
Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **27 March 2001** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs M A Weir – Chairman

Cllr R S Allen
Cllr R A Amner
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr D M Ford
Cllr Mrs J E Ford
Cllr D F L Flack

Cllr J E Grey
Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr V H Leach
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon
Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr R A Adams

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. K A Gibbs, Mrs J Hall, Mrs J Helson and Mrs L I V Phillips.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllrs. Mrs H L A Glynn and D R Helson

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
R Crofts	-	Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
G Woolhouse	-	Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
D Timson	-	Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
S Clarkson	-	Head of Revenue and Housing Management
L Lapite	-	Solicitor
J Bostock	-	Principal Committee Administrator

128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor V H Leach declared a non-pecuniary interest in the presentation by South Essex Mental Health and Community Care Trust by virtue of being the Governor of a School in negotiation with the Trust.

129 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

130 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Access to Grove Nursery Group via Grove Woods (Minute 49/01)

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) advised that further information was awaited from Essex County Council/Grove Primary School.

Implementation of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 (Minute 50)

The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) confirmed that a report on this matter would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee. (CD(F&ES))

131 PETITION – RECYCLING BINS AT ST JOHN FISHER PLAYING FIELDS, RAYLEIGH

Pursuant to Standing Order 11, the Committee received a petition from Mr C J Lumley and Mrs A Lacey containing 526 signatures and protesting against the removal of the recycling bins at St John Fisher Playing Fields, Little Wheatleys Chase, Rayleigh.

In presenting the petition, Mr Lumley made the following supporting statement:-

“This petition is for the return of recycling bins to the Grange Ward. It is signed by 526 signatories and reflects the recycling habit that has developed in the area, largely brought about by the threat of an incinerator on our borders. Many of the people who signed are elderly and walk to the recycling bins, others are mothers with young children on the way to the local school.

The main recycling centre is the tip at Castle Road, which is not easily accessible from West Rayleigh, and indeed if all of Rayleigh descended on the place (and for most of us that work it would have to be at weekends) the place would become congested and inadequate for peoples’ needs. There is another facility by the café near the Spur roundabout. I walked down to it on Saturday with my dog, there is only a narrow pavement on the opposite side of the road and because this is a fast part of the road cars brush past you at 60 miles per hour. The dog was terrified. It would be highly dangerous to encourage residents to approach that facility on foot let alone try to cross at that point.

This issue has aroused deep emotions in the ward, set residents against residents, and for some of us in public office, angry arguments, and even abuse. People close to the site complained for years about noise and vandalism, and in the end the only answer that Rochford District Council could come up with was to remove the bins completely. This annoyed a large group of residents who had been educated and

encouraged by Rochford to recycle their rubbish. Suddenly they found the bins had been removed without consultation.

The organisers and many who signed the petition are very aware and have sympathy with residents living close to the site at John Fisher. If you read our petition carefully the wording is "We demand the immediate return of this vital amenity". We have deliberately not said where. Obviously for many the John Fisher playfields is still the ideal site. However at the other end of the Ward we have a single bottlebank in the Travellers Joy car park. Although we have complaints about noise (simply because bottle banks are the noisiest) I have not seen much evidence of vandalism. Perhaps a single recycling bin does not offer such excitement to a vandal.

If this idea was adopted suitable sites in the Ward could be, one at John Fisher, one on the grass verge beside the service road at the Grange shopping parade, and another at a similar site at the Newsbox parade of shops. It would solve the problem of accessibility to the community and although it would not satisfy people who want to do all their recycling at one go, we feel that a compromise has to be achieved somehow.

The alternative would have to be a vandal proof site that was locked after dark, or household collection of recycled rubbish. Of course all this involves a higher cost, but we think that Rochford District Council should be honest with us and not just pay lip service to recycling. The public should be told what the cost of recycling would be and then be able to make the choice of paying higher Council Tax or risk the threat of incinerators in South East Essex.

As we have said we do not want to impose a recycling centre on somebody's doorstep, but we feel that the current decision was made in haste and without considering all reasonable alternatives".

Members recognised that, whilst the Council had previously given detailed consideration to recycling bin location, the petition raised a number of points worthy of further consideration.

On a Motion moved by Councillor D R Helson and seconded by Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

That this matter be referred to Full Council with a full report from Officers on the matters raised by the petitioners and associated options. (HHHCC)

132 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee considered the Minutes of the following Sub-Committees and the Recommendations contained therein.

-
- (1) **Leisure Sub-Committee – 14 February 2001**
(2) **Leisure Sub-Committee – 13 March 2001**

Minute 99-Leisure Connection Management Report

The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) confirmed that a consultant had been appointed to investigate the ongoing problems being experienced with the showers at the Clements Hall Leisure Centre.

