

Community Services Scrutiny Committee6 July 2006
2.30pm to 5.35pm

Present: Councillors Slatter (Chair), Blencowe, Ellis-Miller, Hughes, Hymans, James, Kightley, Liddle, Lynn, Upstone

Non-voting co-optees: Stan Best, Jon Quinn (Tenant/Leaseholder Reps)

Also Present:

Cllr Smith (Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation), Cllr Smart (Executive Councillor for Housing), Cllr Nimmo-Smith, The Leader (for Cllr Stuart Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health)

Cllr Bradnack for items 06/CS/37 and 06/CS/38

For the Information of the Council

06/CS/32 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 30 March and 25 May 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

06/CS/33 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Tony Barnes (Tenant Representative) and Cllr Stuart (Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health).

05/CS/34 Declarations of Interest

None declared by members present at the meeting.

06/CS/35 Public Questions**Report on Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground**

(See Minute 06/CS/40)

A number of residents spoke on proposals to erect a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground. In addition, Mrs Clancey submitted a comprehensive paper commenting on the proposal, which had been circulated to members of the Committee.

Before the residents spoke, Cllr Julie Smith, Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation, said that she was minded to accept the recommendation set out on the agenda for the meeting, and, in addition, to ask officers to carry out additional consultations with young people and residents before the decision was implemented.

Mrs C Clancey, further to her written comments, reminded members of the previous consultations which had been carried out and the results which she felt had reflected the lack of demand for the proposed facility. She said residents felt that there was sufficient provision in neighbouring wards to meet local demand and that the recreation ground was not a suitable location for the facility.

Mr R Thompson queried the basis for the proposed provision and whether the Council was attempting to fulfil a need that had not been substantiated. He wanted to know how the existing facilities on the recreation ground and in the vicinity were measured in terms of recreational provision. He said the MUGA would impinge on the existing facilities such as the football pitches. The examples of MUGAs shown on the website looked garish and

would be intrusive on the recreation ground and would not enhance the environment. The results of the consultations so far showed the majority of residents were against the provision.

Mr D Hirst felt that the existing use of the recreation ground had not been recognised sufficiently. Saturdays were already a busy time with full use of the facilities. As teams came from around the area not just locally, car parking space was a problem and would be exacerbated by any additional facility. The problem was likely to be experienced on Saturdays and at weekends as use of the recreation ground grew.

Mr J Hudson said the previous consultation lacked validity as people adjacent to the recreation ground would not have known it was taking place and had been unable to express an opinion. Further, too few people had responded to make the consultation exercise worthwhile. He gave examples of young people congregating on the recreation ground regularly left litter, including broken bottles and were on the ground until the early hours of the morning at the weekends. He doubted whether the MUGA would be used by the age group it was intended to serve, its potential use needed to be established by a further properly conducted consultation.

Mr D McKeown pointed out that the preferred location for a MUGA would be at Cherry Hinton Hall which could accommodate such a facility and where it would be used by people from a larger catchment area. There were alternate facilities in the vicinity and there seemed no demand for location of a MUGA on the recreation ground

The Head of Active Communities said that she would respond to Mrs Clancey's written comments following the meeting. She responded to the questions by the residents, confirming that the siting of the MUGA was not intended to impinge on the football pitch, that the MUGA was intended to supplement the alternate facilities referred to and be a local facility for use by local residents. She went on to describe the standards set by the National Playing Fields Association in the context of the existing and the proposed provision. She reminded the committee of the consultation process undertaken and the identification of the need in the area for this provision.

Residents were present during the discussion of the item on the Committees' agenda: Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground: Project Appraisal for Approval For Multi-Use Games Area (see minute 06/CS/40 below)

06/CS/36 2006/07 Programme for New Affordable Housing 2006/08

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/23)

The officers' report detailed schemes that were successful in securing Approved Development Programme grant in the recent Housing Corporation bidding round. It considered sites not fully funded by that programme for capital funding from the Housing Capital Investment Plan (HCIP)

The decision was taken in 2005 (Investing in Affordable Housing July 2005) to make Council resources available to approved development partners for new build affordable housing, and to allocate monies received as commuted sums in lieu of S106 on site affordable housing provision, to further schemes.

The report summarised current policies for affordable housing, and recommends criteria for ensuring value for money in the affordable housing capital investment programme. It identified the need for a policy review in this area.

Members discussed the relationship between providing affordable housing and the planning gain from S106 agreements. They also considered an additional recommendation by Councillor Upstone asking officers to bring forward options which go further than the mandatory proposals for consideration of higher energy efficiency standards in accommodation.

The Committee approved, by 7 votes to 0, the recommendations set out in the officers' report and a further recommendation:

That officers bring forward options which go further than the mandatory proposals for consideration of higher energy efficiency standards.

