

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Services Committee** held on **27 June 2000** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs M A Weir – Chairman

Cllr R S Allen
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr D M Ford
Cllr Mrs J E Ford
Cllr D F Flack
Cllr J E Grey
Cllr Mrs J Hall

Cllr Mrs J Helson
Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr V H Leach
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon
Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr Mrs L I V Phillips

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr G Fox

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs R Brown, T G Cutmore, Mrs W M Stevenson and Mrs M J Webster

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr T Livings and D A Weir

OFFICERS ATTENDING

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
G Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
L Lapite	Solicitor
A Wyatt	Committee Administrator

192 FORMER COUNCILLOR V D HUTCHINGS

Members were advised by the Chairman of the recent death of former Councillor V D Hutchings and that as soon as funeral arrangements had been made, Members would be advised accordingly.

193 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C C Langlands declared a non-pecuniary interest in the items “Housing Investment Programme”, “Home Repair Assistance” and “Quality and Choice – A Decent Home for All” by virtue of being a leaseholder of a former Council property.

194 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 March 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

195 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Whilst considering the outstanding issues, Members were updated by the Solicitor on the current progress with regard to the Appeal lodged in respect of the change of site layout at Halcyon Caravan Park. Members were satisfied that all necessary action had been taken. Minutes 214/99, 27/00 and 79/00 (HHHCC) were carried forward.

196 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Members considered the Minutes of the Sub-Committees and the Recommendations contained therein.

(1)	Leisure Sub-Committee	2 March 2000
(2)	Urgency Sub-Committee	2 March 2000
(3)	Urgency Sub-Committee	8 March 2000
(4)	Urgency Sub-Committee	4 April 2000
(5)	Urgency Sub-Committee	18 April 2000
(6)	Leisure Sub-Committee	13 June 2000

Minute 77- Leisure Consultancy

Resolved

That the proposals put forward by PMP Consultancy for undertaking public consultation in relation to the review of leisure be endorsed. (HLCS)

Minute 78 – Leisure Best Value

Resolved

- (1) that the implications of best value in respect of Leisure Services be noted.
- (2) that issues including facility provision, tourism, sport and recreation acts, culture and a consistent approach to parking at leisure facilities be taken into account in the Best Value Review process for leisure. (CEX)

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

Minute 80 – Summer Playscheme Swimming Provision (Minute 287/99)

Resolved

That the Summer Swimming Scheme proceed as detailed in the report. (HLCS)

Minute 81 – Fairview Tennis Courts

Resolved

- (1) That the matter be deferred pending a Public Consultation Exercise, to include the three options for tennis, basketball and five-a-side football with the residential properties, as those roads adjoining the site, with Rayleigh Town Council and with a reply-paid service being used to ensure maximum response. (The details of the consultation to be confirmed in consultation with the Chairman of the Leisure Sub-Committee and Ward Members).
- (2) That further, a bid be made to the English Basketball Association for four basketball goals for siting within the Rochford District.

Minute 82 – Youth Sports Development Group (Minute 23/00)

Resolved

That the report be noted. (HLCS)

(7) Community Safety Sub-Committee 14 June 2000

Minute 146 – Update on Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy

Resolved

- (1) that the report be noted.
- (2) that update reports be submitted to future Meetings of the Community Safety Sub-Committee.
- (3) that arrangements be made for a seminar, to which all Members of the Council are to be invited, on speeding.

Minute 147 – Grange and Rawreth Ward – Update on the Survey to Identify Areas of Vulnerability to crime and disorder issues and needs analysis of young people in the Ward

Resolved

- (1) that, in view of the poor response to the Public Consultation Exercise to date, incidents of crime and disorder in the area of Grange and

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

Rawreth should be dealt with as and when they arise, rather than through the development and implementation of an agreed programme of actions which it was envisaged would develop out of the Public Consultation Exercise.

