

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 2 April 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **2 April 2002** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn (Chairman)

Cllr R S Allen
Cllr R A Amner
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr V H Leach

Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs J Hall.

SUBSTITUTE

Cllr D R Helson

OFFICERS ATTENDING

P Warren	Chief Executive
R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
S Clarkson	Head of Revenue and Housing Management
H Drye	Corporate Policy Manager
S Neville	Residential Service Unit Manager
A Coulson	Housing, Client & Strategy Officer
A Wilson	Local Supporting People Officer, Castle Point and Rochford
M Martin	Committee Administrator

Note:

The Committee observed a minute's silence in memory of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

The Chairman thanked the Members of the Committee for their support throughout this municipal year.

125 MINUTES

The Committee received the Minutes of the following meetings:-

- (1) Leisure Sub-Committee – 8 January 2002
- (2) Community Safety Sub-Committee – 15 January 2002
- (3) Housing Management Sub-Committee – 23 January 2002

- (4) Community Services Committee – 5 February 2002

126 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The following issues arising from the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 March 2002 were considered:-

Rent Arrears Recovery – Water Charges (Min 114/02)

Members noted that this would bring the Council in line with other Essex Authorities and that Tenants' views would be sought by direct communication via the Council's newsletter, 'Your Home' and by communication with the Tenant representative. These would be reported back to this Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the cessation of the collection of water and sewerage charges on behalf of Water Authorities from April 2003 be supported in principle and that preliminary notice be given to the Essex and Suffolk Water Company.
- (2) That Tenants' views be sought in accordance with the Council's statutory duty to consult on any proposed changes to their Tenancy Agreement.
- (3) That a further report be submitted to the Community Services Committee after the consultation period (HRHM)

Decorating Allowances (Min 115/02)

Resolved

- (1) That the Decorating Allowance Scheme stop, with the proviso that the Housing Manager can award an exceptional decorating allowance of £40 per room (to a maximum of £200) if a property is refused twice or in other exceptional circumstances.
- (2) That exceptional decorating allowances be paid half in advance and the remainder be claimed within 6 months of accepting the tenancy following an inspection and proof of expenditure. Payments to be made directly into the rent account. (HRHM)

127 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Committee noted the progress of the outstanding issues. In response to Member questions, the following was noted:-

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Fear of Burglary – Provision of door chains and viewers for vulnerable residents (Minute 132(2)/01)

The Chief Executive reported that the number of residents wishing to take advantage of this had been disappointing. He would inform Members of the Committee of the exact figures.

Mill Hall Lift (Minute 382/01)

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) agreed to notify Members of the reasons why it had not been feasible to install a stair lift in Mill Hall.

Officers would be liaising with Holmes Place, the Council's Leisure Contractor, regarding the possibility of using an alarmed weight limit system when a new lift is installed in Mill Hall.

Leisure Connection Management Report (Minute 411/01)

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) agreed to provide local Ward Members with details of the outcome of the visit by the Essex County Youth Service's mobile outreach group to Clements Hall Leisure Centre prior to Christmas 2001.

Rochford Residents Leisure Card (Minute 411/01)

Holmes Place are committed to bringing in a Leisure Card with a customised design. Details will be brought before this Committee.

128 POLICE REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Essex Police which apprised Members of the current situation with regard to police action on crime and disorder.

In noting the details contained within the report and perusing the crime statistics which had been appended to the report, the following was noted by Members:-

- The codes J11 related to Rochford and J13 to Rayleigh.
- As a result of a two-pronged force wide operation spread over one week, in which all divisions took part, six arrests were made. These related to active criminals suspected of burglaries and vehicle crime.
- High Visibility Policing throughout the division was reported to have taken place.
- Some of the statistics appeared to be inaccurate.
- A year on year comparison had not been provided, as requested by the previous Community Services Committee.

On a Motion moved by Cllr R A Pearson and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore, Members requested that in the absence of a representative from the Police being in attendance at the meeting, their questions be forwarded to the Police and a response brought back to Members.

