

Community Services Committee 1 March 2000

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **1 March 2000** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson – Chairman

Cllr R S Allen
Cllr P A Beckers
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr D M Ford
Cllr N Harris
Cllr Mrs J Helson

Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon
Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr V H Leach

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C I Black, J M Dickson, K A Gibbs, J E Grey and Mrs A R Hutchings,

SUBSTITUTES

Cllrs D E Barnes, G A Mockford, C R Morgan and P F A Webster

EX OFFICIO MEMBER ATTENDING

Cllr D R Helson

OFFICERS ATTENDING

R Crofts – Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
G P Woolhouse – Head of Housing Health and Community Care
T Galloway – Head of Leisure and Client Services
L Lapite – Solicitor
D Timson – Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
G Dawson – Parks Officer
A Wyatt – Committee Administrator

MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor C C Langlands declared a pecuniary interest in the item Contract Specification for the renewal of the Grounds Maintenance Service for 2001

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(Minute 83) by virtue of being a leaseholder of Local Authority owned flats which would benefit from the contract.

Councillor R A Pearson declared a non-pecuniary interest in the same item by virtue of being a football referee using sports grounds named within the report.

Councillor Mrs M S Vince declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item Petition from residents regarding youth problems at Doggetts Playspace (Minute 74) by virtue of living within the Close named in the report.

72 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 January 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from Minute 25 the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that the South Essex Health Authority would probably publish its draft Health Improvement Programme within the next two weeks. If appropriate an Urgency Sub-Committee could be convened to consider the draft programme.

73 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following question had been received from Mrs Peters on behalf of the residents of Stillwells, Rochford regarding the aerial runway at Doggetts Playspace:-

“Why were the residents of Stillwells not consulted about the installation of the aerial runway along the boundary of the Playspace, opposite the front of their properties, and is it acceptable for the residents of Stillwells to have the aerial runway installed 21.5 metres from their front room windows, so that their view out is dominated by the constant back and forward movements of this 3.5 metre high device, along with all the associated noise and disturbance that the residents cannot escape from day or night.

How can the safety of the very young children be guaranteed, the aerial runway is inappropriate for a Play area where toddlers may wander into the path of a fast moving hard object. The residents feel that the siting of the aerial runway is invasive, dangerous and inappropriate and has had a disastrous effect on their everyday lives and should therefore be completely removed from the Doggetts Playspace”.

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In response the Chairman advised:-

1. Consultation

- a. In reporting to Members on the proposed Rolling programme for playspaces Officers indicated that there would be consultation with the Parish Councils.
- b. Officers wrote to the three Councils, Rochford, Hullbridge and Rayleigh Town on 24 May 1999, indicating a list the equipment that was being proposed to be installed in the play spaces. This was to reflect that Parish Councils are closer to the community and more likely to be in touch.
- c. Officers reported back to Community Services Committee on 13 July on the current state of the consultation and were authorised to commence with the three play schemes as identified in the report.
- d. Officers considered that, as the scheme was to refurbish an existing play space, further local consultation would not be necessary.

2. Safety

- a. The equipment is standard play ground equipment, which is used nationally. The equipment is manufactured to current British and European Standards and has been installed with the appropriate safety surfaces.
- b. The Aerial Runway is installed adjacent to a boundary to remove the temptation for children to run across it to get to other equipment.
- c. The play space was subject to a Risk Assessment carried out independently by the National Playing Fields Association Inspector. This identified some minor alterations, which were carried out before the play space was opened on 21 January 2000.

3. Environment

- a. Following a meeting with Residents, Officers acknowledged that the play space was rather open and lacked trees. Following this 20 trees have been planted along the boundary with Stilwells and in other locations.
- b. It would not be appropriate to provide denser planting, as this would shield the space and prevent Passive Surveillance of the site.
- c. Noise and activity will be an issue around play spaces as they are designed to attract families and children.
- d. Officers also considered that in the light of experience the refurbished play space would generate a high level of activity

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initially which would fall back to a more normal level of activity after a short period.

- e. Checks have been made with Rochford Police and, although there are reports of Police Officers being called out to the play space, there are no logged incidents. There are 5 logged incidents of children / youths on the Bowling Green.

74 PETITION FROM RESIDENTS REGARDING YOUTH PROBLEMS AT DOGGETTS PLAYSPACE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure & Client Services on a petition received from residents of Stillwells and Stambridge Road in relation to social problems experienced since the refurbishment and upgrading of Doggetts Playspace in December 1999.

In noting the background to the upgrading of the facilities for this Playspace, Members expressed concern at the lack of public and Ward Member consultation which had taken place. The Committee was divided as to support for either the removal and re-siting of the play equipment or its retention with locking at night. On a Motion put by Councillor D M Ford and seconded by Councillor Mrs M A Weir it was:-

RESOLVED

- (1) That the aerial runway installed at Doggetts Playspace be removed and re-sited to a suitable alternative location.
- (2) That the matter be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to seek funding. (HLCS)

75 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Committee was satisfied that all necessary action had been taken. Minutes 288(iii)(99)(HHHCC), 214/99(HHHCC) and 27/00(HHHCC) were carried forward.

