

CAPITAL SCHEMES – PROGRESS REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the meeting of Council held on 27 February 2001, a motion on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group was agreed which instructed officers to prepare a report for this Committee in respect of selected initiatives. This report sets out the progress and anticipated timescales of the various schemes (Minute 82(2)/01 refers).

2 PROGRESS REPORT

- 2.1. Presentation equipment for the Council Chamber - £53,000
- 2.1.1. A full report on this item is set out on the agenda of this Committee.
- 2.2. Rayleigh Windmill - £25,000
- 2.2.1. The sum of £25,000 was set aside within the capital programme in order to carry out works that make more parts of the mill accessible to the public.
- 2.2.2. A Working Group is currently in the process of identifying the most effective way of managing this property in the future. Discussions have been held with the National Trust in order to explore the possibility of that organisation taking control of the property or some other alternative trust.
- 2.2.3. The rationale for exploring future management arrangements was based upon the possibility of an organisation such as a charitable trust having a far better chance of attracting grant funding than the local authority would. To this end the use of the £25,000 is awaiting the resolution of this issue, as clearly, this could form the basis of matched funding as part of a bid for grant.
- 2.2.4. Progress on the project and the need to report back to the Working Group has been awaiting a formal response from the National Trust. That has now been received. The Head of Legal Services is seeking to arrange a meeting of the working group in early May to consider the issues. It is anticipated that a report will be brought before Members in the next cycle giving options for possible ways forward. At that time decisions will need to be taken in respect of how the £25,000 may best be utilised.
- 2.3. Rochford Town Centre - £100,000

-
- 2.3.1. A report was presented to Transportation and Environmental Services Committee on 22 March 2001. A scheme was agreed to go out to public consultation. Subject to the scheme being agreed, it is anticipated works could commence in the autumn, although the programme associated with this is extremely tight and cannot be finalised until the project is firmed up.
- 2.4. Hockley Town Centre - £150,000
- 2.4.1. A Working Group is still considering various options for use of this money. New paving works are a favoured option, but problems were thought to exist owing to a predominance of privately owned forecourts in front of shops. Definitive plans showing frontages have just been received from Essex County Council. These show that the frontages are part of the highway. The Working Group can now progress with the design of a scheme. Other aspirations would involve the co-operation of statutory undertakers which is currently being sought.
- 2.4.2. The Working Group is meeting regularly, but as yet it has not been possible to determine a proper timetable. The design and carrying out of the works would need to be undertaken by Essex County Council contractors. Essex County Council officers advise that, if a scheme can be agreed in the next cycle of meetings, work could commence before the end of the financial year, subject to there being no problems with statutory undertakers.
- 2.5. Hullbridge Village - £100,000
- 2.5.1. A similar position exists to that of the Hockley project. Limited designs are being considered but the predominance of privately owned frontages poses a significant problem. A meeting with traders has been arranged for 11 April in Hullbridge in order to progress the scheme.
- 2.5.2. Essex County Council would be responsible for design and implementation. County officers have advised that, if a scheme can be agreed in the next cycle of meetings, the works could be completed by the end of the financial year.
- 2.6. CCTV in Shopping Parades - £40,000
- 2.6.1. Tenders for the work were returned on 29 March 2001. Evaluation will be carried out over the next three weeks. Implementation will take approximately eight weeks, but this will be dependent upon the level of co-operation obtained from the various site owners.

2.7. Road Safety and Pedestrian Crossings - £30,000

2.7.1. A report was presented to Transportation and Environmental Services Committee on 22 March recommending a Toucan crossing in Ashington and wig-wags outside Canewdon School. Members wished more information regarding other schools prior to making a decision. The matter was deferred to the next meeting of Transportation Sub Committee. Notwithstanding the short delay in taking the decision, the works should be carried out during the financial year.

2.8. Upgrade Lighting in Council Car Parks - £30,000

2.8.1. A full design report with costings is currently being carried out by specialist consultants. Works are programmed to be carried out from June to October.