Resolved

That a report be submitted to the next Meeting of Full Council on how the video projection equipment in Mill Hall will be operated, including the following aspects:-

- Who will be able to use the equipment.
- Arrangements for hiring to groups.
- Regular children film shows.
- Charging policy, including additional for weddings, conferences.
- When will first public showing be
- Policy in respect of the new Leisure Contract
- Marketing/Promotion. (CD(F& ES))

Minute 100- Maintenance Issues – Leisure Buildings

(a) **Clements Hall Leisure Centre Showers**

Resolved

That Officers report further on this subject to the next Meeting of the Sub-Committee, including the availability of alternative systems.
(CD(F&ES))

(b) **Freight House Security Lights**

Resolved

That a report setting out specific proposals be submitted at the next Meeting of the Sub-Committee, the cost element of the report to be exempt. (CD(F&ES))

Minute 101 – The Essex Active Sports Partnership

Resolved

That Rochford District Council's commitment to the active Essex Active Sports Partnership be extended for an additional two years.
(CD(F&ES))

Minute 102 – Rayleigh Boys Football Club

It was noted that current precautions associated with Foot & Mouth disease meant that a visit to the Playing Fields had not been possible and agreed that a letter should be sent to the Club indicating that a visit will be arranged as soon as opportune.

Resolved

That a site meeting be arranged with representatives of the Rayleigh Boys Club with a report on the outcome submitted to the next Meeting of the Sub-Committee, this Council's representatives to include the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, Ward Councillors and a representative from each Group. (CD(F&ES))

(3) Community Safety Sub-Committee – 14 March 2001

Minute 173 – The District Emergency Plan

Resolved

- (1) That the Chief Executive be authorised to issue the draft District Emergency Plan for consultation after making the necessary amendments to take account of the matters outlined.
- (2) That the need for Members to receive training in emergency planning be considered when the Member training programme for 2001/02 is prepared. (CE)

Minute 174 – Flooding – Resourcing Emergency Arrangements

Resolved

- (1) That a review of facilities available at the Depot to store sand and sandbags be undertaken and reported back to Members with full cost implications.
- (2) That "Rochford District Matters" and direct mailing be used as a means to highlight the threat of flooding in certain areas, and to encourage households to take pre-emptive action wherever possible. (CE)

Minute 175 – Update on Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy

Following a motion moved by Councillor V H Leach and seconded by Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn relating to nominations to the Rochford Crime & Disorder Partnership, it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted and update reports submitted to future Meetings of the Community Safety Sub-Committee.

-
- (2) That a sum of £100 be made available for the renewal of the line rental for the mobile telephones issued to victims of domestic violence, with initially only the rental of two handsets renewed pending an assessment of demand.
 - (3) That the Minutes of the Rochford District Crime & Disorder Partnership Meetings be reported to the Council through the Community Safety Sub-Committee.
 - (4) That the Chairman of the Community Safety Sub-Committee and an Officer be nominated to serve on the Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Group
 - (5) That a review of all scheduled items be undertaken with each appropriate partner agency with a view to:-
 - (a) deleting those items which have been completed.
 - (b) deleting those items which are unlikely to be realistically achieved.
 - (c) carrying forward those items not yet started into the strategy for 2002 onwards.
 - (d) rolling forward those items to continue into the strategy for 2002 onwards.
 - (6) That the results of the review be reported to a future Meeting of the Community Safety Sub-Committee and the Rochford District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. (CE)

Minute 176 – Fear of Burglary – Provision of door chains and viewers for vulnerable residents

Resolved

That subject to sufficient numbers of vulnerable residents wishing to take advantage of the provision of door chains and viewers being identified, 500 sets being purchased at a cost of £1.35 each, this to be funded from monies made available by Essex County Council.

Minute 177 – Illegal Parking – Information Campaign

Resolved

That 2000 copies of a leaflet advising of the problems caused by illegal and irresponsible parking be produced at a cost of £690. (CE)

Minute 178 – Domestic Violence – Secondary Schools Programme

Resolved

That the Council participate in the Theatre Active Domestic Violence Awareness project at a cost of £1,400. (CE).

(3) Housing Management Sub-Committee – 15 March 2001**Minute 123 – Capital Programme 2001/02**

The Head of Revenue and Housing Management confirmed that monies for CCTV in sheltered housing must be funded from the Housing Revenue account.

Resolved

That subject to including provision of £30,000 for a scheme for the introduction of CCTV to sheltered housing blocks, the capital programme, as set out in the appendix to the Sub-Committee Minutes, be approved. (HRHM)

Minute 126 – Payment for Tenant Representatives

Note: Councillor C C Langlands declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of being a leaseholder of a former Council property.

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Revenue and Housing Management confirmed that the legality and representation aspects of proposals would be considered by the Tenant Involvement Steering Group.

