

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **9 September 2004** when there were present:

Cllr T Livings (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs M A Starke (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr P K Savill

Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr Mrs M S Vince

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr M G B Starke

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C J Lumley

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
D Timson	- Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
J Bourne	- Leisure & Contracts Manager
N Khan	- Solicitor
M Martin	- Committee Administrator

ALSO ATTENDING

C Bentley - Operations Manager, Holmes Place

389 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

390 HOLMES PLACE PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received and noted the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which invited Members to receive a report from Holmes Place Leisure Management on the progress and development of the leisure management contract.

Mr Bentley advised Members that the key issue around progress and development was the refurbishment currently taking place at the Clements Hall Leisure Centre. This was on target for completion by the beginning of October with the official opening taking place at the end of that month, together with a weekend of special events. This would co-incide with the

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2004

Centre's 25th Birthday Party and would be a high profile event with appropriate publicity.

Members were pleased to note that:-

- as part of a new strategy based on Service, Standards and Sales, Holmes Place had introduced 'Energy Hours' to the Centre which focused on providing the best possible customer service. This had been well received by customers.
- the new Centre, planned to be built on the site of the former Park School, Rayleigh, was scheduled to be opened early in 2006. Members agreed with the suggestion that a more appropriate and marketable name would be 'The Rayleigh Leisure Centre'.
- following the introduction of the Police Dispersal Orders within the District and the alcohol free exclusion zone in operation in the vicinity of Clements Hall, the Police response to incidents had greatly improved. These initiatives were aimed primarily at issues around youth nuisance and criminal damage.
- in respect of the Police Dispersal Orders, initial feedback from the Police was that the orders were having a positive impact across the whole District. A systematic review of their effectiveness was scheduled to commence in October.
- the 'Hyper' activities at the Great Wakering Sports Centre had been a success. It was anticipated that further funding might be available through County support for initiatives tackling Anti-Social behaviour.
- the Leisure & Contracts Manager, in conjunction with Holmes Place, was looking for a solution in respect of cars being dumped and left burnt out in the Freight House Car Park.

The Chief Executive advised that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had invited bids for funding within the context of Thames Gateway South East Essex, to pick up the likely underspend across the whole Thames Gateway area in 2004/05. He had suggested projects such as the Windmill at Rayleigh, the Tourism strategy and the new leisure centre on the former Park School site as possible candidates for this underspend, given the need for this money to be spent by the end of this financial year

Members were very pleased to note the excellent progress being made at all leisure sites across the District and it was:-

Recommended to the Community Services Committee

That the Centre being developed on the site of the former Park School, Rayleigh be named 'The Rayleigh Leisure Centre'. (CD(F&ES))

391 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION STRATEGY/COMMUNITY SAFETY – IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST VALUE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive which updated Members on Crime and Disorder issues.

During discussion, the following was noted:-

- a strategy for dealing with prolific offenders had been drawn up County-wide which would be operated in the context of the District-wide Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- the recently appointed Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator was carrying out specific work around the issues of youth nuisance and criminal damage.
- the Police were looking at the effectiveness of the work of the Community Support officers. This evaluation would be fed through into the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- the success of the 'firebreak' initiative, an intensive course run by the Fire Service and targeted at young offenders.
- the increasing emphasis being placed on the need for measurable outputs for every action proposed in connection with Crime and Disorder.

392 CATERING FRANCHISES ON OPEN SPACES

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on the opportunities that may be available to increase the number of catering franchises on Open Spaces and Woodlands at times of increased public attendance.

A Member requested that Hullbridge Recreation Ground be included in the list of sites where there might be sufficient demand for a catering franchise, particularly in relation to ice-creams.

An integral part of any franchise should be that the area around the unit should be kept free of litter. A trial operation was therefore favoured, as this would indicate whether the issue of litter beyond the immediate vicinity of any operation was deemed to be a problem.

Recommended to the Community Services Committee

- (1) That officers seek expressions of interest as to the viability of taking up the franchise opportunities at one or more of the following locations:-

- Great Wakering
- Ashingdon
- Fairview
- Rawreth
- St John Fisher
- Grove
- Hullbridge

- (2) That, initially, any franchises so taken up be trialled for a 12 month periods. (CD(F&ES))

393 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE LAND AND PLAY SPACE AREAS IN ROCHFORD DISTRICT OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which reviewed the arrangements around how Public Open Space and recreation land is held by the Council and considered trust options that may help safeguard these areas for the future.

Members noted that work on this subject had been built into this year's work programme. Whilst there would be an opportunity cost involved, it was important to invest time to the issue of protecting such areas.

Members were in unanimous agreement with the proposals and it was:-

Recommended to the Community Services Committee

- (1) That the principle of transferring Public Open Space Land to one or more appropriate trust bodies be agreed.
- (2) That, initially, the principle of developing one or more trust bodies focus on the following sites:-

The Playing Field, Althorne Way, Canewdon
Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park
Playing Field, High Street, Great Wakering
Clements Hall Playing Field
Hawkwell Common
Hockley Woods
Playing Fields, Pooles Lane, Hullbridge
Playing Fields, Rawreth Lane, Rawreth
Fairview Playing Field, Rayleigh
Brooklands Gardens, Hockley Road, Rayleigh
Grove Road Public Open Space and Woods, Rayleigh
Kingley Wood Public Open Space, Rayleigh
St John Fisher Playing Fields, Rayleigh
New Public Open Space at the former Park School site.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2004

- (3) That discussions take place with Parish Councils in respect of the spaces currently leased to them, to investigate whether they would be prepared to include these areas in any trust arrangement.
- (4) That an update report be provided of progress in early 2005, to include feedback on the discussions with Parishes and to identify whether any other land holdings should be included in possible trust arrangements.
(HLS)

The meeting closed at 8.54 pm.

Chairman

Date