

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

16 November 2006

2.30pm to 7.10pm

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

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

Also Present:

Cllr Smith (Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation), Cllr Smart (Executive Councillor for Housing), Cllr Stuart (Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health) Councillor Herbert (minute 06/CS/51) and Councillor Taylor (prior to discussion on minute 06/CS/62)

For the Information of the Council

06/CS/44 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 6 July 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

06/CS/45 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Upstone, Mr Tony Barnes and Mr Jon Quinn (Tenant Representatives)

05/CS/46 Declarations of Interest

The following members declared the personal interests indicated:

Councillor	Item	Interest
Boyce	15 -	As an appointed Council representative on the Cambridge Sports Hall Trust
Hymans	8 -	Member of the Committee of Friends of Histon Road Cemetery
Hymans	17	As a member of the Castle Community Action Group
James	5 -	Trustee of Church Schools of Cambridge
Kightley	11 -	Employee of NIAB, on site adjacent to those referred to in the report
Slatter	7 -	As supporter of the scheme

06/CS/47 Public Questions

Public Speakers spoke prior to members considering the items on which the public speakers had expressed an interest.

Review of Open Space and Recreation Section 106 Programme

Mrs Clancey said that she was concerned that the schemes for consideration for S106 funding had been approved on an arbitrary basis, without using empirical evidence for assessing priority or validity and without consultation with local residents.

The Chair said that the points made by the speaker would be addressed in discussion and the assessment of priority would be carried out on a fair and equitable basis.

Additional Consultation on Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground

Mr D Thompson said that he was concerned about the premise of the consultation process carried out by RBA Research Ltd, how it was compiled and the basis on which it had been carried out, given that, as yet, no decision had been made. He felt that there was an inherent contradiction in the process and that the Council had been duplicitous in its approach. He pointed out the large number of S106 schemes referred to in the report under another item and said that the funding should be used for providing more open space for residents given the increased volume of development proposed in the area. He referred to a report by the Institute of Public Policy Research, an independent think tank, on the subject of dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Mrs Clancey referred to the history of the scheme and said that as she understood no public support had been demonstrated for the provision of a facility on the Recreation Ground. She was concerned at how the young people had been recruited by the external consultant and the number of young people sampled. She pointed out the proximity of Cherry Hinton Hall grounds and the overlapping provisions for the adjacent wards.

Mr McKeowan referred to a recent press report which indicated that provision of such facilities led to increased vandalism; he felt that it was unlikely that users and residents would be willing to run the gauntlet of 'drunken yobs' who would be attracted to the Recreation Ground by the facility.

The Head of Active Communities confirmed the brief with which RBA had been provided, the means of recruiting the young people sampled and referred to the new facilities provided in St Bede's school which would be opened in the New Year.

The Executive Councillor spoke on the basis of the decision which she had made in July and had been referred to in the officer's report on this item. She said that the residents' comments and concerns would be taken into account in making her decision.

06/CS/48 2006/07 Performance Review and Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets – Community Development & Health Portfolio

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/41)

The report under the Service Performance Review sets out performance for the first six months of 2006/07, highlighting achievements but also detailing those actions that would, or could, fail to meet targets by the end of the financial year. This information would enable the Executive Councillor to consider whether service priorities and resources should be refocused to enable objectives and targets for the current year to be met.

Appendix A to the report set out the overall base budget position for services within the Community Development and Health portfolio, comparing the current budget to the proposed revised budget for the financial year, 2006/07.

An extract from the Capital Plan, showing the current budget for schemes covered by the Community Development & Health portfolio, was presented in Appendix C.

Members referred to a number of schemes included in the report, among them

The proposed City Centre Youth Venue
The City Centre Project for Older People

Community Facilities in the Southern Fringe Developments

Officers responded to members' comments and questions. The Head of Community Development said that he would seek clarification on the use being made of the former Parson's Court facility and on its suitability as a city center youth venue.

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the officers' report, no vote was taken.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development & Health approved the recommendation.

06/CS/49 Project Appraisal: Replacement: Dec – Children and Youth Bus

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/42)

The Dec mobile children and youth bus was a popular service used by the Children and Young Peoples Participation Service. The Dec had been in service since 2000 but was no longer operationally or environmentally viable. The Project Appraisal attached to the report explored options for responding to this situation and recommended that a replacement second hand bus be purchased and equipped using s106 resources for Community Development purposes.

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

Community Development & Health approved the recommendation.

