Brien | - | Committee Administrator     |

At the commencement of the meeting the Chairman, on behalf of Members of the Committee, conveyed all good wishes to Cllrs Mrs M A Starke and M G B Starke during this difficult time.

### **ALSO PRESENT**

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| M Jarvis | - | Regional Manager, Serviceteam (Veolia)        |
| P Crabbe | - | Operations Supervisor, Serviceteam (Veolia)   |
| S Brown  | - | Regional Manager, Virgin Active               |
| T Hudson | - | General Manager, Clements Hall Leisure Centre |

## **91 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to paragraph 3 of minute 392 being revised to read that 'Cllr J P Cottis declared a personal interest in the item on Holmes Place Progress Report by virtue of being a member at Clements Hall'.

## **92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr R A Amner declared a prejudicial interest in the item on Holmes Place Moving to Virgin Active Progress Report, by virtue of involvement with Clements Hall (and left the meeting during consideration of this item).

Cllr J P Cottis declared a personal interest in the item on Holmes Place Moving to Virgin Active Progress Report, by virtue of being a user of the Clements Hall facilities.

Cllr P R Robinson declared a personal interest in the item on Holmes Place Moving to Virgin Active Progress Report, by virtue of being a member at Clements Hall.

### 93     **PROGRESS ON DECISIONS**

The Committee received the schedule relating to Progress on Decisions:-

#### **(1) Pooles Lane Recreation Ground – Proposed Additional Equipment (Minute 332/06)**

A Member observed that the equipment had not been installed, as the schedule implied. Officers explained that the update provided on the schedule should be corrected to read that 'Rochford District Council's involvement is now complete, and continued responsibility would fall under Hullbridge Parish Council'.

It was noted that the Seaview Drive Playspace had been brought to the attention of a Member by local residents, and following a site visit it appeared that the area had been subjected to vandalism. It was felt that there is a high demand for the playspace, which may be improved if the gates were locked of an evening whilst not in use. Officers agreed to take comments back to the office for appropriate follow up and action.

#### **(2) Tendering Process for the Grounds Maintenance Contract (Minute 398/06)**

Officers provided an update on the procurement process and advised that this continued to run according to timetable, there had been a lot of interest in the contract from industry and a number of individual meetings had taken place.

Members were mindful of the recent revision to the terms of reference of the Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee, as agreed by the Environmental Services Committee on 13 March 2007, to be expanded to include overseeing the progress and development of the contract procurement process for street cleansing. Members concurred that there would be merit in further expanding these terms of reference to also include overseeing the progress and development of the contract procurement process for grounds maintenance.

#### **Resolved**

That the terms of reference of the Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee be expanded to include overseeing the progress and development of the contract procurement process for grounds maintenance. (HCS)

### 94     **SERVICETEAM (VEOLIA) – GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Community Services that provided Members with a progress report from Serviceteam on the Grounds Maintenance Contract and which introduced Mike Jarvis (Regional Manager) and Paul Crabbe (Operations Supervisor).

In presenting the report and answering questions, Mike Jarvis and Paul Crabbe advised that:-

- Under the item of grass cutting, the winter mow had now finished, and ? of the February/early March first cut had taken place.
- The early spring had impacted on the schedule and ultimately results in a longer grass cutting season.
- Dog waste was a recognised ongoing problem that was being addressed through the procurement process.
- Since the report had been written, all winter works were now complete.
- There continued to be issues with regard to suitable NVQ training for the landscapes work format. A formal training programme had been devised, and subject to approval this would be implemented for members of staff.

The Committee extended gratitude to Mike Jarvis and Paul Crabbe for their contribution to the meeting.

#### **Resolved**

That the content of the progress report and answers provided by Serviceteam's Regional Manager and Operations Supervisor in relation to the grounds maintenance contract be noted.

### 95     **HOLMES PLACE MOVING TO VIRGIN ACTIVE PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received the report of the Head of Community Services that provided Members with a progress report from Holmes Place/Virgin Active on the progress and development of the leisure management contract, and further received a presentation from Stephen Brown (Regional Manager) and Tony Hudson (General Manager, Clements Hall).

The Committee and officers joined in congratulating Stephen Brown on his recent promotion to Regional Manager.

