

Community Services Committee – 5 September 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **5 September 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr R A Amner
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

Cllr Mrs P Aves

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher

Cllr Mrs L Hungate

Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr J Thomass

VISITING

Cllrs T Livings, Mrs J R Lumley, D G Stansby, Mrs M A Starke and M G B Starke.

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse - Corporate Director (External Services)
S Scrutton - Head of Planning and Transportation
S Neville - Residential Services Unit Manager
R Peacey - Safety, Food & Regulation Unit Manager
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

P Geoghegan and K Subramanian of the NHS Partnership Trust

267 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

268 NHS PARTNERSHIP TRUST - PROPOSALS FOR ROCHFORD HOSPITAL

The Committee received a presentation from Patrick Geoghegan, Chief Executive of the NHS Partnership Trust, on proposals for Rochford Hospital. The presentation, which was allied to a DVD demonstrating how the new hospital would look on completion, included information on the Trust vision; overall transformation; the Runwell closure and modernisation programme; developing services in Brentwood and the national programme for information technology. Dr Geoghegan confirmed that, subject to conditions such as the weather being favourable, the new hospital would be in operation from January 2008. He wished to place on record his thanks to the Members of this and other Council Committees for all the support given to the hospital project.

Responding to questions, Dr Geoghegan advised that:-

- The patient group would remain the same – primarily acute adults aged 18 to 65 for assessment treatment and older persons for initial assessment. Long term care would be offered at the Rawreth Close and Clifton Lodge facilities. There will be a medium and low secure unit at Runwell.
- The Trust was in the process of concluding a £30m private finance initiative. Experience had established that such initiatives require a focussed and tough approach at the point of negotiation. The Rochford Hospital project had been achieved through public funding in the sum of £21m.
- Intensive care requirements will be met via a unit at Basildon Hospital.
- Whilst there will be modern security facilities (such as swipe cards) at the Rochford site, patients will not be high risk. Risk assessments are undertaken for each site.
- The nature of the site is such that, once Rochford Hospital is completed, it would be difficult to undertake major expansion. It can be anticipated that the trend towards people wanting support in their own homes is likely to continue, which will free up capacity.

The Committee endorsed the observation of a Member that the new hospital was a reflection of the hard work and enthusiasm of Dr Geoghegan and the rest of his team. The team should be congratulated for achieving public funding.

Dr Geoghegan confirmed that he would be happy to provide update reports and would welcome any Members who wished to visit the facilities.

269 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

Note: Councillor Mrs J R Lumley declared a personal interest in the item on Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Services (RRAVS) – Core Funding Support – by virtue of being a trustee of RRAVS.

Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Services – Core Funding Support (Minute 539/04)

It was noted that this subject would now be monitored by the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee.

Report of the Windmill Sub-Committee (Minute 321/05)

It was noted that officers were in consultation with the County Council on the possibility that the Windmill could be licensed for weddings involving smaller groups.

Head and Neck Surgery in Essex – Consultation (Minutes 479/05)

Officers confirmed that it will be indicated to the Essex Strategic Health Authority that the Council would hope to be assured that the best possible radio therapy equipment is available at Basildon. The Strategic Health Authority will be invited to report back on the position with regard to both this and associated cancer services reconfiguration.

Report of the Windmill Sub-Committee (Minute 483/05)

Reference was made to the value of ensuring that there are sufficient volunteers for all floors at the Windmill. It was noted that the work of the Windmill Management Committee included the identification of volunteers.

270 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) on supporting a bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government for funding for development of a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL).

Responding to questions officers advised that, whilst it is possible such schemes are not as effective in circumstances where there are fewer vacancies, levels of customer satisfaction are high. There would be a cost to the Authority in operating a CBL scheme, but it was a Government requirement.

Resolved

That a bid by the Thames Gateway South Essex Sub-Region for funding development of a Choice-Based Lettings Scheme be supported. (CD(ES))

271 HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) on amendments to the Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy.

Responding to questions, the Residential Services Unit Manager advised that the Decent Homes standard could include improvements to bathrooms and kitchens. He also advised that, whilst assistance to top up a disabled facility grant would effectively take account of an individual's income/savings, other forms of assistance under the policy are qualifying benefit related.

Resolved

That the amended Housing Renewal Assistance Policy be agreed. (CD(ES))

272 FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) on approving the Food Safety Service Plan.

In congratulating officers on the production of such a detailed document a Member observed that the Food Standards Agency was placing significant requirements on authorities. It was noted that, in responding to consultation, the Federation of Small Businesses had observed that inspection targets seem reasonable and that the summary of actions indicated that adequate resources were available.

Resolved

That the Food Safety Service Plan and the plan to complete the production of all food law enforcement documents and to implement a peer review system by December 2006 be approved. (CD(ES))

273 HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) on the Health and Safety Service Plan.

Members agreed that staff should be congratulated for the production of such a detailed and high quality document. Specific reference was made to the value of including a staff development plan and to the positive feedback from end users.

Resolved

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

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Chairman

Date