

Community Services Committee – 5 July 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **5 July 2005** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S P Smith
Vice-Chairman: Cllr R A Amner

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr K A Gibbs
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr J Thomass
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs L Hungate.

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
S Clarkson	- Head of Revenue and Housing Management
D Timson	- Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
R Peacey	- Safety, Food & Regulation Unit Manager
E Hanlon	- Principal Environmental Health Officer
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

256 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

257 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J M Pullen declared a personal interest in item 13 of the agenda by virtue of membership of the National Trust Rayleigh Mount Local Committee and of the Windmill Sub-Committee.

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley declared a personal interest in item 13 of the agenda by virtue of membership of the National Trust Rayleigh Mount Local Committee and Cllr J Thomass also declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of membership of the Windmill Sub-Committee.

258 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

(Note: Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of membership of Hawkwell Parish Council and of Rochford Parish Council and Cllr Mrs M J Webster also declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being Vice-Chairman of the National Trust Rayleigh Mount Local Committee.)

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions and in response to Member questions the following was noted:-

Woodland Strategy Resources

English Nature was no longer offering this type of grant and it therefore seemed unlikely that funding would be available via external sources.

Skateboard Facilities – Clements Hall

Officers confirmed that the original Minute referred to support pledged by this Authority to help a group of young people in their endeavours to secure funding to build a new skateboarding facility at Clements Hall. The youngsters had subsequently lost interest. However, the existing skateboard ramp at Clements Hall was becoming worn and £16,000 had been set aside by the Council to replace the ramp. Officers had, in the meantime, been attempting to identify sources of funding to supplement this budget so that the facility, which was more suitable for older children, could be extended so that younger children might also enjoy it. The ramp was being regularly monitored by officers in terms of safety and it was anticipated that the ramp would be replaced in the current financial year.

Members concurred that there would be merit in including an item or leaflet in Rochford District Matters informing the public about the replacement of this worn ramp. Officers would also provide a leaflet for the purpose of including it with the Hawkwell Parish Council newsletter.

Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002

Government guidance was expected to be available in the autumn. The report on the service delivery of the housing management function would be considered at the Policy and Finance Committee on 12 July.

Unfit House

The original timescale for the works was 12 weeks and works had begun in April. However, due to unforeseen works, it was anticipated that work should be completed in September.

Catering Franchises on Open Spaces

The franchises were very time and place specific. The franchise for Ashingdon would only be in operation during the winter when there were football matches. It was confirmed that the ice cream vendor would pay £400 p.a. for the franchise at Hockley Woods, while in Ashingdon the charge would be £50 per visit. These monies would go into the General Fund.

St John Ambulance – Hockley Community Centre – Update

It was confirmed that the Hockley Community Centre Association had recently spent £16,000 on improving the fabric of the building and replacing the electrical wiring. It appeared unlikely, however, that St John Ambulance would be able to pursue the siting of their headquarters here.

Sutton Court Playspace, Rochford

A meeting of the Playspace Sub-Committee would be taking place the next day at the Freight House, Rochford to enable large numbers of people to attend. All those with objections relating to the playspace were aware of the meeting. The Sub-Committee would consider different options for the playspace, but any refurbishment of the older children's play area would require the Parish Council to contribute financially.

Rochford Town Sports and Social Club – Application for New Lease on the Pavilion at Rochford Recreation Ground, Rochford

Officers advised that, following discussions, a final draft of the lease had been sent to the Club's solicitors and officers were confident that this would be accepted.

Housing Development Scheme – Tylney Avenue, Rochford

The deed of release had been agreed and would be completed shortly. Swan Housing Group's revised scheme would soon be considered by the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee.

Government Plans for Digital Television Switchover

No action would be taken to convert to digital television, given the future transfer of housing stock.

East of England Children's Services Member Network

A meeting that had been arranged was cancelled and rearranged at short notice, such that Member representatives had been unable to attend. Minutes of the meeting would, however, be included in the Members' Bulletin, once available.

Woodlands

Officers advised that the £50 cost per oak tree was purely to cover the costs of each mature tree.

