

Community Services Scrutiny Committee30 March 2006
2.30pm to 5.35pm

Present: Councillors J Smith (Chair), Blencowe, Bradnack, Ellis-Miller, Hughes, Hymans, James, Kightley and Slatter.

Also Present: Cllr J Rosenstiel, Executive Councillor Community Development and Leisure, Councillor Smart, Executive Councillor Housing and Health
Non-Voting co-opted members nominated by the Housing Management Board: Mr Stan Best, Mr Brian Haywood and Mr Lance Routledge

For the Information of the Council**06/CS/15 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 19 January 2006 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to a number of corrections of the Declarations of Interest , and signed by the Chair.

06/CS/16 Apologies for Absence

None.

05/CS/17 Declarations of Interest

The following personal and prejudicial interest was declared; the member indicated took no part in the discussion, having left the room, and did not speak or vote:

Cllr Bradnack Moorings Implementation Policy As he lived on Riverside.

06/CS/18 Public Questions**a River Moorings Implementation Policy (see minute 06/CS/20)**

Sarah Johnson spoke on the proposals to manage river moorings more effectively which would have an impact on a number of existing river users, including her, as they had not been successful in obtaining a permit. She pointed out the difficulty of obtaining low cost accommodation in the city. She asked the Committee to recommend the review of the decision to introduce these arrangements.

Councillor J Rosenstiel responded to the comments acknowledging concerns about the acute shortage of housing and the problems of homelessness in the city. She said the proposals had been well publicised and it was accepted that there would be people who would not receive a permit, but with the expected turn over of users these problems would be resolved.

The Head of Active Communities said that she would respond to Ms Johnson in the context of the particular circumstances of her application after the meeting.

The Director of Community Services said that it was anticipated that anyone who was dissatisfied with the process would be dealt with under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

b Withdrawal of Report on Nightingale Avenue recreation Ground

Mrs C Clancey asked for clarification on whether it was proposed to report further on the proposals for Nightingale Recreation Ground.

The Head of Active Communities said that she would be reporting to the Executive Councillor and Scrutiny Committee in the next cycle and would need additional time to deal with the issues raised in the consultation process.

06/CS/19 Request For Additional Funding To Support Previously Approved Project To Refurbish Kings Hedges Learner Pool

This report followed on the original Project Appraisal report to support the Refurbishment of the Kings Hedges Learner Pool, which was approved by the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Leisure in April 2004. The release of extra funding in the sum of £101,500 from section 106 resources was sought to complete the project by July 2006.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor Community Development and Leisure, approved the recommendation.

06/CS/20 Moorings Implementation Policy

The report updated members on the situation on the Moorings Policy and Council Tax relating to Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and referred to the report to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources for 28 March 2006. It also gave details of the proposed implementation and administration of the 48-hour moorings scheme, following the previous reports on the proposals.

Members took account of the comments and the request from a members of the public and discussed whether the length of mooring allocation could be related to the length of individual boats rather than standardised at one length. They also considered whether the 6 moorings allocated to visitor use should be used instead to off-set the demand for permanent mooring space at least in the short term. The decision by the Conservators of the River Cam to defer their decision to ban mooring along Midsummer Common had been deferred to allow the results of the moorings policy to be taken into account. The merits of the appeals process was also discussed.

The officers were concerned that if mooring space length were related to boat length it would lead to management difficulties and possible disputes between users. The Council's complaints process would be used to deal with any dissatisfied applicants for permits. A review would be held later in the year to assess progress with implementation.

A proposal that a further recommendation as set out below be added to those in the report was approved by 6 votes to 0:

'For a transitional period of one year, to retain the six places proposed for 48 hour mooring in the general mooring scheme, subject to assessment of applicants for mooring on appropriate criteria to be made available to existing applicants.'

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report, as amended above, by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor Community Development and Leisure, approved the recommendation.

