

Community Services Committee – 4 October 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **4 October 2005** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S P Smith

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr Mrs L Hungate
Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R A Amner and Mrs H L A Glynn.

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts - Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
G Woolhouse - Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
D Timson - Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
J Bourne - Leisure and Contracts Manager
J Pritchard - Housing Manager
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

359 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 September 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

360 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J M Pullen declared a personal interest in the item on use of the beacon at the Mill for Christmas lights by virtue of being a Member of Rayleigh Town Council.

Councillor Mrs L A Butcher declared a personal interest in the item on the "Youth Matters" Green Paper by virtue of employment by Southend Borough Council on behalf of Connections.

Councillor J R F Mason declared a personal interest in the item on the skateboard Half Pipe at Clements Hall by virtue of being a Member of Hawkehill Parish Council.

361 PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT 2004/05

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on the Public Health report 2004/05 and welcomed Dr. Andrea Atherton, Acting Director of Public Health for Castle Point and

Rochford, who was in attendance to present the report by way of a power point presentation.

In response to questions, Dr Atherton advised on the nature of some of the statistics associated with smoking and confirmed that there should be a full glossary of terms with the public health report.

During debate, specific reference was made to the value of the Primary Care Trust's work in concentrating on "prevention rather than cure".

Members made a number of observations on the report including that:-

- It is important to ensure that statistics come across as meaningful.
- It is of value to recognise that there are a wide variety of pollutants that may affect health.
- There would be merit in ensuring that the District Council has Primary Care Trust contact details so that the public can be referred as appropriate. The Trust could also perhaps make posters/leaflets available for Council Reception areas.
- There are issues around the need to make sure food is clearly labelled and ensuring that NHS catering provides healthy options.
- Whilst the encouragement of physical activity is good, the public needs to be aware of the facilities, such as cycle lanes, that are available.
- The STAR Partnership is a good example of how many aspects of inter- agency working can be encompassed.
- While aspects of health have been on school curriculums for many years, the relative impact appears to be marginal. Perhaps health and education services need to come together in more pro-active ways. Changing school run habits is most likely to be achieved through the targeting of young parents.

The Head of Housing, Health and Community Care emphasised that the Council already did a great deal in terms of interaction with the health agenda. For example, liaison with Primary Care Trusts on permits for polluting processes and ensuring that appropriate choices are available for leisure activities. As Local Area Agreements and the work of the Local Strategic Partnership are developed, there will be an increase in activity with regard to the tackling of areas such as obesity and smoking and the furtherance of integrated working. It was noted that the Thames Gateway had now launched its "Green Grid" project.

Resolved

That, whilst recognising that there are matters of description/definition worthy of further clarification within the 2004/05 report, the continuation and development of current cross organisational working should be endorsed. (HHHCC)

362 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee reviewed the progress on decisions schedule.

(1) Woodland Strategy Resources (Minute 428/03)

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) confirmed that all potential funding opportunities relating to the appointment of an Environmental Liaison Officer had been exhausted and that, for this post to be pursued, consideration would need to be given to District Council funding.

Resolved

That a bid for funding for the post of Environmental Liaison Officer be included in forthcoming budget strategy considerations. (CD(F&ES))

(2) Catering Franchises on Open Spaces (Minute 37/05)

The Property Maintenance and Highways Manager advised that there had only been two respondents to the catering franchise advert. Both had become involved in the pilot scheme. It was recognised that there should be ongoing monitoring of the pilot scheme, particularly given the possibility that current terms are not particularly attractive.

(3) Sutton Court Playspace, Rochford (Minute 42/05)

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) confirmed that Rochford Parish Council had provided written confirmation that they will contribute 50% of Phase 1 costs.

(4) Woodlands (Minute 134/05)

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) advised that officers were considering the possibilities for introducing a suitable advertising board at the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park to identify the sponsors of the trees being planted in commemoration of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Resolved

That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services), in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, to make arrangements for the introduction of a suitable

advertising board at the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park to facilitate the identification of the sponsors of the trees being planted in commemoration of the Battle of Trafalgar. Press releases to be issued as appropriate.
(CD(F&ES))

(5) Issues Arising from Overview & Scrutiny – Lettings Policy (Minute 215/05)

The Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that the definition associated with key workers set out in the schedule had been developed specifically for the purpose of the identified Housing Corporation projects. The Council did have a general definition.

(6) Application by Rayleigh Police Division – Renewal of Dispersal Powers (Minute 216/05)

The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) advised that there had, as yet, been no feed-back from the police on this scheme, although it had only commenced in July. Costs would need to be introduced into the budget process.

The Committee endorsed the observation of the Chairman that it would be of value to have a report on this subject available by the next meeting of the Committee at the latest.

363 DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care seeking approval to revised plans for the development of housing on the former play space at Tylney Avenue, Rochford and for the development of a small plot in Great Wakering.

In presenting the report the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that, in terms of neighbourhood parking, four of the six spaces associated with the Tylney Avenue scheme would be provided at adjoining properties, but that this was subject to the householders' agreement. It was confirmed that Ward Councillors had been consulted on the proposals.

Resolved

- (1) That the revised proposal for ten units of social rented housing at Tylney Avenue, Rochford, including two bungalows suitable for wheelchair users, twenty one on site parking spaces and six further neighbourhood parking spaces, be approved.
- (2) That the land at Twyford Avenue/Mercer Avenue, Great Wakering be transferred to the Swan Housing Group at nil cost subject to the necessary planning permission being obtained and such terms as the Head of Legal Services considers appropriate to secure the provision of the approved housing scheme. (HHHCC)(HLS)

364 BIDS FOR HOUSING CORPORATION FUNDING

(Note: Councillor Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of involvement with learning disability associated with work as a County Councillor.

