

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 14 November 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **14 November 2002** when there were present:

Cllr M G B Starke (Chairman)
Cllr T Livings (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr P A Capon
Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr D F L Flack

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr C J Lumley
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

VISITING

Cllr C I Black

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts – Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
A Bugeja – Head of Legal Services
Mrs H Drye – Corporate Policy Manager
J Bourne – Leisure & Contracts Manager
S Garland – Community Safety Officer
Miss C Evans – Legal Officer
Mrs M Martin – Committee Administrator

ALSO ATTENDING

Ms B Forde - KPMG
M Cresswell – Assistant Director, KPMG
C Bentley – Operations Manager, Holmes Place
M Talley – Contracts Manager, Holmes Place

556 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

557 HOUSING MANAGEMENT – SOFT MARKET TESTING

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which sought Members' views in respect of the soft marketing exercise which had been undertaken on behalf of the Council by KPMG. A copy of their report had been appended.

Members noted that as part of the Housing Management Best Value Review, the review team had recommended that consultants be employed to carry out an assessment of the market and to advise the Council as to the likelihood of achieving savings, without any diminution in the level of the service delivery.

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The Chairman welcomed the representatives from KPMG, who had attended the meeting to present their findings and thanked them for a very comprehensive report. It was noted that the soft market test had reached the following conclusions:-

- Staffing levels were not in excess of those in private sector organisations.
- Significant savings could only be made through the internal reduction of overheads, the restructuring of warden services and repairs administration.
- The Council should only externalise Housing Management Services if it is unable to reduce costs internally.

Members noted that with regard to warden services, a trial scheme would be installed for one year, utilising a central control facility. This would enable tenants to be able to make an informed choice on the level of service and cost.

Resolved

- (1) That the results of the central call-out facility trial be reported back to this Committee.
- (2) That overhead costs continue to be reviewed through the annual budget process and future best value reviews. (CD(F&ES))

558 PROPOSALS FOR THE NEW PARK SPORTS CENTRE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services), appended to which were the initial costed proposals which had been provided by Holmes Place Leisure Management, for the provision of a new leisure facility at the former Park School site in Rayleigh. The first option was for a dry-side only facility and the second option provided for a swimming pool facility.

Members noted that:-

- The costings assumed that the Council would have to provide more capital expenditure for the second option.
- The option of borrowing at a fixed rate over for example 20 years could be considered.
- The swimming pool option would necessitate a significant tax increase.
- A Healthy Living Centre would appeal to a different market from the Clements Hall Sports Centre and could include more specialist facilities such as a Chiropodist and Physiotherapist.
- Tennis and badminton facilities were planned.
- Space would be available for use by small groups of people for meetings.
- The provision of skateboarding ramps could be considered.
- Two squash courts may be sufficient.

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A majority of Members of the Committee agreed that all Councillors should have an opportunity to express their views on the proposals and on a Motion moved by

Cllr T G Cutmore and seconded by Cllr P A Capon it was:-

Recommended to Council

- (1) That because of the capital and revenue cost implications, no swimming facility should be provided at this site.
- (2) That all Members be invited to submit any additional suggestions to those appended to the report by 14 January 2003.
- (3) That Holmes Place be invited to attend the meeting of the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11 February 2003 to discuss all the options.
- (4) That final options, including outline capital and revenue cost implications, be recommended by this Committee to Council for consideration at the meeting of Council to be held on 25 February 2003. (CD(F&ES))

559 UPDATE ON CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION STRATEGY

Note: Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn declared a personal interest by virtue of being a member of the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive which updated Members on the current situation with regard to progress on the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

Members noted that:-

- The Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, which had been launched in April 2002, had specified primary objectives and actions to be carried out by this authority and a number of key partners.
- An update of these objectives and actions reported to a recent Crime and Disorder Partnership monitoring group meeting was included in the report.
- Whilst vandalism is not specifically mentioned in the report, it is monitored.
- An amount of £95,000 had been set aside in 1999 to support the aims of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and the current balance is £46,628. Members requested a breakdown of spending.
- Further update reports would be submitted to future meetings of this Committee.

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560 SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which apprised Members of this year's summer holiday programme and noted its success.

Members noted that:-

- A wide range of activities had been on offer for children and young people, with more emphasis than previously on minority sports and more unusual activities.
- The swimming scheme had operated again with good reports back from attendees. A breakdown of attendance for each venue was included in the report.
- The take up of day camp places had been very good. These had been provided by Holmes Place.
- Workshops had been provided for Rayleigh and Hockley libraries.
- Customer feedback questionnaires were issued and a summary of comments had been appended to the report.

Members offered their congratulations to officers for the success of the programme. In response to Member suggestions, officers agreed to:

- investigate the possibilities of providing a further skateboarding activity in Rayleigh and Rochford around Easter 2003, following the success of the one held this Summer and to provide Members with details of the costs involved.
- contact the Parish/Town Councils to see whether any funding might be available for next year.
- Contact local schools to request whether any facilities could be made available for these activities.

Resolved

That a report be brought back to this Committee with the costs involved in providing skateboarding events, in order that Members can consider whether these could be provided more regularly and/or free of charge.

Recommended to Community Services Committee

- (1) That the swimming initiative continues and that a budget of £12,000 is included in the draft budget for 2003.
- (2) That the Day Camps continue and that a budget of £9,100 is included in the draft budget for 2003. (CD(F&ES))

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The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Chairman

Date