- (2) that progress reports be received by the Community Safety Sub-Committee
- (3) that Officers produce leaflets, to be distributed to all residents in the area, outlining plans for the youth of the area during the summer holiday period.
- (4) that Officers write to Rayleigh Grange Community Association to ascertain what events it had planned for the summer holiday period. (HCPI)

Minute 148 – Roche and St Andrews Ward

Resolved

- (1) that further progress reports be brought to the Sub-Committee.
- (2) That the items outlined in the Minutes be actioned. (HHHCC)(HCPI)

Minute 149 – Closed Circuit Television Cameras

During consideration of this particular item, Members were of the opinion that priority order should be placed on those CCTV cameras being installed in out of town shopping parades, being funded from this Authority's budget and it was

Resolved

- (1) that the £40,000 set aside in the Council's budgets for the installation of CCTV cameras be targeted at out of town shopping parades in the following priority order:-
 - (i) Golden Cross Parade, Hawkwell
 - (ii) Rochford Garden Way, Rochford
 - (iii) High Street, Great Wakering
 - (iv) London Road, Rayleigh
- (2) that a bid be made for Central Government funds to provide CCTV cameras in out of town shopping parades in Hullbridge and Hockley as identified in the report
- (3) that update reports be submitted to future Meetings of the Community Safety Sub-Committee.

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

Minute 150 – Vandalism Damage

Resolved

That the report be noted and that further reports be brought back to the Community Safety Sub-Committee as appropriate.

Minute 151 – Government Proposals for the modernisation of Licensing Laws.

Resolved

That the Council's response be as outlined in the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care subject to the amendment outlined in the Minutes. (HHHCC)

(8) Housing Management Sub-Committee

15 June 2000

Minute 110 – Land at St Walter Raleigh Drive, Rayleigh

Resolved

That the request by residents in Pearson Avenue to purchase the plot of land in Sir Walter Raleigh Drive, (the location of which was shown on the plan appended to the report) be refused and that the area in question be retained in the Council's ownership.

197 PRESENTATION BY MR ROGER SINDEN – ALBERT JONES COURT, ROCHFORD

NOTE: The Chairman admitted this item of urgent business as the County's timetable for the disposal of certain older persons residential homes would not admit delay.

The Committee welcomed Mr Roger Sinden, County Manager for Older Persons Homes, who had attended the Meeting to present to Members the current situation with regard to the proposed lease transfer of Albert Jones Court in Rochford to a private care home provider. In advising Members of the history to the disposal of care homes, it was noted that the Strathmore Group, which currently ran five homes in the Southend area, had submitted a sealed bid in the second round of invitations for bids in respect of older persons homes specifically that relating to the Albert Jones Court site. It was further noted that Essex County Council were now considering that bid and would advise Rochford District Council Members accordingly of the outcome as soon as possible.

Members questions were specifically answered by Mr Sinden in respect of the following:-

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

- The Health and Safety Executives Notice served on Albert Jones Court
- The quality of care to be provided to residents following the lease transfer of the site.
- The issues surrounding the capital receipt from the bungalow site.
- The future of Sweyne Court in Rayleigh.
- The cost for provision of residential care home beds in both the public and private sector.
- The details relating to residents care whilst building works are undertaken by the Strathmore Group, in bringing Albert Jones Court up to both registration standard and an acceptable standard to the Health and Safety Executive.

In thanking Mr Sinden for his presentation, Members considered that in the first instance, Officers should write to all Essex County Councillors seeking their support in the future provision of residential care home beds by the County Council. Mr Sinden then left the Meeting and it was

Resolved that Officers write to all Essex County Councillors representing the Rochford District stating that this Authority expects their support in the continued provision of County Care Homes for the elderly by Essex County Council and seeking their support for this in forthcoming debates at County Hall. (HHHCC)

198 PETITION

The Committee considered a petition seeking this Council's support in re-establishing sub post office facilities in the East Ward of Hockley and seeking to secure the long term provision of post office services throughout the County, as referred by Council on 18 April 2000. In considering the petition, Members believed that post office facilities were more than just a business, indeed were a focus point for communities and as such, this Authority should stand with the petition for the maintenance of post office facilities throughout the District. On a motion put by Councillor D F Flack and seconded by Councillor Mrs J E Hall, it was

Resolved

That this Authority supports the re-establishment of sub post office facilities in the East Ward of Hockley and further supports the securing of the long-term provision of post office services throughout the community. (HCPI)

199 ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care outlining the current law and practical arrangements relating to asylum seekers.

