

## Community Services Committee – 6 March 2007

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **6 March 2007** 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 T G Cutmore

Cllr T E Goodwin

Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr J Thomass

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr Mrs C A Weston

### **VISITING**

Cllr T Livings

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

G Woolhouse - Corporate Director (External Services)

J Bourne - Head of Community Services

S Neville - Strategic Housing Manager

J O'Brien - Committee Administrator

### **ALSO PRESENT**

K Mc Kenny - Network Director, Essex Cancer Network

### **61 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **62 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS**

The Committee considered the Progress on Decisions Schedule:-

#### **(a) Unfit House (Minute 261/05)**

Responding to the question of a Member officers advised that, whilst there was no definite timeline, matters are progressing well and reaching conclusion.

#### **(b) Hardwick House Site – Naming of Developments (Minute 261/05)**

Officers advised that the opening ceremony previously scheduled for 23 February 2007 has been delayed until 16 March 2007.

**(c) Donation of Redundant Teen Shelter to Stambridge Community Centre (Minute 84/06)**

It was noted that there had been other Parish Council interest in the teen shelter. The Chairman agreed with the wishes of Members that the teen shelter could be made available for use by Parish Councils who wished to use the facilities on a trial basis.

**(d) Private Sector House Condition Survey (Minute 86/06)**

The Committee noted that participation was voluntary by members of the community and that they may have concerns in divulging their details. Officers confirmed that individual properties were not identified as part of the survey, and there was no current requirement to make this information public.

Officers advised that this was a joint survey undertaken with Basildon and Thurrock Councils. There was a subsequent delay in reaching the initial draft report deadline, and a meeting with officers was due to take place in the next week to consider the results that are available to date.

**(e) Opening of Pooles Lane Pavilion, Hullbridge as Public Toilets (Minute 04/07)**

Officers confirmed that the reopening of the toilets remained on target for Easter 2007.

### **63 RECONFIGURATION OF CANCER SERVICES**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) which introduced Kevin Mc Kenny, Network Director of Essex Cancer Network.

Mr Mc Kenny was welcomed to the meeting and delivered a presentation on recent developments and public consultation, which covered the following areas:-

- Consultations and outcomes (December 2005 – March 2006)
  - Cancer Networks
  - Specialist Cancer Surgical Centres
- Current Position against Implementation
- Cancer Networks and their configuration in Essex
- The need to review current arrangements
- The Cancer Network Options, Strategic Health Authority (SHA) decisions and reasons
- Current Cancer Network position

- Specialist Surgical Centres for less-common cancers
- What are less-common cancers
- Existing arrangements and plans for less-common cancers
- What decisions needed to be made on less-common cancers, SHA conclusions
- Current position on Upper GI, Urology and Head and Neck

Responding to questions, Kevin Mc Kenny advised that:-

- There had been a timetable slip with regard to the Head and Neck Cancer Surgical Centre that was not yet in place at Chelmsford. Issues were being addressed and a plan is due to be completed by 30 March 2007 with centralisation ready for implementation by the end of 2007.
- Concerns were raised about the accessibility of the Specialist Surgical Centres through the consultation process before the SHA reached their decisions.
- Observations of a Member on the need for a clear communications channel between the Strategic Health Authority and Members following the consultation process would be taken away for consideration.
- The Government have set up a robust process to monitor the Cancer Networks process in delivering centres for less-common cancers which would be introduced into the compliance 'star' award system.
- Centralising specialist surgeons builds on the service strengths and proves to be a successful approach with better clinical outcomes.
- Southend Hospital has a recognised Specialist Surgical Centre for some less-common cancers.

The Committee noted that the Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford could be considered a lengthy journey for treatment if travelling from within the Rochford District, particularly by public transport.

The Chairman extended thanks on behalf of the Committee for Kevin Mc Kenny's contribution and responses to their questions, and invited him to return to a future meeting with a progress update that would be welcomed by Members.

### Resolved

That the progress report on cancer services be noted.

### 64 RESULTS OF THE COUNCIL TENANTS SATISFACTION SURVEY 2006

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) on the results of the Tenants Satisfaction Survey that took place in June 2006.

The Committee noted that, notwithstanding the overall results were positive, there did seem to be a notable conflict between some of the responses as shown in appendix 1 to the report.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- The survey comprised of set questions to be asked in the format shown, as provided by Government, and so there was no room for alteration. This enables direct comparison with other Authorities.
- The Council performs its own independent survey with tenants and monitors their services on a regular basis.
- The result on the question ‘thinking about your last repair, how would you rate the overall quality of the work?’ was disappointing and did not correspond with pleasing results from the Council’s own survey carried out which did not highlight any concerns of this nature.
- Following an observation of a Member, discussions would take place with the Housing Maintenance Team to consider incorporating a question within the Councils own ongoing survey with residents on categorising repairs and maintenance, with the view that this would clearly identify specifics.
- Further to a request by the Committee, the tenants satisfaction survey 2006 results would be published in the Rochford District Matters.
- Upon completion of the large scale voluntary transfer of housing stock the Council would not be required to undertake this survey. Members’ views are welcomed on what information they would want to receive in the future and this will be agreed before the transfer is finalised.

### Resolved

- (1) That the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey undertaken in 2006 be noted.
- (2) That a press release be issued detailing the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey undertaken in 2006. (CD(ES))

### 65 VALUE FOR MONEY STUDY ON HANDYPERSON AND GARDENING SERVICES - UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Community Services on progress updates to the Value for Money Study of the Handyman and Gardening Services currently being provided in the District.

In presenting the report and responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- A correction to the report under point 3.4 and to Appendix 2 should actually read as 'services are targeted at the elderly or disabled on a low income'.
- The term 'elderly' refers to those over 60 years of age.
- Springboard do not currently extend their services to other groups than those referred to in the report and have limitations to the extent of services provided, predominately carrying out 'maintenance tasks'.
- As noted by a Member, the provision by charities or voluntary organisations would be monitored to ascertain any increase/change to current levels.
- Details on the outcome of negotiations with Springboard Housing Association around the allocation of the additional funding for 2007/08 were expected by the end of March 2007.
- Springboard promote their services as appropriate within the community and the Council does additional advertising through Rochford District Matters. As observed by a Member, it is recognised that the handyman and gardening service is a good facility made available to the local community and there is merit in raising the awareness of such within the District.
- Following the request of Members, notwithstanding that handyman and gardening services are provided as outlined in the report, investigations would be made into known contractors for recommendation to other groups in the community to use independently.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the content of the Value for Money Study on Handyman and Gardening Services report be noted.
- (2) That the Handyman and Gardening Services continue to be provided in the same manner as in the previous years of its operation.

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- (3) That a further report be made to Committee on the outcome of the negotiations with Springboard Housing Association, around the allocation of the additional funding for 2007/08. HCS

The meeting closed at 8.54pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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