

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 17 September 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **17 September 2002** when there were present:

Cllr M G B Starke (Chairman)
Cllr T Livings (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr P A Capon
Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr D F L Flack
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C J Lumley.

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
G Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
J Bourne	Leisure & Contracts Manager
T Metcalf	Audit & Process Review Manager
S Whitehead	Solicitor
A Wilson	Supporting People Officer
M Martin	Committee Administrator

423 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

424 MOTION ON NOTICE

The Committee received the Motion on Notice which had been referred to this Committee from the meeting of Council held on 30 July 2002 and which related to the issue of high-level cisterns in Council housing.

Members noted that:-

- a full appraisal of Council housing stock had been undertaken in relation to the Government's Decent Homes Criteria.
- following this appraisal, none of the Council housing stock with Rochford District Council fell below the Government's Decent Homes criteria
- funding for all major repairs and improvements to Council Housing is provided from the Major Repairs Allowance, which is part of the Housing Revenue Account.
- a programme for the refurbishment of bathrooms and kitchens will be included in the proposals for 2003/4, incorporating the issues raised in this Motion.

Resolved

That a programme of works to maintain Council housing stock will be prepared to include the issues raised in the Motion relating to the issue of high level cisterns. (CD(F&ES))

425 LEISURE CONTRACT - HOLMES PLACE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) and noted the contents of the Contract Progress Report from Holmes Place which had been appended.

The Chairman welcomed Carl Bentley, the Operations Manager for Holmes Place. Members offered their congratulations to Mark Tally, the Contract Manager for Holmes Place who had been unable to attend the meeting, due to the fact that his wife had recently given birth.

Mr Bentley drew Members' attention to various sections of the Holmes Place Leisure Management Contract Progress Report. In particular, the following was noted:-

- in respect of the Mill Hall developments, an Invitation to Tender document had been issued to four companies, with the anticipation that the works should be completed in early January 2003.
- in respect of the Clements Hall developments, it is anticipated that work should commence during the first quarter of 2003.
- at present the works included in both of these developments are as detailed in Holmes Place's original tender submission.
- the achievement in the period of 5 months since taking over the running of the Leisure Contract had been great, due to the support of the Holmes Place staff and the officers of the District Council.
- changes to the staffing structures had taken place which had led to greater motivation.
- much of the backlog of maintenance had been completed, which had included investment in new equipment.
- the distribution of the newsletters had led to a direct increase in sales.
- Holmes Place is working in tandem with the District Council to progress the use of Rochford District Matters as a sales tool.
- a programme of Arts and sports development has been established through to the end of the year.
- there had been a lack of consistency in catering, and contractors had been appointed to take over the function from 1 October 2002.
- the likely merger of Holmes Place with Cannons would result in the former retaining the brand name.

In response to Member comments/questions, the following was noted:-

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- Holmes Place had plans to try and resolve the issue of young people causing a nuisance in the vicinity of the building at Clements Hall, Hawkwell.
- difficulties surrounding the parking of cars at the Freight House, Rochford site were being addressed.
- the staff at the Freight House ought to be sited in a position more accessible to those entering the building.
- the programme of films shown at the Mill Hall, Rayleigh would continue to be developed, including the publicity of these events
- special functions for Christmas 2002 had been organised.

Members noted the various options that existed for the introduction of a Rochford Leisure Card scheme, which had been appended to the report. Using computer technology, the introduction of a 'SMART' card would enable various levels of information to be collected from those using the Centres. This information would be useful in ensuring that facilities continued meet the needs of users.

Members favoured the option which would provide a financial benefit to residents and it was

Recommended to Community Services Committee

That the preferred option for a district wide leisure card scheme would be to provide a financial benefit to residents at the point of entry to the scheme as follows:-

Residents would pay a lower initial joining fee than non-residents based on a 25% reduction. They would then pay on each visit the current members' rates which would be available to both resident and non-resident members. For this option there would be no addition to the Unitary Charge. (CD(F&ES))

426 FRAIL ELDERLY HOUSING

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which summarised the position reached by the Committee in its consideration of housing and support for frail older residents.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Gaynor Abbott-Simpson from the South Essex Partnership NHS Trust and Jane Mackie from Essex County Council, who provided Members with a presentation on Mental Health issues for Older People.

During their presentation, Members noted the following:-

- Social Services is committed to helping people maintain independence in their own homes.
- It is essential that training, education and support be given to the role of the Warden in Sheltered Housing.
- Within the County, the Supporting People Government initiative is currently being implemented and pilot schemes to try different models of care are being trialled in the Basildon area.

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- Consideration should be given to designing homes in the future that take account of the difficulties of older people.
- The provision of community alarm systems, day hospitals and social day centres is necessary
- A variety of electronic devices could be installed, for example, pressure mats which would alert a carer to a person getting out of bed.
- Development of 24 hour support services was important.