Councillor Mrs B J Wilkins declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being a Great Wakering Parish Councillor.)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care seeking views on various proposals being put forward by housing associations for social housing developments in the District.

Responding to questions, the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that it was standard practice for the Committee to consider supporting these type of proposals and that such consideration would have no bearing on the activity of the Council as a Planning Authority

Resolved

That the proposals identified in the Appendix to the report be supported in principle. (HHHCC)

365 RESPONSE TO “YOUTH MATTERS” GREEN PAPER

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on the “Youth Matters” Green Paper.

The Committee endorsed a number of suggestions for inclusion in the Council’s response. It was felt that it would be of value to utilise the Members’ Bulletin to consult all Members on the proposed final response.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to inclusion of the following additional comments, the suggested responses set out at Appendix B of the report be endorsed:-
 - Employment with training should be identified as one of the issues facing young people.
 - There should be more emphasis on the role of young people, parents and carers.
 - Any reward cards should be significant and valuable.
 - Support should only be offered by trained professionals.
 - Proposals need to be adequately resourced.
 - It is hoped that young people can be fully involved as consultees wherever possible.

- (2) That officers utilise the Members Bulletin to consult all Members of the Council on the proposed final response in case any Member wishes to make any further comment. (CD(F&ES))

366 CONSULTATION - SKATEBOARD HALF PIPE, CLEMENTS HALL RECREATION GROUND

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on the results of a public consultation on the replacement of the skateboard half pipe at Clements Hall Recreation Ground.

It was noted that the local Ward Member had not received any direct representation on this matter and observed that the low level of consultation response pointed to there being no particular issues.

Responding to questions, the Property Maintenance and Highways Manager advised that the new half pipe would be lower, quieter and suitable for a wider age group. Officers intended to introduce a spray can project to deal with potential graffiti issues. The value of revisiting sites every year or so to engender a sense of “ownership” from young people using the facilities could be recognised. The Rochford Garden Way project had been a good example of a renewable spray can art project. Holmes Place had not indicated that proposals would have any implications for the sports centre.

Resolved

That, in the light of a limited consultation response, the Council proceed with the replacement of the half pipe skateboard facilities at the Clements Hall Recreation Ground. (CD(F&ES))

367 FORMER PARK SCHOOL SITE – ADDITIONAL PLAYING FIELD LAND FOR ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) seeking approval for the disposal of a small section of land on the former Park School site to Essex County Council to assist in the creation of a playing field for the new school site.

Responding to questions, the Leisure and Contracts Manager advised that the section of land would facilitate health and safety by providing an appropriate run-off at the side of the school pitch. Any booking of the playing field beyond school hours would be the responsibility of the school. Disposal would not impact on any future plans the Council may have relating to the open space.

During discussion of the possibilities, it was felt that it would be appropriate to ensure a restrictive covenant was introduced providing that the section of land will be transferred back to the District Council should it no longer be required for the specific purpose of forming part of the school playing field.

Resolved

That the piece of land identified at Appendix A of the report be transferred to Essex County Council for the purpose of being part of the new school's playing field, subject to the associated restrictive covenant providing that this land will be transferred back to the District Council should it be no longer required for the specific purposes of forming part of the school playing field and to the other terms and conditions identified in the report. (CD(F&ES))

368 REQUEST FOR PURCHASE OF LAND – BULLWOOD ROAD, HOCKLEY

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) on a request to purchase land currently in the ownership of the Council to the rear of 10 – 32 Bullwood Road, Hockley.

Resolved

That the land to the rear of 10-32 Bullwood Road, Hockley be retained as a buffer strip between the properties and the play area and that the necessary action be taken against those who have encroached on to the area. (CD(F&ES))

369 REQUEST TO USE THE BEACON AT THE MILL, RAYLEIGH FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) seeking views on the use of the beacon at the Mill in connection with Rayleigh Town Council's Christmas lights celebration.

Responding to questions, the Property Maintenance and Highways Manager advised that, to date, beacon usage had only ever been by the District Council. Whilst the beacon had not been used for five years or so, a recent safety check had now identified that there was no need for parts replacement. The cost of the check was likely to be under £300. The original figure in the report had anticipated replacement of the burners and piping as they had not been used for so long.

It was noted that the Town Council hoped that including the beacon in Christmas arrangements would bring a real sense of occasion to the lighting ceremony. A Member observed that the safety check cost of just under £300 was more acceptable than the costing originally identified within the report and that it would be appropriate on this occasion to contribute to the Town Council's Christmas celebrations. Notwithstanding this it was felt that any future similar use should be charged at cost and that, bearing in mind that lighting should only take place on special occasions, the Council should give consideration to any other requests for usage on a case by case basis.

Resolved

That Rayleigh Town Council be allowed to use the Beacon as part of their Christmas Lighting celebrations this year at no charge on the basis that the actual costs associated with safety checks would be just under £300 and subject to any future similar use by the Town Council being charged at cost. The District Council to give consideration to any other requests for beacon usage on a case by case basis. (CD(F&ES))

370 SHELTERED HOUSING MANAGEMENT - ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management on the management of the twelve Sheltered Housing Schemes as it related to best practice.

Resolved

That the report on Sheltered Housing Management and how it relates to best practice be noted. (HRHM)

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

371 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW

The Committee considered the exempt element of the report of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the sheltered housing review. Members agreed a motion, moved by Councillor T G Cutmore and seconded by Councillor S P Smith, that a Sub-Committee of the Community Services Committee be charged with the review activity identified under proposals (1) and (5).

Members received further clarification on financial aspects associated with this matter. Detail on this and the agreed way forward are set out in the exempt Appendix to these Minutes.

The meeting closed at 9.22 pm.

Chairman

Date