2.9. Downhall Road/London Road Junction - £50,000.

2.9.1. A study of the area has been commissioned by Essex County Council, the results of which are expected by the end of March. County Officers will then be in a position to determine the best course of action required to resolve any problems that are shown to exist.

2.9.2. It is intended that a report be made to the next meeting of Transportation and Environmental Services Committee. County officers advise that, subject to it being possible to provide a viable solution that is within budget, the works could be completed within the financial year.

2.10. Rolling Programme – Play Equipment - £50,000

2.10.1 Tenders for Elsenham Court and Rowan Way playspaces were let and contractors ready to start work in January in accordance with the normal timetable. Wet weather would have resulted in damage to areas if work had commenced then. The decision was, therefore, taken to delay the start of the work.

2.10.2 Although conditions are still not ideal, fencing work is due to start the week commencing 26 March. Equipment installation will start between the week commencing 9 April and the week commencing 17 April, dependent upon weather. Completion is programmed for mid to late May.

2.10.3 With regard to the skate provision at Canewdon, further consultation is taking place. The results of this will be reported to the next Community Services Committee, at which time the report in respect of the 2001/2002 programme will be presented.

2.11. Play Scheme – Glebe and Morrins - £50,000

2.11.1 The situation on this site is similar to that reported at paragraph 2.10.1 above. Fencing of the site has commenced and play equipment contractors will start in accordance with paragraph 2.10.2 above.

2.12. 35-39 West Street - £31,000

2.12.1 The Compulsory Purchase Order for these properties is under way and confirmation of the order is expected imminently. Subject to confirmation, there will be a period of 3 months for publication of the appropriate statutory notices. Transfer of ownership should then take place, at which time the Council can transfer the land to the Southend Building Preservation Trust. It is hoped this can be achieved by the end of June. The timetable for the works to commence is at the discretion of the Southend Building Preservation Trust.

2.13. 50-54 West Street - £75,000

2.13.1 As Members are aware, owing to these properties not being listed buildings, Compulsory Purchase is not an option.

2.13.2 A dialogue has been established between the Council, the owners and the Southend Building Preservation Trust. The owners have allowed the Trust's consultants to examine the buildings and a possible scheme is being prepared. It is understood that this exercise is nearing completion but no date has been given.

2.13.3 The owners are a development company and obviously any proposals must result in a scheme which is financially viable before the owners would go ahead with it.

2.13.4 As the only way forward is by negotiation, it is not possible to give a definitive timetable on how the scheme may progress.

2.14. Tennis Courts at Fairview Playing Field - £10,800

2.14.1 This is not a capital item. This repair was the result of an officer bid for resources in the 1999/2000 annual maintenance and repair programme.

2.14.2 The annual maintenance and repair programme only includes items which are considered essential. In respect of this item officers considered that two of the four courts were in need of resurfacing.

2.14.3 The item was placed on hold pending further investigation as to whether or not tennis should continue or some other facility be provided. After public consultation it was agreed that tennis should remain.

2.14.4 The resurfacing of the two courts in question has been completed, but white lining had to be delayed owing to the closure of the field following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Once the fields are open,

white lining will only take around half a day, but the timing will be dependent upon the contractor's workload.

- 2.14.5 In addition to the resurfacing, the tennis posts require replacing. These are on order and delivery is anticipated by mid April.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1. As Members may see from the report, the work is under way on the items, but there are areas where the involvement of third parties is required and this can cause unavoidable delays to projects. Certainly, weather conditions have played a major part in delaying schemes where ground works are required.
- 3.2. In view of Members' concerns, it is suggested a similar style of report is brought forward on a quarterly basis. The next report would, therefore, be to the Finance and General Purposes Committee scheduled for 12 July 2001

4 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) To note the report.
- (2) That further reports are made on a quarterly basis, the next one being to the Finance and General Purposes Committee being held on 12 July 2001. (CD(F&ES))

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)

For further information please contact Roger Crofts on:-

Tel:- 01702 546366 Extn. 3006
E-Mail:- roger.crofts@rochford.gov.uk