In response to Member comments/questions, the following were noted:-

- Access to care services is available to all, via a community care assessment.
- There is a shortage of skilled and able people to assist in caring.
- The appointments system for older people is currently being investigated to avoid wasted appointments being set up and to maximise the use of a consultant's time
- It was encouraging to note that the NHS and Social Services are working in partnership, particularly when a mental health problem is coupled with physical problems.
- There is a greater need for psychological and emotional help for those suffering with dementia and mental health problems.
- A 'people centred' approach to care is adopted when dealing with mental health problems.

The report evaluated proposals for further research by the Council's consultants, together with issues relating to the Council's sheltered accommodation. The options outlined would provide a number of ways in which the consultants could provide further assistance in developing the strategy which would be available in February 2003 for inclusion in the Council's Housing Strategy for July 2003, in line with the timetable in the Corporate Plan. Members were in agreement that Option 2 provided the preferred method of achieving this.

Resolved

That Officers develop detailed proposals to introduce on-site joint health and social care teams into sheltered housing schemes from April 2003 and these be considered for inclusion in the Local Service Agreement with Essex County Council. (HHHCC)

Recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee

That additional funding of £10,000 be provided in order that the Consultants carry out the following work, together with some support for follow-up work by this Council:-

- (1) Map the supply of specialist accommodation against needs at a local level.
- (2) Establish the voids and lettings of Registered Social Landlords with Sheltered Housing in the District along with their own plans for tackling

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difficult to let stock and re-modelling services for older people or developing different or additional provision.

- (3) Undertake an option appraisal of the Council's Sheltered schemes.
(HHHCC)

427 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF HEALTH IN ESSEX

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which advised Members of this Committee of a request from the Community Services Committee concerning consultation arrangements on health scrutiny matters with County Councillor representatives.

At the meeting of the Community Services Committee on 3 September 2002, Members had considered the report on the arrangements that were being put in place in Essex to undertake the new power of overview and scrutiny of health services.

County Councillor R A Pearson is on the Essex Overview and Scrutiny Committee and therefore, at present, Rochford does not have a directly nominated, co-opted Member. The Association of Essex Authorities has indicated that it would wish these arrangements to be changed for future years, so that Rochford, Castle Point and Basildon might rotate a nominee.

Members of the Community Services Committee had recommended that the County Councillor representative for this area be invited to all relevant meetings of this Committee when it considers National Health Service overview and scrutiny.

Concern was expressed that the new proposals represented a downgrading of the democratic process and Cllr D F L Flack wished it to be recorded that he would not support the recommendation.

On a Motion moved by Cllr T G Cutmore and seconded by Cllr P A Capon it was:-

Resolved

That the County Councillor representative for this area on the County's Overview & Scrutiny Committee be invited to all relevant meetings of this Council's Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee when it considers NHS overview and scrutiny. (HHHCC)

428 SUPPORTING PEOPLE - SHADOW STRATEGY 2003/4

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which sought Member's comments on the draft Essex Supporting People Shadow Strategy 2003/4 which had been appended to the report. An extract from the draft Essex Supporting People Annual Statement which accompanied the former was also appended.

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Members noted that the Commissioning Body would be asked to sign off the draft Shadow Strategy for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Chairman welcomed Andrew Wilson, the Local Supporting People Officer for Castle Point and Rochford to the meeting.

During debate, the following comments were noted:-

- Work would continue with the housing associations to update the figures contained within the Annual Statement.
- The strategy should include provision for victims of crime.
- Supporting People should direct services to the client and not the other way round.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Essex Supporting People Shadow Strategy be agreed.
- (2) That the comments that the Strategy should look at support for the victims of crime and should adopt an approach whereby services are co-ordinated around people's needs be reported to the Commissioning Body. (HHHCC)

429 FALLS COLLABORATIVE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which advised Members of an opportunity to participate in a multi-agency project dealing with falls amongst older people, which had recently received support at the Rochford Health Partnership Board.

Members noted that Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust (PCT) had been successful in bidding to the NHS Modernisation Agency and had been awarded £15,000 towards the employment of a Project Manager and the cost of the training workshops for staff from participating agencies. Contributions are being sought from partner agencies, including this Council. A contribution would help meet the shortfall and demonstrate commitment to the collaborative nature of the project.

Members agreed this is an admirable scheme, which they noted was aimed at reducing falls in older people by up to 30%.

Recommended to Community Services Committee

That the falls collaborative be supported and that a contribution of £2000 be made from the Housing Revenue Account. (HHHCC)

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430 AUDIT REPORT

The Committee considered and agreed the exempt report of the Chief Executive which drew Members' attention to a completed audit investigation on Pest Control and provided an update of audit recommendations.

The meeting finished at 9.20 pm.

Chairman

Date