06/CS/50 Project Appraisal: Refurbishment of King George V Recreation Ground Pavilion

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/43)

The report covered a proposal to refurbish and expand the King George Vth Recreation Ground Pavilion to improve its capacity to support the use of the recreation ground and to provide a local community facility for children and young people, in particular.

Two options had been considered:

- a) The refurbishment, extension and environmental upgrade of the pavilion.
- b) Option a) plus the construction of a new changing and shower block.

Funding for the project would come from s106 resources for Community Development and Recreation and Open Space.

Members discussed the efficiency of doing the full scheme in two stages. The Head of Community Development explained that the second phase of the scheme, the addition of a new changing room and shower block, required further consultation and discussion before it could proceed but that it was possible and desirable to go ahead with the first phase to ensure residents and, in particular, children and young people had access to a community facility for which they had waited for some considerable time.

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

The Executive Councillor for Community Development & Health approved the recommendation.

06/CS/51 Crematorium Business Plan

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/44)

The Crematorium business plan set out the vision for the service in 2012 and beyond. It brought together the need to modernise the service and the need to take care of the environment. At the same time it assessed the service in the Best Value context and explored the council's options in respect of service delivery.

In addition there were details for a proactive initiative on the provision of cutting edge services, including green burial and the provision of more memorial choices. The plan deals with the statutory commitments needed for the mercury abatement requirements of Defra in the United Kingdom (UK).

Members welcomed the recommendation that full abatement of mercury in the cremation process be implemented. Some members were concerned at the possible contamination resulting in pollution of land in the vicinity of the crematorium and suggested that soil sampling be undertaken.

There was also discussion about the value of the Charter for the Bereaved. It was explained that a significant number of local authorities had signed up to the Charter and it was felt to be positive in providing guidelines for the service as well as being of benefit to the public.

There was no reference to consulting those with an interest in cemeteries, for instance the Histon Road Cemetery. It was agreed that this omission would be taken up and rectified.

The proposed availability of green burials was also welcomed.

Members agreed that the suggestion for a Municipal Funeral Service should be investigated.

Members discussed the revenue options and were concerned that while the costs of the service and its development should be covered by the charges, the level of charging should not be excessive. They felt that in paragraph 2.1.4 of the recommendations the reference in the heading to a 'high revenue' memorial garden should be deleted.

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

The Executive Councillor for Community Development & Health approved the recommendation.

06/CS/52 2006/07 Performance Review and Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets – Housing Portfolio

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/45)

The report set out performance for the first six months of 2006/07, highlighting achievements but also detailed those actions that would, or could, fail to meet targets by the end of the financial year. This information would enable the Executive Councillor to

consider whether service priorities and resources should be refocused to enable objectives and targets for the current year to be met.

Appendix A of the report set out the overall base budget position for services within the Housing portfolio, comparing the current budget to the proposed revised budget for the financial year, 2006/07.

An extract from the Capital Plan showing the current budget for schemes covered by the Housing portfolio, was presented in Appendix C. The Housing Investment Programme was presented in Appendix E.

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

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendation.

06/CS/53 Home Energy Strategy

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/46)

The Council's new Medium Term Objectives included the commitments to agree targets for carbon dioxide reduction, improve the energy rating of housing in the city and to help people understand how they personally can make changes to live more sustainably and contribute to carbon reduction".

The Council had recently signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. This acknowledged that climate change was occurring and that it would continue to have far-reaching effects on the UK's people and places, economy, society and environment. In signing the Declaration, the Council welcomed the opportunity to lead the response to climate change at a local level.

More than a quarter of carbon dioxide emissions in the City were as a result of the energy used to heat, light and power homes.

The advent of a full-time Home Energy Officer had allowed time to develop a strategy to tackle home energy issues that would have effect across all tenures within Cambridge City.

The aim of the new Home Energy Strategy was to: "Increase the efficient use of energy in existing homes in Cambridge and reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide (and other greenhouse gases) associated with this use of energy in order to mitigate climate change."

There was also a need to inform and facilitate improvements in the households that need it most – for example, housing conditions of vulnerable private sector households tend to be worse than those of other households in the private sector.

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/54 The Cambridge Challenge – Proposals to Select an Affordable Housing Delivery Partner for Key Sites

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/47)

The Housing Corporation proposed to select a single Strategic Delivery Partner to deliver the affordable housing on three major sites in the Cambridge sub-region. Of these sites, two were mostly in Cambridge City (Southern Fringe and Northwest Cambridge), whilst the third, Northstowe, was in South Cambridgeshire. The affordable housing element of all three was already being developed as a partnership between the two authorities.