76 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee considered the Minutes of Sub-Committees and the recommendations contained therein.

(i) Community Safety Sub-Committee – 9 February 2000

Minute 138 - Update on Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted

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- (2) That the suggested amendments in the report and those outlined in the Minutes, including funding of up to £600 from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy Budget to cover the cost of mobile telephones, be agreed.
- (3) That update reports be submitted to future meetings of the Community Safety Sub-Committee. (HCPI)

Minute 139 - Crucial Crew 2000

Resolved

That £500 be set aside to assist with the funding of the Crucial Crew 2000 initiative, to be funded from the Council's Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy budget (HCPI)

Minute 140 - Teenex

Resolved

- (1) That the Council assist with funding the attendance of people from the Rochford District at the TEENEX course
- (2) That £400 be provided from the Council's Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy budget for this purpose (HCPI)

Minute 141 -the Government's Crime Reduction Strategy

Resolved

That, in noting the contents of the Government's Crime Reduction Strategy:-

- (i) concern be expressed that the Rochford District will be receiving a reduced Police and Traffic Warden service
- (ii) a request be made that a presentation be given to the Authority by the new Superintendent prior to any possible further restructuring of Rayleigh Police Division. (HCPI)

(ii) Housing Management Sub-Committee – 16 February 2000

Members considered it appropriate to refer the issues under Minutes 100 and 101 to the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group as they dealt with Asset Review sites.

Resolved

That the recommendations under Minute 100 (land at Boston Avenue, Rayleigh) and Minute 101 (land at Meadowside, Rayleigh) be referred

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to the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group for consideration.
(HRHM)

(iii) Leisure Sub-Committee – 17 February 2000

Minute 70 - Fire Safety Inspection - Park Sports Centre

Resolved

- (1) That Officers write to Essex County Council seeking their views and risk assessment of the works detailed in the appendix to the Report. Should the response not be forthcoming by 24 February 2000 that works should begin on the smaller items such as running man signage and white painting of stair treads with 50% of the cost being offset against the costs for future works to the Park School site.
- (2) That a site visit be arranged to Park Sports Centre with the Community Services Committee being invited to attend. The site visit to be followed by a meeting of the Leisure Sub-Committee with an urgency Sub-Committee of the Community Services Committee being immediately called after to ratify decisions made (HLCS)(HFS)

77 PETITION REQUESTING STREET SKATING FACILITIES IN SWEYNE PARK, RAYLEIGH

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Client Services on a petition from a group of young people in Rayleigh for a new skating facility to be located in Sweyne Park, Rayleigh.

Members agreed that, should any facility be installed within Sweyne Park, proper and full consultation to include local residents, the Ward Members and the Youth Service should be undertaken. The Committee also agreed a motion moved by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor D M Ford relating to consultation on any future playspace proposals.

Resolved

- (1) That consideration be given to a new skating facility in Sweyne Park, Rayleigh as part of the playspace audit and that any proposal for such a facility be the subject of full consultation with local residents, Ward Members and the Youth Service.
- (2) That any future proposal for playspace equipment or facilities be the subject of full consultation with local residents prior to installation. (HLCS)

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78 NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion, standing in the names of Councillors T G Cutmore and G A Mockford, was referred by Council on the 8 February 2000 to this Committee for consideration:-

“Rochford District Council supports the Warm Homes and Efficient Energy Conservation Bill, which proposes to bring an end to fuel poverty by means of a National programme of home insulation and energy efficiency driven by Central Government”.

Members were advised that funding for the scheme would be provided by Central Government.

The Committee considered that both local MPs should be encouraged to attend and vote on the Bill when it came before Parliament. In this regard it was felt that Officers should seek reports back from the MPs after the hearing of the Bill.

Resolved

- (1) That Rochford District Council supports the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Bill, which proposes to bring an end to fuel poverty by means of a National Programme of home insulation and energy efficiency driven by Central Government.
- (2) That the local MPs be encouraged to attend the hearing of the Bill in Parliament and asked to report back on the outcome. (HHH&CC)

79 FLOATING SUPPORT SCHEME

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which proposed the introduction of joint working arrangements to provide intensive housing management services to vulnerable homeless people who would otherwise have difficulty in establishing a stable tenancy and sought agreement to the use of some Council or registered social landlord accommodation.

Considering the scheme to be of merit, some concern was expressed by Members at the potential loss of housing units for other social housing needs. On a Motion put by Councillor Mrs J Helson and seconded by Councillor V H Leach it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That this Authority supports the establishment of a floating support scheme in Rochford, if appropriate in partnership with other District Councils, as outlined in the report, and that Officers be authorised to implement the scheme.