In presenting the report and answering questions, representatives from Holmes Place/Virgin Active advised that:-

- The series of staff roadshows held had been positively received, with high attendance figures overall and Sir Richard Branson having been present on one of the days.
- 'Brand standards' was a key programme to be introduced, which was a gradual process and had already been established at Clements Hall and Rayleigh Leisure Centre. There continued to be consistent improvement from all departments across these sites that was encouraging and significant in implementing the brand standards initiative.
- Mystery shopping was taking place at Clements Hall and Rayleigh Leisure Centre, and had been successful in the first 2 months at both sites. This would be an ongoing process and involved a new member joining each month that considers a long list of criteria and compiles a report upon completion, which provides results and important feedback.
- Two permanent Maintenance staff were now based at Clements Hall, in addition to two further members of staff covering the other sites within the contract.
- There had been substantial progress in addressing and reducing the vandalism at Clements Hall. A successful working relationship is in place with the Police to manage the process.
- Vandalism of the toilets at the Mill Arts & Events Centre remained a concern, though this had not worsened, and was being monitored.
- Minor improvements continue to be made at the Great Wakering sports centre and replacement windows had already been arranged for the building. Discussions have taken place between the Parish Council and the District Council around possible further improvements to the facility, particularly with regard to youth facilities and looking at future discussions with other potential partners such as Essex County Council, Youth Service etc.
- Following a Member's observation, the suggestion for a men's only pool session at Clements Hall would be considered.
- Further to a Member's suggestion, the possibility of a mini V-Festival in Rochford would be investigated.
- Stephen Brown would still remain very much involved with the contract until the Operations Manager post was filled, where naturally responsibilities would be distributed as necessary.

Following a Member concern on the fly tipping occurring at Castle Hall, officers would liaise with appropriate colleagues and establish if this is already identified as a hotspot area and what measures are in place to monitor the site.

The Committee concurred with a Member that the Holmes Place/Virgin Active had been a well-managed merger that they were proud for the Council to be associated with.

The Committee also noted that staff were very friendly across the sites and their local knowledge was identifiable and a clear attribute. This was advantageous for users of the facilities and would be good to see continued.

A Member congratulated Homes Place/Virgin Active on the Essex Book Festival event held at the Mill Arts & Events Centre the previous evening.

The Committee extended well wishes to Stephen Brown on his new appointment, and thanked him for his valuable input to the meeting.

### **96 ACTION PLAN FOR AN ESSEX LEGACY FROM THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES AND PARALYMPICS**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Community Services on the Action Plan for an Essex Legacy from the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics.

Introducing this item, officers advised that the action plan had been produced to assist in maximising the potential opportunity and benefits of the 2012 Games being staged close to the District. The recommendations, as outlined in the covering report, were to endorse the action plan in principle and would not form a commitment in terms of responsibilities or finance at this stage.

The Committee concurred that the action plan was clearly in its initial stages and it seemed evidential that there were areas of uncertainty where clarity was required.

Notwithstanding recognition of the 2012 Games, on the basis of limited information this raised concerns of Members surrounding contributed costs, infrastructure and actual benefit and implications for the District.

On a Motion moved by Cllr T G Cutmore, and seconded by Cllr J P Cottis, it was:-

#### **Resolved**

That the Action Plan for an Essex Legacy from the 2012 Games be noted, and a further detailed report be produced as more additional information is received.

### 97 UPDATE ON BRAINSTORMING MEETING OF 17 JANUARY 2007

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Community Services which summarised the ideas put forward at the previous brainstorming meeting and clarified areas for specific action and attention.

Introducing this item, officers advised that the recommendations depicted both the specifics identified as short term successes and remaining items to be further researched. The Chairman added that medium to long term aspirations were clear for a majority of the items as deemed appropriate.

The Committee noted that:-

- Historians already perform walking tours in Rochford and should the Council be able to formalise the event then this would be beneficial to involve the community and utilise and promote local knowledge.
- Some items could contribute towards the regeneration of Rochford Town.
- The recent street performers that had been out in Rayleigh High Street had been positively received by the community and local businesses. Encouraging feedback had been provided from members of the public.
- There could be merit in promoting the officer tour of the old house at the Rochford District Council South Street premises to all Members.
- Events were taking place to celebrate St George's Day, which included a free family art day at the Mill Arts and Events Centre, Rayleigh and a St George's Day breakfast being organised by Essex County Councillor Roy Pearson in Great Wakering.

Officers confirmed that they recognise the need for health & safety and public liability insurance in organising any event and that appropriate considerations and steps would be followed, as standard procedure.

Officers would look into the suggestion raised by a Member to consider the District's involvement with a 'magic club'.

The Committee concurred that it was pleasing to be forward planning and looking ahead to the forthcoming year with the development of activities that reflect the history/heritage of the District.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the staging of an appropriate annual event to celebrate St George's Day be agreed.

- (2) That Essex County Council be approached with proposals for improved directional and brown tourism signage for key facilities in the District.
- (3) That further research be undertaken into the other items mentioned in sections 4.1 and 4.3 of the report and a further report be produced on the outcomes from this research that prioritises which of the ideas are to be taken further.
- (4) That officers explore the possibilities of external grants to fund additional human resource capacity. For example, a Heritage Officer. (HCS)

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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