259 FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and

Community Care asking for Members' approval of the Food Safety Service Plan.

Members congratulated officers for all their hard work in this area, particularly in light of staff shortages.

Resolved

That the Food Safety Service Plan and the plan to complete the production of all food law enforcement documents be approved and that a peer review system be implemented by April 2006. (HHHCC)

260 HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care asking for Members' approval of the Health and Safety Service Plan.

Resolved

That the Health and Safety Service Plan be approved. (HHHCC)

261 HARDWICK HOUSE SITE – NAMING OF DEVELOPMENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care asking Members to determine the names for the developments at the Hardwick House site, Rayleigh.

Resolved

- (1) That the name Hardwick House be retained for the existing building.
- (2) That Swan Housing Group be requested to organise a competition amongst the scheme's residents to name the new older person's scheme at Dobson's Close, Rayleigh. (HHHCC)

262 REPORT OF THE WINDMILL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Windmill Sub-Committee asking Members to agree proposals for a partnership with the National Trust for a strategy around the opening of the various elements of the Rayleigh Windmill project and the use of sponsors to provide support for events and equipment financially or in other forms in return for advertising.

Officers advised that works were on schedule. The scaffolding would be dismantled within the next week or two, with the new sails raised at the end of July. An open day would be held on 6 September for the general public, who would be given the opportunity to have a tour of the windmill and to see photographs detailing the various stages of the renovation work. There was a

general consensus that the opening of the sensory garden should be delayed until March 2006, as more plants would be in flower at that time than in December.

Written confirmation had now been received from the National Trust formally agreeing to the partnership arrangements outlined in the officer's report to the Windmill Sub-Committee on 7 June.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to a management fee for the opening and closing of the windmill, officers advised that Holmes Place would simply act as key holders and would monitor security tapes. It was therefore anticipated that if there was to be a management fee it should be minimal.

Members concurred that there would be merit in utilising the mobile exhibition unit for the opening day and that leaflets should be displayed in it of other attractions within the District, including the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed, in principle, that a partnership with the National Trust be formed, with details of responsibilities, governance, etc, to be reported back to Committee in due course.
- (2) That the strategy around the opening of the various elements of the project, as detailed in the report, be agreed, subject to the sensory garden being opened in March 2006.
- (3) That the use of sponsors to provide support for events / equipment financially or in other forms in return for advertising be agreed.
(CD(F&ES))

263 LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER OF HOUSING STOCK

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management inviting Members to appoint four elected Member representatives, together with substitutes, to serve on the Joint Transfer Steering Group being set up to oversee the implementation of the Council's pre-ballot project plan for delivery of transfer of the Council's housing stock to a registered social landlord.

During debate there was a general consensus that it would be best to delay nomination of the non-Group Member in order to allow time for the 3 non-Group Members to discuss the matter in more detail.

It was, however, noted that the non-Group Members present considered that there would be merit in the Chief Executive meeting with them in order to facilitate the issue.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillors T G Cutmore, Mrs J R Lumley and S P Smith, together with one representative from non-Group Members, together with substitutes, be appointed to serve as the Council's representatives on the Joint Transfer Steering Group.
- (2) That appointment of the non-Group Member be deferred until all 3 non-Group Members could discuss the matter. (HRHM)

(Note: Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn and J R F Mason wished it to be recorded that they had voted against the second decision above).

264 NHS LOCAL IMPROVEMENT FINANCE TRUST

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care requesting Members to approve the Council's participation in the local improvement finance trust at level 1.

Resolved

That the Council signs up to the Southend and Castle Point & Rochford LIFT programme at level 1. (HHHCC)

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business on the grounds that exempt information as disclosed in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

265 RIGHT TO BUY – THE USE OF DISCRETIONARY POWERS ON REPAYMENT OF DISCOUNT

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management inviting Members to consider repayment of discount.

Resolved

- (1) That the procedures mentioned in this report be adopted for any future cases.
- (2) That, given the special circumstances outlined in the exempt report, discount repayment be waived in this particular case as demonstrable hardship is proven. (HRHM)

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The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Chairman

Date