

## **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 15 April 2003**

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Minutes of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **15 April 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr M G B Starke (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs T J Capon (Acting Vice-Chairman)

Cllr P A Capon  
Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr C J Lumley  
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Livings.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Cllr J E Grey

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal Services
S Garland	- Community Safety Officer
S Neville	- Residential Services Unit Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

### **194 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2003 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **195 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn declared a personal interest in item 9 by virtue of being a member of Rochford Parish Council.

### **196 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS**

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions.

#### **Housing Renewal**

Responding to a Member enquiry, Officers confirmed that the draft Private Sector Renewal Policy related to the maintenance and improvement of housing stock in the private sector. The provision of affordable housing including social housing did not fall within this Policy.

Officers emphasised that, with respect to certain large developments, the

Local Authority had the opportunity to secure the provision of affordable housing through Section 106 agreements.

### **Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection Best Value Review – Interim Report**

Officers would forward to Committee Members details of the specific contracted services that were appealing to contractors.

### **Homelessness/Housing Strategy Action Plans – Progress Report**

Officers confirmed that the housing strategy and policy training contained within the new Member training programme was for all Members.

## **197 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY – EMERGING ISSUES**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care updating Members on progress with the development of the Council's homelessness strategy and the issues that were arising.

Officers confirmed that this year a strategy would be developed to address the problem of bringing empty properties back into use.

Responding to a Member enquiry, Officers confirmed that the homelessness strategy would address any emerging trends in reasons for homelessness.

Responding to Member concern about the high level of housing advice enquiries in relation to the number of housing staff, Officers asserted that housing advice was a principal element of the housing strategy. Included within the Best Value Review Action Plan was an examination of the different options for providing housing advice, together with associated costings.

Concluding the debate, Members recorded their thanks to the Homelessness and Housing Advice staff for all their hard work.

On a motion moved by Cllr T G Cutmore and seconded by Cllr Mrs M A Starke, it was:-

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Committee note the progress being made on the development of the homelessness strategy.
- (2) That the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee oversee the drafting of the homelessness strategy. (HHHCC)

## **198 ANIMAL WELFARE CHARTER**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care inviting Members to consider the formation of a Sub-

Committee to look at the issues and oversee the drafting of the Council's Animal Welfare Charter.

During debate the following concerns were raised:

- That the suggested visits to premises should include visits to animal keepers other than recognised shelters and breeders.
- That the countryside view of animal welfare should be included in drafting the Charter.

On a motion moved by Cllr P A Capon and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore it was:-

### **Resolved**

That an Animal Welfare Charter Sub-Committee be formed after the District Elections, comprising 6 Members reflecting the political composition of the Council. (HHHCC)

## **199 BEST VALUE REVIEW – COMMUNITY SAFETY**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive providing a closer inspection of the current Community Safety service provided by the District Council and seeking Members' views on proposed actions to improve the service.

During debate concern was expressed that the Best Value Review of Community Safety should include vandalism as one of the main areas of community safety. Officers confirmed that vandalism featured greatly in the strategy and was given a high priority.

Responding to a concern raised by Members that 57 South Street was being inadequately used by the Youth Service, Officers affirmed that Rochford Parish Council and the District Council were exploring the possibilities of additional agencies to make use of the building.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to Home Office funding, Officers confirmed that a series of individual bids for the funding of community safety measures had been made to the Home Office in 2003/04.

In response to a further Member enquiry relating to the nature of additional support provided by Victim Support, Officers asserted that specific details had not been given but were likely to include support for young victims of crime and staff training.

Members were concerned about the possibility of local businesses not reporting business crime due to apprehension that insurance premiums might increase. It was further perceived that there would be merit in an article

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appearing in *Rochford District Matters* inviting local businesses for their views on how to reduce business crime.

Members congratulated Officers for their comprehensive work on the Best Value Review of Community Safety.

### **Resolved**

That, subject to the above Member comments, the Action Plan as set out in Appendix B to the report, be agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_