Resolved

That in noting the report, the following information be brought back to this Committee:-

- (1) details of where uniformed officers took to the streets in the recent 'Operation Relentless'
- (2) the progress made by the Police's Schools' Liaison Officer
- (3) detailed breakdown of crime statistics by postcode
- (4) evidence as to how these crime statistics are used to benefit crime prevention. (CEx)

129 BEST VALUE REPORT ON LEISURE SERVICES

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive which brought before Members the final Best Value report on Leisure Services. This had now been published by the Best Value Inspectorate. Members had already seen the Inspectorate's draft report.

Members noted that the majority of the issues raised by the Inspectorate would be addressed through the new Leisure Contract with Holmes Place.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That the key recommendations contained in the report be monitored through the Overview and Scrutiny process by way of the regular review of the new Leisure Contract. (CEx)

130 SUPPORTING PEOPLE – PROGRESS REPORT

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Local Supporting People Officer for Castle Point and Rochford. The Committee received the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which informed Members of the progress of the Supporting People project.

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Members noted that:-

- the aim was to improve the quality of life for those with difficulties.
- the position statement, currently under development, emphasised the preventative nature of the Supporting People programme and included a series of statements for a range of client groups.
- once completed, the position statement would be presented to Members.

During debate and in response to Member questions, it was noted that-

- No reduction in funding was anticipated at this stage as a result of incorporating the money provided for supported housing into the Supporting People Grant.
- The project would be within the Audit process.
- The frail/elderly needs study would address the needs of the elderly and vulnerable.
- The District's Head of Housing, Health & Community Care was a member of the Implementation and Planning Group.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress of the Supporting People project be noted.
- (2) That the Council's appointment to the Essex Commissioning Body and local Core Strategy Group be the Chairman of the Community Services Committee.
- (3) That the Supporting People local position statement be presented at a future meeting of this Committee. (HHHCC)

131 SUPPORTING PEOPLE CHARGING – ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which outlined the proposed Supporting People charging arrangements and reported on the practical implications of the revised charging proposals.

Members noted that the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) had published a second consultation paper on 1 February 2002 on the Supporting People methods of charging and means testing.

Some Members expressed concerns about the second charging 'model' which would be applicable only to sheltered housing. This would move the point of charging and collection away from the

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Administering Authority (Essex County Council) towards a new 'Charging Authority' and to providers.

The Charging Authority would produce a schedule which would identify those who are in receipt of full or partial housing benefit or who have been assessed under the non-residential social services means test as needing help to meet the costs.

Members thanked the Local Supporting People Officer for his attendance at the meeting and helpful explanation of the project.

Resolved

- (1) That the Supporting People charging proposals are noted.
- (2) That a further report is submitted to this Committee when the final charging details are available. (HHHCC)

132 CCTV FUNDING IN LOCAL SHOPPING PARADES

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought Members' approval for the further installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in local shopping parades.

Members noted that the Community Services Committee had resolved in February 2002 that £15,000 be set aside in the Capital Programme to complete the CCTV in local shopping parades scheme. It was agreed that the Grove Road, Rayleigh site be held in abeyance pending the result of alternative sources of funding from the Police. The areas that had been identified in order of priority were parts of Hockley, Grove Road, Rayleigh and Hambro Hill, Rayleigh.

Following a site visit informal estimates had been received detailing the likely costs for CCTV installation in each of the three sites.

Members noted that the CCTV scheme in Rayleigh Town Centre had been 3 way funded by the District Council, the Town Council and the Rayleigh and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

The following Motion was moved by Cllr D R Helson and seconded by Cllr V H Leach:-

- (1) That the Hambro Hill scheme be completed.
- (2) That the remainder of the £15,000 be put towards the cost of the Hockley scheme with the local Chamber of Trade and the Parish Council being invited to contribute the outstanding amount.

Members were concerned that the Hockley Parish Council had been one of the first to purchase CCTV for use in that area and were also

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contributing generously towards the refurbishment scheme in the town centre. If the money were used for the Hockley scheme in its entirety, this would represent value for money for the residents of that area.

The Motion was lost on a show of hands.

Members noted that:-

- the Police view was that preference should be given to the Hockley scheme in view of the higher levels of crime both historically and potentially.
- the enhancement works had now commenced in Hockley and if this site were selected, discussions would take place without delay to ensure that there was a minimum of disruption in implementing the camera scheme.

Resolved

That the funding be used to provide Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in Hockley. (CEX)

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Chairman

Date