In noting that this item was the result of a Motion to Council on 18 April 2000, Members welcomed Mr Robin Rennie, Regional Manager of the East of England Consortium for Asylum Seekers, who had been invited

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

to attend the Meeting to answer Members questions specifically relating to current law and practice on asylum seekers.

Having given a brief résumé of the history and current arrangements in force relating to asylum seekers, Mr Rennie advised the Committee of the following points in answer to Members questions:-

- The matter of asylum seekers was governed by international law, ultimately dating back to 1951, with the current Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 which contained provision for the Secretary of State to direct that Local Authorities make accommodation for asylum seekers available.
- Membership of the Consortium was voluntary and could be on one of three basis; the first option would be for full Membership with a proactive approach for a Local Authority to be involved with the management programme for asylum seekers, the second approach would be for a Local Authority to be less involved, as an associate Member, although an interested party and supportive of neighbouring Authorities. The third option would be for the Local Authority to maintain an interest in asylum seekers and seek to retain the option for full involvement if circumstances change, but not to participate in regular meetings.

In summing up, Mr Rennie made reference to help previously given to Bosnian refugees by this Authority in previous years and his hope for that excellent example to continue. Members thanked Mr Rennie for his presentation and he then left the Meeting. On a Motion put by Councillor D A Weir and seconded by Councillor D F Flack, it was

Resolved

- (1) That Officers continue to monitor changes in the law and operational practice relating to asylum seekers and report further should there be significant implications for the District.
- (2) That this Authority pursues Option 3, in joining the Consortium as an interested but not active member. (HHHCC)

200 DOGGETTS PLAY SPACE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which advised Members of the consultation process undertaken in respect of the aerial runway at Doggetts Play Space and the results achieved.

In noting the response to the consultation, in particular, those in favour of the aerial runway being retained within the site as opposed to those who sought re-siting of the aerial runway, as well as comments provided by consultees, it was decided that, given the overwhelming majority in favour of

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

relocation within the Doggetts Play Space, that relocation would be the most appropriate course of action and on a show of hands, it was

Resolved

- (1) That the results of the consultation be noted.
- (2) That Option 1, for the re-siting of the aerial runway equipment within Doggetts Play Space, be implemented as outlined in the report. (CD(F&ES))

201 GETTING TO PATIENTS FASTER – AMBULANCE SERVICE CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which detailed a consultation document, issued by Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust on changes to ambulance stations and operational methods to improve ambulance response times. Noting the consultation details as outlined in the report and the suggested response from Officers, Members made reference to recent media attention which had been brought to the subject.

Whilst noting that the proposal was to improve ambulance response times, Members expressed some concern at possible wholesale change which may work on paper, however, in practice might not. It was considered appropriate for this Authority to support Option 4 – implement the key locations proposal, maintaining some additional ambulance stations to limit disruption and improve the spread of cover. Further to this debate, a Member raised a point in respect of the Fire Service possibly undertaking a similar review to improve response times to their emergencies. On a motion put by Councillor D F Flack and seconded by Councillor D A Weir, it was

Resolved

- (1) that the Council's response be as outlined in the report with this Authority preferring Option 4 for the review of ambulance services
- (2) that South Essex Health Authority be urged to conduct a formal consultation on these proposals. (26609)(HHHCC)

202 HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care outlining the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) process for this year and inviting Members to consider priorities for use of the Local Authority's Social Housing Grant (LASHG) which is included within the approved Capital Programme and suggesting priorities to be identified for housing corporation funding for 2001/2002.