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendation.

06/CS/37 Homelessness Review Contract *(See Record of Decision 06/CS/24)*

The purpose of the officers' report was to present findings and recommendations following a review of the system by which homelessness decisions were carried out. In February 2005, the review process had outsourced to an external contractor, Sternberg, Reed, Taylor and Gill Solicitors on a two-year contract.

It had been agreed that the contract be reviewed in advance of its conclusion in February 2007, to determine whether or not the council should enter into a re-tendering exercise for this work. This current review followed on from a mid-term appraisal in January 2006. At that stage, it had been agreed that the council would not exercise the twelve month break clause option and should continue with the contract for a further year.

Members asked for additional comparative data for processing the homelessness decisions by previous methods to be circulated as soon as possible by the officers.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 7 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendation.

06/CS/38 Home Energy Policy & Strategy *(See Record of Decision 06/CS/25)*

The officers' report outlined the key objectives and plans for the Home Energy Strategy with a view to gaining initial approval before extensive development and consultation (including equality impact assessment) was carried out over the summer.

Previous Cambridge City Council Home Energy policies were now out of date and the appointment of a full-time Home Energy Officer had allowed sufficient time to begin the process of developing a new strategy. The strategy being submitted to the July Community Services Scrutiny Committee was in a basic draft format set out to kick-start the consultation process. This would last for approximately three months until the finalised Home Energy Strategy was submitted to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in Autumn 2006 for final decision by the Executive Councillor.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 7 votes to 0.



The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendation.

06/CS/39 Leisurecard Review

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/26)

The officers report on the consultation and the conclusions following the review in 2004 of the Leisurecard scheme. The report also covered progress made with revising the scheme.

Although the proposed new scheme allied to the Visitor card is reasonably well advanced, the potential of the county smart card scheme had become more apparent in recent weeks. As a result, officers required further time to assess the merits of this scheme and requested approval to bring a report to the January 2007 Scrutiny cycle with final recommendations.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 7 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/40 Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground: Project Appraisal for Approval For Multi-Use Games Area

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/27)

Following the representations made by the members of the public and the comment made by the Executive Councillor on her view on the recommendation set out on the agenda, members discussed the Project Appraisal by the Head of Active Communities describing the project, the history of consultation on the proposal and how the officers had arrived at the conclusion they had, the options available to the Council and the policy justifications for the recommendations.

Members recalled that further opportunity would be available to residents to express their opinions on the proposals if the Executive Councillor were to approve the Project Appraisal as planning permission would have to be sought. They felt that there was sufficient justification for proceeding with the project and that consultation had been satisfactorily carried out.

The Committee approved the recommendation set out on the agenda by 7 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation said that she accepted the recommendation and in the light of public response and the length of time since the last round of public consultation, she would decide as follows:

To approve the construction of a multi use games area on Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground and the additional funding request from S106 resources of £20,000, as noted in the officers' project appraisal, subject to further independent consultation with young people to verify that a multi use games area is the most appropriate facility to meet the needs of young people in the area.

Also to carry out further independent consultation with local residents to identify their specific concerns in relation to provision of this type.

06/CS/41 S106 Community Development Schemes

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/27)

The purpose of the officers' report was to enable members to monitor progress on the planning and implementation of Community Development Projects in the Planning Obligations Strategy and to recommend a further list of schemes for development and potential funding.

Since 2004, £1.698.855 had been received in Section106 contributions for Community Development projects of which £968.000 had been spent on or committed to specific schemes. Most of this expenditure has been in the form of grants to voluntary or charitable organisations to develop or improve the infrastructure of community facilities in response to the impact of new residential developments. As far as possible, grants had been used to enable the recipients to attract additional capital investment from other sources or to stimulate partnerships.

£730.855 remained to be spent and the report makes recommendations on prioritising projects for further development and funding. The list of potential projects, in priority order, was:

- A new "Dec" bus for children and young people.
- Refurbishment of King George Vth Recreation Ground Pavilion, Trumpington
- A city-centre venue for young people
- Equipment for Eastern Gate Court Community Centre (Petersfield)
- Other potential projects, on which there have been informal discussions and also those which might come forward between now and the review of the Planning Obligations Strategy, should remain on a hold list, pending further assessment. Projects that respond to the impact of major development should be given a high priority.

Members discussed the need for consultation with young people on the proposals that affected them and to ensure that they were followed up.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 7 votes to 0.

The Leader approved the recommendation.

06/CS/42 Forward Plan

The Committee noted that there were no non-key decisions on the current version of the Forward Plan (published on 1 July 2006).

06/CS/43 Record of Executive Decision - Reinstatement Of 48 Hour Moorings

In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee noted the above Record of Decision which related to a decision made by the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation (Cllr Smith) without prior scrutiny.