06/CS/21 Review Of Skatepark Provision In Cambridge City

The report had been prepared in response to a request in March 2005 from the Executive Councillor for Community Development & Leisure to re-examine requirements for the provision of skatepark facilities in Cambridge City. It was based on specific consultation undertaken during 2005 by the Children and Young Peoples' Participation Services (ChYpPs) with young people and skate facility users, and reflected the subsequent consideration of the report findings by the Head of Active Communities and the ChYpPs Manager. A representative of the skateboarder users responded to members questions and spoke in support of proposals to improve and expand the facilities.

Members discussed the proposals and agreed that there were serious concerns about the viability of the Queen Anne Terrace Car Park option, particularly about the safety of skaters and the management of the car park. They also agreed on the importance of further consultation with young people and local residents.

The Head of Active Communities said that the forum provided by the Area Communities would be used to explore the views of local residents on the proposals.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor Community Development and Leisure, approved the recommendation.

06/CS/22 Junction - Service Level Agreement 2006/07

In 2000, the City Council had agreed to enter into a partnership agreement with the Junction CDC which replaced the former grant aid arrangement. The five-year agreement commenced in April 2002 and would expire in March 2007. It gave guaranteed revenue funding of £97,400 per annum in return for an agreed level of activity which was determined through the annual SLA process.

Members were concerned that The Junction was encouraged to retain its experimental approach.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor Community Development and Leisure, approved the recommendation.

06/CS/23 General Fund - 2005/06 Estimated Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances (CD&L)

This report presented a summary of the 2005/06 estimated outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Community Development & Leisure portfolio, compared to the current budget for the year. The position for revenue and capital was reported and anticipated variances from budgets are highlighted, together with explanations. Requests to carry forward funding arising from certain budget underspends into 2006/07 were identified, where they were anticipated at this stage, subject to final outturn.

Members commented on the position of the Parson's Court Drop-In Centre, following its proposed closure at the end of March.

The Committee approved the recommendations by 6 votes to 0 as set out in the officers' report.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Leisure approved the recommendations.

06/CS/24 Community Facilities on Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground

Members noted that the item had been withdrawn from the agenda in the light of the need further consideration of the response to consultation.

06/CS/25 General Fund - 2005/06 Estimated Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances (H&H General Fund)

This report presented a summary of the 2005/06 estimated outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Housing and Health General Fund Services portfolio, compared to the current budget for the year. The position for revenue and capital was reported and anticipated variances from budgets are highlighted, together with explanations. Requests to carry forward funding arising from certain budget underspends into 2006/07 were identified, where they were anticipated at this stage, subject to final outturn.

The Committee approved the recommendations by 6 votes to 0 as set out in the officers' report.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Health approved the recommendations.

06/CS/26 Exclusion of Public

Resolved to exclude members of the public from the meeting for the following two items on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by Category 2 as defined in the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

06/CS/27 Compulsory Purchase Order: Vacant House A

Property A had been vacant for over 5 years and its condition was deteriorating. The owner was known to live and work abroad. Accordingly a notice of intended entry was executed on 22 December 2005 by two Environmental Health Officers accompanied by a Building Surveyor and a Senior Estates Surveyor. The inspection had revealed that the

house was vacant and unfit for human habitation. The property had been valued and total refurbishment costs estimated.

The Committee approved the recommendations by 6 votes to 0 as set out in the officers' report.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Health approved the recommendations.

06/CS/28 Compulsory Purchase Order: Vacant House B

Property A had been empty for approximately two and a half years and its condition was deteriorating. The owner was known to live and work abroad and had not followed up the intention to bring the property back into use within a reasonable time. Accordingly a notice of intended entry was executed on 6 January 2006 by two Environmental Health Officers accompanied by a Building Surveyor and a Senior Estates Surveyor. The inspection revealed that the house was vacant and unfit for human habitation. The property had been valued and total refurbishment costs estimated.

The Committee approved the recommendations by 6 votes to 0 as set out in the officers' report.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Health approved the recommendations.

06/CS/28 Forward Plan Non-Key Decisions Designated for Scrutiny

The Committee noted that there were no non-key decisions on the current version of the Forward Plan (published 17 March 2006) which it wished referred for Scrutiny.

CHAIR