

Community Services Committee – 7 January 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **7 January 2003** when there were present:

Cllr R A Amner (Chairman)

Cllr T E Goodwin
Cllr Mrs L Hungate
Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr P K Savill
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs R Brown, K A Gibbs, Mrs J R Lumley

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Clarkson	Head of Revenue and Housing Management
S Scrutton	Head of Planning Services
G Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
D Timson	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
M Martin	Committee Administrator

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2002 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

(1) Summer Holiday Activities

The Committee considered the report of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 November 2002.

Members wished to congratulate the responsible Officers on the success of the 2002 summer holiday programme and to comment on the usefulness of the Customer Comment Analysis which had been appended to the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the swimming initiative continues and that a budget of £12,000 is included in the draft budget for 2003.
- (2) That the Day Camps continue and that a budget of £9,100 is included in the draft budget for 2003. (CD(F&ES))

(2) Housing Revenue Account 2003/04 – Capital Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2002.

Members requested that congratulations be passed to those Officers who had dealt with a fire incident in such a professional way during the Christmas period at Rochford Garden Way. Members welcomed the upgrade to this particular area.

Members noted that a weekly smoke alarm test is carried out.

Resolved

That the Draft Housing Capital Programme be agreed for submission to Council on 28 January 2003. (HRHM)

(3) Health and Safety Enforcement – Update

The Committee considered the report of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2002.

Resolved

That the Action Plan be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive for consideration. (HHHCC)

(4) Condition of Public Conveniences

The Committee considered the report of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2002.

Members welcomed the possibility of providing additional car parking spaces if the Old Ship Lane toilets building is demolished.

Resolved

- (1) That, the possibilities for disposal of the Old Ship Lane toilet be further investigated on the basis that any resulting capital receipt would be used to help fund the improvement programme associated with other toilets.
- (2) That provision be made in draft Capital and Revenue estimates for this Council to take responsibility for increased cleaning of all toilets and refurbishment of the following:-
 - Pooles Lane, Hullbridge
 - The Spa, Southend Road, Hockley
 - High Street, Great Wakering
 - Main Road, Hockley Woods, Hockley

- (3) That no further action be taken on the possibilities of Superloos given the significant costing associated with such toilets.
(CD(F&ES))

3 AMENDMENT TO THE LETTING POLICY 2003

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which sought Members' agreement to revise the points awarded to HM Forces personnel under the new Letting Policy,

Members noted that, following their acceptance of the new Letting Policy, to be implemented in January 2003, a formal twelve week consultation period had begun and that, apart from suggestions for minor amendments to layout, there had only been two responses for a change to the points awarded.

The first was from the Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency (ESHRA) linked to the British Legion and had requested that additional consideration be given to HM Forces personnel coming up for discharge. A copy of the communication from them had been appended to the report, together with a revised points schedule.

A second response had been received, but was too late for inclusion within the report. This had been from Essex County Council, and concerned key workers who lived in excess of 25 miles from their employment with a request that the mileage limit be abolished completely. Members were reminded that they had agreed the definition of a key worker at the meeting of this Committee held on 1 October 2002.

Members were in agreement that the Council should recognise the particular problems faced by Ex Armed Forces personnel and that they should not be penalised for moving away from the District to serve their country. However, Members agreed that it would be difficult to support the request by the County Council for the mileage limit to be abolished completely.

Any amendments would be reviewed on a 12 monthly basis and brought back to the Committee, should any problems be highlighted.

Resolved

- (1) That the revised points level to HM Forces personnel be adopted.
- (2) That those registering for social housing and being accepted for key worker status should remain as having to travel 25 miles to their place of work.
(HRHM)

4 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which sought Members' agreement to adopt a Domestic Violence Policy for Social Housing.

Members noted that a corporate Domestic Violence Policy had been formally adopted by this Committee on 1 October 2002. Appended to the report was a draft Domestic Violence Policy for Social Housing, which provided a detailed framework for dealing with tenants who are either the victims or perpetrators of Domestic Violence.

Resolved

That the Domestic Violence Policy in Social Housing be adopted. (HRHM)

5 CCTV CAMERAS – ROCHFORD TOWN CENTRE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which sought Members' approval for additional funds to install CCTV cameras in Rochford Market Square.

Members noted that:-

- £5,080 had previously been allocated to the Rochford Chamber of Trade towards the installation of a CCTV system in the Market Square
- a suggested scheme had been prepared involving the provision of five cameras and an estimate received for the required equipment and works
- this very basic scheme had been estimated to cost in the region of £8,500 and, therefore the budget available would not be adequate to achieve even a very basic system.
- consideration could be given to the provision of the balance from the Crime and Disorder budget.
- there were concerns over the positioning of cameras on Georgian buildings.
- no formal application had been made to the National Westminster Bank regarding the positioning of a camera on their building.
- if there was agreement in principle to the provision of a CCTV scheme, officers could investigate some alternative schemes, which avoided the use of listed buildings.
- the views of the Police would be sought in order to try and provide a scheme which could be of the most use in the detection and prosecution of criminals.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Cllr J R F Mason it was

Resolved

- (1) That the provision of a system of CCTV cameras in the Rochford Market Square be supported in principle.
- (2) That the Community Safety officer be requested to investigate and report back to the Committee on the provision of a detailed scheme up to the value of £10,000.

- (3) That, where possible, the scheme should avoid cameras being located on listed buildings. (CE)

6 NHS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STUDIES

Note: Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in this item, by virtue of the fact that she is the County's Deputy Portfolioholder on Community Care.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which invited Members to consider the topics that had been suggested as future NHS Scrutiny studies in Essex.

Members noted that:-

- a new power of Unitary and upper tier local authorities is to carry out scrutiny of National Health services.
- a partnership forum had been formed to help ensure that second tier Councils are included in the scrutiny process
- whilst this is a subject which would normally be considered initially by the Council's Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Districts had been asked for comments on two proposed studies which had been suggested for the period January – July 2003.
- responses were required in order that they be considered at the meeting of the Partnership Forum to be held on 10 January 2003.
- a study into access to health services for children, if undertaken, would be a large and complex scrutiny study, and more details on the resources required to undertake such a study were needed.

Members were of the opinion that although they would be pleased to support a study into patient transport, they would also like to put forward the suggestion that a study into the feeding arrangements for patients in hospitals, in particular the elderly and infirm, be considered for the future; also, a study into standards of cleanliness and prevention of hospital acquired infections. The Head of Service reported that he had already put this forward, but would reinforce it with a further request.

Resolved

That a health scrutiny study of patient transport in Essex be supported. (HHHCC)

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Chairman

Date