

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 11 September 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **11 September 2003** when there were present:

Cllr T Livings (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs T J Capon (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr C J Lumley
Cllr P K Savill
Cllr D G Stansby

Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr P F A Webster

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs C I Black, K A Gibbs, J E Grey, Mrs J R Lumley, M G B Starke, D A Weir

REPRESENTING THE TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS

Cllr N Drayton-Thomas	Ashingdon
Cllr Ms P Lonergan	Ashingdon
Cllr Mrs M Pointer	Canewdon
H E Morris	Clerk – Great Wakering
Cllr Mrs M A Weir	Hawkwell/Rochford
Cllr A Matthews	Rawreth
Cllr P A Beckers	Rawreth/Rayleigh

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
G Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
D Timson	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
J Bourne	Leisure & Contracts Manager
S Whitehead	Solicitor
M Martin	Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

Carl Bentley Operations Manager, Holmes Place

408 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

409 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs T G Cutmore, T Livings, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley, Mrs M S Vince and D A Weir declared a common personal interest in the item on the Playspace Rolling Programme by virtue of being Town/Parish Councillors.

Cllr Livings declared a personal interest in the item on the Holmes Place Progress Report by virtue of his wife being a member of the Rayleigh Women's Institute who are users of the Mill Hall, Rayleigh.

410 FORMER PLAY SPACE AT TYLNEY AVENUE, ROCHFORD/ HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND BY SWAN HOUSING GROUP

The Committee considered the two reports of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care simultaneously. They had both been referred to this Committee for further consideration by the Community Services Committee at its meeting held on 2 September 2003.

During Member debate it was agreed that:-

- both these items be referred to the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee for full consideration
- a public meeting, with adequate public notice, be held in respect of each of the six sites so that affected residents would be able to make their views known to Members
- the Ward Members for each site involved be invited to the relevant Sub-Committee meeting when their site is being considered.
- the work be carried out as quickly as possible, whilst allowing adequate time for full and genuine consultation with local residents.
- details around nomination rights for the various properties be made available at these meetings.

Cllr Mrs M S Vince reported that the results of a survey carried out amongst residents living in and around Tylney Avenue, Rochford had been passed to officers for consideration. Some of the main concerns had included traffic congestion, specific parking problems and safety concerns.

On a Motion moved by Cllr P F A Webster and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore it was

Resolved

- (1) That the items on Former Play Space At Tylney Avenue, Rochford and Housing Development On Council Owned Land by Swan Housing Group be referred for detailed consideration to the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee.

- (2) That the following additional terms of reference be agreed for the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee.
- to examine the 6 proposed housing developments referred from the Community Services Committee on 2 September 2003
 - to conduct consultations with residents in the locality of each proposed development
 - to report back to this Committee. (HHHCC)

411 HOLMES PLACE PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee noted the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services), and the attached report from Holmes Place Leisure Management on the progress and development of the leisure management contract.

Mr Bentley highlighted the salient points from his report. Of particular note was the fact that:-

- the recently appointed Chief Executive planned to develop customer services as a priority and in the light of growing competition.
- Holmes Place wished to highlight the availability of an events team which could be utilised at community events.

Also appended to the report had been a proposal from Holmes Place to cease the operation of a Crèche at the Mill Arts and Events Centre. Mr Bentley confirmed that this was running at a loss and that the money could be better utilised, in particular, to increase levels of cover on the reception desk. Members noted that officers had received 9 letters of objection to this proposal.

Members thanked Mr Bentley for his presentation and confirmed that the improved catering standards at the Freight House had been noted.

In response to Member comments that there had been no mention in the report of the proposed Park School sports centre, the Corporate Director reported that discussions were taking place between Holmes Place, a design team and the County Council. The intention was to ensure that the County disposes of the site by the end of this year, as delays would give rise to problems.

On a Motion moved by Cllr P F A Webster and seconded by Cllr Mrs M S Vince it was:-

Recommended to Community Services Committee

That the Crèche facility at The Mill, Rayleigh be closed, due to lack of demand and that the room be utilised for a range of other uses and bookings.
(CD(F&ES))

412 PLAYSPACE ROLLING PROGRAMME 2003/04

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which provided Members with information relating to maintenance costs and average installation costs for playspaces, so that these might be considered in relation to the Parish Councils.

Members concurred with the view of the Chairman that, although representatives from the Parish Councils had been invited to the meeting, it was essential that adequate consideration be given to the proposals and that a Playspace Sub-Committee be established for this purpose.

In order that adequate cross party representation be afforded, it was suggested the Sub-Committee comprise three Conservative Members, together with one from each of the other political parties.

Officers confirmed that the aim was to draw up a workable policy in partnership with Town/Parish Councils. However, whilst there was no immediate urgency over this issue in general terms, two refurbishment schemes were already held in abeyance pending a decision over funding.

Whilst Town/Parish Council representatives confirmed that they needed to have some estimate of the likely costs before reaching any decisions, officers confirmed that at this stage it was important to consider the principles and that more details on costings would emerge as a policy is developed. This would need to reflect the differing financial positions of the various Councils.

Members agreed that the Town/Parish Councils should make submissions in writing as to their views on partnership working and what they are seek to achieve in terms of partnership working on playspace provision before the first meeting of the Sub-Committee. It was considered that a realistical deadline of two months for responses would be appropriate.

Officers confirmed that:-

- the Minutes of all its Committee and Sub-Committee were supplied to the Town/Parish Councils
- meetings of the Sub-Committee would be public meetings.

The Chairman thanked the Town/Parish Councils for their attendance at the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That a Playspace Sub-Committee be established to recommend a policy, in partnership with the Town/Parish Councils, in respect of public playspaces and to report back to this Committee with its recommendations.

- (2) That the Sub-Committee comprise Cllrs T Livings, Mrs J R Lumley, D G Stansby, Mrs M S Vince and P F A Webster.

413 HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT – UPDATE

The Committee noted the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which updated Members on the progress made with the action plan for health and safety enforcement.

The meeting closed at 8.28 pm.

Chairman

Date