

Minutes of the meeting of the **Urgency Sub-Committee of the Community Services Committee** held on **8 March 2000** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson – Chairman

Cllr Mrs S J Lemon

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

## **VISITING**

Cllrs D E Barnes and T Livings

## **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mr R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
Mr A Galloway	Head of Leisure and Client Services
Mr S Clarkson	Head of Revenues and Housing Management
Mr L Lapite	Solicitor
Mr D Timson	Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
Mr D Brown	Environmental Protection Unit Manager
Mr G Brazendale	Committee Administrator

## **10 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **11 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## **12 PROGRESS AND PROPSALS FOR BUILDING MAINTENANCE – WORCESTER DRIVE, RAYLEIGH**

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Leisure and Client Services which informed Members of progress in dealing with an issue in relation to the presence of asbestos in a leaseholder flat in Worcester Drive, Rayleigh, and addressed proposals for investigation into similar blocks within the District. The report also outlined the background to Asbestos Management in Rochford District Council, following adoption of the Asbestos Policy in 1998, a copy of which was appended for Members' information.

During subsequent discussion, Members raised a number of concerns in relation to the Worcester Drive case, and these were noted by Officers to guide the procedures that would be adopted should other similar instances arise elsewhere in the District. The arrangements that had been made to inspect the remaining three leased units within the Worcester Drive complex were noted, and the Solicitor provided Members with clarification of the Council's rights of access to these properties under the terms of the leases with the tenants.

Examining the potential for asbestos-related problems in a wider context, Members were anxious to ensure that other housing units where similar difficulties could arise were identified and inspected as a matter of urgency. It was explained that properties that had been categorised as high risk were already receiving attention but clearly, unforeseen incidents of the kind experienced in other premises such as at Worcester Close, would warrant immediate action. It was anticipated that the remaining leasehold flats and those of Council tenants situated in similar blocks within Worcester Close and also in Essex Drive would be inspected within the next four weeks.

The asbestos content of flues and the presence of high content asbestos rose within these buildings would receive particularly close examination.

The Sub-Committee was informed that, under the terms of the current leases, the leaseholders would be responsible for meeting part of the cost of the asbestos removal and associated work, and Members were concerned about the possible financial difficulties that some of the flats' occupants could consequently face. It was therefore agreed that Officers should ensure that residents were informed of the arrangements that could be made for them to make the necessary payments in instalments. It was also considered important to assist in the inspection process, that the Council's surveyors were able to time visits flexibly including weekend or evening visits if required.

At Members' request, the Solicitor undertook to prepare a letter for Ward Councillors to respond to concerned residents, explaining the action that was being taken in respect of the Worcester Drive and Essex Close properties.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the progress of the current works to the identified block be noted and that the works be carried out as a matter of urgency as required by the Council's established Policy for dealing with issues of this nature.
- (2) That inspections as set out in the Head of Services' report be carried out, and a plan of action together with associated costs be reported to the Community Services Committee.

- (3) That, should any inspection show the need for urgent action to be taken, approval be given so that works can be carried out and reported back to this Committee following the remedial action taken. (HLCS)

The meeting opened at 3.00 pm and closed at 3.50 pm.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_