- (2) That the Head of Revenue and Housing Management, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee as appropriate, be authorised to lease up to six units of 1 bedroom accommodation at any time in periods of up to two years to enable the scheme to operate and that the Council's Allocation Scheme be amended to incorporate this.
- (3) That efforts be made to secure the provision of accommodation for the scheme from registered social landlords.
- (4) That a monitoring report on the scheme be brought back to this Committee six months after implementation.
(HHHCC,HRHM,HLS)

80 ANIMAL WELFARE LICENCE INTERIM INSPECTIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which reviewed the working of the Council's inspection policy for unannounced interim inspections of licensed riding establishments, animal boarding establishments, pet shops, dog breeders and dangerous wild animal premises.

Members were pleased to note the success of the unannounced interim inspections and it was:-

Resolved

That Officers continue with the current Animal Welfare Licence Renewal and Interim Inspection Policy. (HHHCC)

81 MILLENNIUM FESTIVAL – EXTENDED LIQUOR LICENSING HOURS PROPOSAL

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which sought the views of Members on a proposal to establish a festival hour – a one hour extension to normal liquor licensing hours between 25 May and 28 August 2000.

Noting the background to the proposal, Members considered that it could not be supported as the extension of all licensing hours may give rise to increased public disorder and nuisance throughout the week.

Resolved

That Officers reply to the Director of The Millennium Festival Team confirming that the Council does not support the "Festival Hour" in principle, because extending the closing hour of pubs to midnight on every day between 25 May and 28 August 2000 will increase the potential for noise nuisance and public disorder. Each application for

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an extension of normal liquor licensing hours should be considered on its merits by the Licensing Justices to ensure that public order is maintained and noise nuisance controlled and that the Council's views be copied to Essex Police and the Clerk to the Joint Licensing Committee. (HHHCC)

82 COUNTYWIDE HEALTH FORUM – A REQUEST FOR MEMBER NOMINATION

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought nomination to an Essexwide Health Forum to be set up under the auspices of the Association of Essex Councils.

Resolved

That the Vice-Chairman of the Community Services Committee or her nominee be this Authority's Member nomination to the Essexwide Health Forum. (CEX)

83 CONTRACT SPECIFICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICE FOR 2001.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Client Services which presented the final draft specification for the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

Members agreed that the following points be dealt with prior to the specification being despatched.

Page 47 – Pesticides

The Soil Association should be contacted with regard to those pesticides used throughout the Council's playing fields to seek their view on whether suitable alternatives could be found.

Page 462 – Point 4.4.3 - Cleansing and Associated Tasks

Include category 3 zones under this heading.

Page 63 – Point 4.5.1 – Amend final line of second paragraph to read –

Undertake the emptying immediately.

Page 64 – Point 4.6.1 – Amend final line of second paragraph to read –

Undertake the emptying immediately.

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Page 65 – Point 4.6.7 – Amend first line of first paragraph to read –
On a minimum of 12 occasions per annum.

Page 94 – Point 8.1

Open Spaces

The areas within open spaces designated as wild flower or conservation areas should have their address expanded to explain clearly where they lay within the Rochford District.

Page 103 – Point 12.2.1 (v)

This issue should be made stronger and it should be the contractor's responsibility to notify clubs of cancellations.

Page 105 – Point 12.2.4 - Pre-Season Operation (August/September)

In re-siting football pitches, where possible, goal posts should be removed across 8 yards.

Page 107 – Point xiv

The contractor on duty at the site to supervise all pre-arranged games should be clearly identifiable, perhaps wearing fluorescent clothing.

Page 116

Play equipment such as aerial runways needed to be fitted into the maintenance programme for rotating, rocking, swinging, sliding or climbing equipment.

Page 119 – Point 14.3

This should be cross-referenced with Point 15 (Lifebuoys)

Page 160

The correctness of some road names within Parishes should be reviewed.

Page 181 – Appendix VIII – Great Wakering Playing Field

Tennis courts should be included within the list of tennis courts and basket ball areas listed.

Page 182

The two hard tennis courts should be removed from the Schedule of Playing Fields.

Resolved

- (1) That the Contract Specification, as amended above, be agreed for the Grounds Maintenance Service.
- (2) That the shortlisting of applicants be delegated to the Compulsory Competitive Tendering Panel or Officers as appropriate. (CD(F&ES))

84 THREE YEAR LEISURE STRATEGY BUDGET

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which set out the current situation with regard to three year Leisure Strategy Budgets.

It was noted that the core of Leisure Services would be subject to extensive review as part of the Leisure Contract Renewal Process. Members considered that the situation should be reviewed as part of consideration of the most appropriate way forward on the Leisure Strategy and Contract.

Resolved

- (1) That the position regarding the Leisure Budget be noted.
- (2) That a review of Budget implications be carried out as part of the Council's consideration of the most appropriate way forward on the Leisure Strategy and Contract. (CD(F&ES))

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

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.

85 BUILDING MAINTENANCE

NOTE: The Chairman admitted this item of business as urgent in view of the need for an early decision on buildings maintenance

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A Member raised a point in relation to the need to review maintenance arrangements for Council owned and leased properties.

Resolved

That a report on the matter be submitted to an Urgency Sub-Committee of the Community Services Committee without delay in order for the matter to be resolved. (HLCS)

The Meeting closed at 10.35pm.

Chairman

Date