Resolved

- (1) That the HIP 2000 process be noted.
- (2) That the Local Authority Social Housing Grant in the approved Capital Programme be allocated as set out in the report.
- (3) That the Council's priorities for Housing Corporation ADP funding be as set out in the report with the addition of supporting a bid for a house for people with learning disabilities. (HHHCC)

203 HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE (Minute 20/97)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care outlining the current policy and the options available for a review of the Home Repair Assistance Grant procedure. Noting the current Council policy with respect to Home Repair Assistance Grants and the background to the review, it was considered, that Option 2 – To modify the Policy to allow any application from a resident disabled person or infirm person in receipt of an income related benefit, was the most appropriate way forward. On a motion put by Councillor D F Flack and seconded by Councillor D M Ford, it was

Resolved

- (1) That the Council's policy is to award home repair assistance to
 - (a) Owner occupiers over 60 years old in receipt of designated income related benefit.
 - (b) Registered disabled or infirm persons or their carers in receipt of a designated income related benefit. (HHHCC)

204 QUALITY AND CHOICE – A DECENT HOME FOR ALL

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care outlining the key proposals in the recently issued Housing Green Paper.

Being mindful of the Local Government Association initial response in respect of the green paper, and the Authority's current policy on housing, it was considered appropriate for the response to state that "this Authority will adhere to its current policy on housing and support the Local Government Association responses where they do not contradict existing Policy. Furthermore, this Authority welcomes the proposals, especially the move towards the control of Houses in Multiple Occupation and the improvement of the leaseholder situation believing tenants rights should be extended further to Mobile Home Sites." On a motion put by Councillor D F Flack, and seconded by Councillor D A Weir, it was

Resolved

That this Authority's response to the Green Paper "Quality and Choice – A Decent Home for All" be as set out above. (HHHCC)

205 ELDERLY PERSON INITIATIVE HANDY PERSON SCHEME

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which outlined a new partnership scheme to undertake small repairs and improvements to help prevent falls amongst older residents. Noting the background to the scheme, Members commended its implementation and on a show of hands, it was

Resolved

- (1) That the Council support the establishment of a Handy Person Scheme as outlined in the report.
- (2) That a figure of £4,000 be included in a draft estimates for 2001/2002. (HHHCC)(HFS)

206 CARAVAN SITE LICENCE CONDITIONS – UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which provided an update on breaches of licence conditions at four caravan sites within the District.

Members concurred with the Officers suggestion for Crouch Caravan Park, Dome Caravan Park and Hockley Mobile Homes to continue to be monitored with a further report in due course, however, in noting the Head of Housing Health and Community Care's advice in respect of a prosecution of the site licence holder for Tower Caravan Park, it was considered appropriate for a meeting to be arranged with the site licence holder, in order for the current situation to be explained to the Ward Members. Furthermore, it was also considered appropriate for prosecution proceedings to be authorised should the outcome of those discussions not be to the satisfaction of Ward Members and Officers and, on a show of hands, it was

Resolved

- (1) That legal proceedings are not taken at this stage in respect of the outstanding breaches at Crouch Caravan Park, Dome Caravan Park and Hockley Mobile Homes but that progress be monitored during site inspections with a further report in 12 months.
- (2) That a meeting be arranged with the site licence holder for Tower Caravan Park, furthermore that prosecution proceedings be

Community Services Committee 27 June 2000

authorised against the site licence holder for breach of site licence condition 3.1. (HHHCC)

207 REGULATION OF POLLSTERS (Minute 133(5/00))

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care advising Members that the Council had no powers to regulate the activity of “pollsters”, persons speaking to members of the public in the street trying to arrange an appointment for a sales person to make a home visit, following a motion considered at Council on 18 April 2000.

Noting the information outlined in the report with regards to the use of street trading controls or the Essex Act Section 11 for the control of such activities, Members considered that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council had successfully removed such persons from their area using the Essex Act. It was further considered that Officers should further investigate the matter with a view to either adoption of Section 11 of the Essex Act, or amendment to existing or introduction of Rochford District Council Bylaws to prevent the activity of pollsters taking place within the District. On a show of hands, it was

Resolved

That Officers investigate further the adoption of Section 11 of the Essex Act, or the amendment of existing or introduction of new Bylaws to prevent the activity of pollsters within the District, with a report being brought to a future Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the resource implication. (HHHCC)(HLS)

208 CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

The Committee noted the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which advised Members of orders placed by the Housing Health and Community Care Division for the period 1 August 1999 to 31 March 2000.

The Meeting closed at 10.50pm.

Chairman

Date