

## **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 10 December 2002**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **10 December 2002** when there were present:

Cllr M G B Starke - Chairman  
Cllr T Livings - Vice-Chairman

Cllr P A Capon  
Cllr Mrs T J Capon  
Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr D F L Flack

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn  
Cllr C J Lumley  
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

R Crofts - Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)  
G Woolhouse - Head of Housing, Health & Community Care  
S Clarkson - Head of Revenue and Housing Management  
S Whitehead - Solicitor  
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

### **601 MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2002 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **602 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS**

The Committee received the schedule relating to Progress on Decisions.

#### **Policing in the Community (Minute 486/02)**

It was noted that the Rayleigh Divisional Commander had given an indication that he was likely to be present at the Meeting scheduled for 11 February 2003 to provide an update on operations.

Outstanding matters would be carried forward.

### **603 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2003/04 - CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management on the proposed Housing Capital Programme for 2003/04.

Responding to Member questions on various items within the Programme, the Head of Revenue and Housing Management advised as follows:-

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**Central Heating upgrades** – these involved the upgrade of partial or background heating to full wet systems.

**Boiler replacement** – works would include the supply and fitting of boilers. The Council could take advantage of bulk purchase discounts. Costs had been reducing over recent years.

**Rochford Garden Way** – Regeneration activity would provide both a physical and aesthetic upgrade to a relatively rundown area that had been the subject of a number of incidents of vandalism. Part of the work would involve the replacement of concrete lintels at doors and windows.

**Smoke alarms** – The Council had a duty of care with regard to smoke alarms. Proposals involved hardwired or cadmium battery alarms. To ensure value for money, works would be put out to tender.

**Four bedroom programme** – Property improvements are excluded from any potential Right to Buy discount levels and costs can be substantially recovered if necessary.

**Decent Homes** – Proposals aligned with Government guidance and were aimed at upgrading the Council's oldest properties.

On a Motion moved by Councillor P A Capon and seconded by Councillor T G Cutmore, it was:-

### **Recommended to the Community Services Committee:-**

That the Draft Housing Capital Programme, as appended to the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management, be agreed for submission to Council on 28 January 2003. (HRHM)

## **604 HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT - UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care on the Improvement Action Plan produced following the inspection of the Health and Safety enforcement function.

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Responding to Member questions, the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that:-

- The present establishment was considered adequate to develop an effective Health and Safety enforcement service. There would only be a need for further reporting on staffing resource levels should problems be encountered in sustaining the establishment.
- The redirection of some resources had already been achieved with no detriment to standards in other service areas. The lead on any airborne communicable diseases would be taken by the Health and Safety Executive/Health Authorities. The District could be asked to assist.
- The Health and Safety Executive and the Emergency Planning service would take the lead on any terrorist associated incidents. The Council could be asked for assistance.

On a Motion moved by Councillor P A Capon and seconded by Councillor T G Cutmore, it was:-

### **Recommended to the Community Services Committee:-**

That the Action Plan appended to the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive for consideration. (HHHCC)

### **605 HOMELESSNESS ACT 2002**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which provided an update on changes to housing legislation introduced by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that the interim report to Committee could identify the groups eligible for housing assistance. Eligibility was established on the basis of a series of tests including establishing whether a person was intentionally homeless. The legal implications associated with occasions when a local authority might be considered to not be meeting other obligations associated with any particular group would need to be given consideration.

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### **Resolved**

- (1) That an interim report on the issues arising from the development of the homelessness strategy be brought to this Committee in Spring 2003.
- (2) That the draft Homelessness Strategy be reported to this Committee in June 2003. (HHHCC)

### **606 CONDITION OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on increasing cleaning frequencies and carrying out refurbishments to the Council's public conveniences.

In presenting the report, the Corporate Director advised that:-

- The Council's valuer had indicated that the Old Ship Lane toilets building, Rochford may be of little value in its own right. The value could be significant if the building was disposed of along with a number of car parking spaces and developed for housing. Demolishing the toilet building with a view to providing additional car parking space would be an increased cost option.
- Hullbridge Parish Council had now indicated that it would be prepared to consider possibilities for partnership working once the Pooles Lane toilet had been refurbished with a self-locking door.

Mindful of the responses from the Town/Parish Councils, the Committee agreed a Motion moved by Councillor T G Cutmore and seconded by Councillor P A Capon and it was:-

### **Recommended to the Community Services Committee:-**

- (1) That, given the availability of a very adequate toilet facility at Back Lane, Rochford, the possibilities for disposal of the Old Ship Lane toilet to be further investigated on the basis that any resulting capital receipt would be used to help fund the improvement programme associated with other toilets.
- (2) That, given it would be unfair if only some Parish Councils were contributing and that it is important to ensure facilities meet this Council's standards, provision be made in the draft Capital and Revenue estimates for this Council to take responsibility for increased cleaning of all toilets and refurbishment of the following:-
  - Pooles Lane, Hullbridge
  - The Spa, Southend Road, Hockley

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- High Street, Great Wakering
  - Main Road, Hockley Woods, Hockley
- (3) That no further action be taken on the possibilities for Superloos given the significant costing associated with such toilets (CD(F&ES))

The Chairman extended best wishes to Members and officers for a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

The Meeting closed at 8.24pm

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_