Reference was made to the recent decision of Council on the appointment of an Independent Panel to consider payments to Members. On a motion moved by Councillor D R Helson and seconded by Councillor V H Leach, it was:-

Resolved

That the question of payment for tenant representatives be referred to the Independent Remuneration Panel in the first instance. (HRHM)

133 PRESENTATION BY SOUTH ESSEX MENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE TRUST

The Committee received a presentation from Patrick Geoghan, Chief Executive and Eunan McIntyre, Director of Mental Health, South Essex Mental Health and Community Care Trust.

The presentation specifically covered: -

- The services provided by the Hockley Industrial Therapy Unit when set up in 1987.
- Why there is a need for change and the objectives for a modern service.
- The principal that everyone from the Hockley Industrial Therapy Unit will receive a similar or better standard of service and support.

Responding to Member questions, it was confirmed that:-

- Where clients are found employment, key workers will monitor the outcomes.
- All present users will have suitable replacement services.
- The Trust works with support from the National Schizophrenia Fellowship work focus scheme.
- Quality of replacement services will be monitored.
- A client is about to move into mainstream employment.
- Over the forthcoming week Wards at Rochford will be transferred to Runwell. The Rochford Wards were being fully refurbished and work includes a new reception area. Members are welcome to visit the Runwell site.
- The Coombewood facility in Rayleigh was to become a community mental health resource centre for locally based services. Essex Social Services were the agents dealing with the planning and other requirements associated with the site. The new facility should be operational by December 2001.
- The Trust had recently appointed six psychiatrists.

-
- The Trust was considering proposals from three potential PFI partners to build and operate the Elderly Mentally Ill unit on Rawreth Lane.
 - In future, more work would be undertaken with local authorities using joint management structures and shared budgets.

The Committee thanked the presenters for attending. The Head of Housing Health and Community Care confirmed that arrangements would be made for Members to visit the Runwell and Coombewood sites as appropriate.

134 HOUSING MANAGEMENT BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on the extension of the Terms of Reference of the Housing Strategy Working Group to include the overseeing of the Housing Management Best Value Review.

Resolved

That the Terms of Reference of the Housing Strategy Working Group be extended to include overseeing of the Housing Management Best Value Review. (CD(F&ES))

135 REPAIRS TO BRICK WALL ADJACENT TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – BACK LANE, ROCHFORD

Note: Councillor Mrs R Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of being on the Management Committee of the CAB.

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on the replacement of an unsound brick wall adjacent to the public conveniences at Back Lane, Rochford.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that further monies would have to be found if it was proposed to undertake work to all the wall in this area. As part of a Conservation Area, there would need to be formal approval for any change of railings.

On a Motion moved by Councillor D M Ford and seconded by Councillor R A Amner, it was:-

Resolved

That the wall at Back Lane car park be re-instated, work to include removal and appropriate replacement of the adjacent Acer tree (CD(F&ES))

136 PIGEONS – HIGH STREET RAYLEIGH

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on the continuing problems caused by pigeons in Rayleigh High Street and possibilities for their reduction.

During debate, a Member wished to emphasise the problems which could be experienced when people left food debris without realising this could attract pigeons. The Chairman of the Rayleigh Town Centre Monitoring Group reported that the Working Group was querying whether by-laws could be introduced to control pigeon nuisance. It was noted that the Group also felt that it could be appropriate to liaise with the Chamber of Trade on approaching owner/occupiers of affected premises in the Town. Reference was made to signage used by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council prohibiting the deposit of food.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that:-

- The possibility of introducing by-laws would be investigated and reported back to Members.
- There are provisions within environmental protection legislation which prohibit littering, including food deposits, and it is possible CCTV cameras could be used to acquire evidence.
- Including the Chamber of Trade in discussions could be valuable. In the early stages, it would be prudent to concentrate on areas where there are most problems. Given the small budget available, careful consideration would have to be given to any financial assistance arrangements.
- Whilst it would be possible to negotiate a preferential rate contract, this may still leave critical “hotspots”. In the first instance, it could be of value to commence discussions with Pest Control companies on the possibilities.

Following a motion moved by Councillor Mrs W M Stevenson and seconded by Councillor Mrs J M Ford relating to possible use of contractors, it was

Resolved

- (1) that the Council continue to educate the public and businesses in order to minimise the available food supply for pigeons in Rayleigh High Street.
- (2) that the signage in the High Street requesting the public not to feed the pigeons be increased, to be funded from the specific budget provisions.
- (3) that the Council's newspaper and other media be utilised to reinforce the message about not feeding pigeons.

-
- (4) that Officers liaise with the Chamber of Trade on approaching the owners/occupiers of affected premises to request that proofing measures be carried out and that the Ward Members be involved in those discussions
 - (5) that Officers consult with Pest Control companies on the possibilities for introducing a contract to carry out proofing works to multiple premises at a discount and that the specific budget provision be used to assist in meeting the costs. (CD (F&ES), (HHHCC))

The Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Chairman _____

Date _____