The HC proposed to enter into a relationship with the selected partner for at least five years, with potential to review and extend if the arrangement is successful. This offer of an ability to negotiate funding over a longer period, outside of usual one or two year bidding cycles, brought much needed certainty to the delivery of major sites.

Other advantages in selecting a single Strategic Partner included opportunities for efficiencies through volume procurement, enabling more units to be delivered within the grant available. Working with one partner maximised opportunities to establish strong local management, and to widen the role of the strategic partner in relation to community development or other public realm management.

The Council, as a key stakeholder, had been invited by the HC to participate in the selection process. Specifically, to help to develop the prospectus and criteria for assessment and to participate in the analysis of bids received.

Members in discussion raised the following concerns: that

- the scheme would tie the Council to a long term partner
- there was no reference to the implications if the partnership scheme was not taken up
- the lack of detailed information

The Head of Community Services explained that the proposal was at an early stage and a detailed report setting out the implications for the council, the criteria for the selection of an RSL partner and the benefits of working long term with that partner. The issues would be the subject of workshops and presentations involving stakeholders' organizations. The option not to take up the proposal could be reviewed at a later stage.

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/55 2006/07 Performance Review and Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets – Arts & Recreation Portfolio

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/48)

The Service Performance Review set out performance for the first six months of 2006/07, highlighting achievements but also detailing those actions that would, or could, fail to meet targets by the end of the financial year. This information would enable the Executive Councillor to consider whether service priorities and resources should be refocused to enable objectives and targets for the current year to be met.

Appendix A of the report set out the overall base budget position for services within the Arts and Recreation portfolio, comparing the current budget to the proposed revised budget for the financial year, 2006/07.

An extract from the Capital Plan, showing the current budget for schemes covered by the Arts & Recreation portfolio, was presented in Appendix C of the report.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/56 Cambridgeshire Horizons Arts and Culture Strategy

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/49)

Cambridgeshire Horizons had commissioned the strategy, which was one of a suite of quality of life documents. It had been launched in July 2006. The four reports were considered by Strategy Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 10 July 2006, and it had been agreed that, while there were some caveats and issues to be clarified, the general direction of the strategies should be endorsed.

It had also agreed that further work be undertaken by officers in consultation with members in order to determine the relative importance of arts and culture facilities and sports facilities within the growth agenda and the resources which the Council was prepared to allocate to help to deliver the sub-regional strategies. It was determined that the status of these two strategies be agreed by the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation following this work and consideration by Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/57 Folk Festival Box Office

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/50)

Following unprecedented demand for Folk Festival tickets in 2006 and consequent pressure on the box office, members had requested a report detailing issues around the supply of tickets. This report sets out measures already agreed for 2007, and options and issues where these have yet to be finally decided.

Members discussed the options and asked for consideration for means of keeping the queue for tickets informed.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/58 Scope of Sports Strategy 2007-12

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/51)

The Council's Sports Services Strategy (2002-2007) had approved by the Executive Councillor for Community Development & Leisure in March 2003 following the Best Value Review of Sports Services in 2002. This report highlights outcomes from the existing strategy, and identified drivers for future consideration in developing a revised approach, as well as a timetable for consultation, analysis and decision-making.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/59 A Major Sports Facilities Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/52)

The report gave an overview of the Major Sports Facilities Strategy for the sub region, one of four 'Quality of Life' documents commissioned by Cambridgeshire Horizons to help shape and guide growth across the sub-region.

The report sought to clarify the purpose of this document and identify the resources required to take forward development of its recommended approach.

In the future there would be a need to consider the relative importance that the Council gave to the provision of major sports facilities in the sub-region so that Members could decide what resources they were prepared to allocate in order to deliver them.

At Strategy Scrutiny Committee on 6 July 2006, the Leader of the Council considered the four Quality of Life reports and, whilst acknowledging there were some caveat and issues in each document to be clarified, a decision was made to endorse the general direction proposed in each of the four strategies.

In her decision of 6 July, the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation instructed:

- officers to carry out further work, in consultation with all Members, to assist Executive Members in deciding the relative importance of major sports facilities and culture and arts facilities within the growth agenda and the resources which the City Council is prepared to allocate to help deliver these sub-regional strategies
- That the status of the 2 strategies within the Council be agreed by the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation on 16 November 2006 following the work above and consideration by Community Services Scrutiny Committee

An implementation group comprising Horizons, local authorities, the County Sport Partnership and Sport England had met on 3 October 2006 to consider the next steps, and had agreed to continue to meet on a quarterly basis in order to progress the strategy.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/60 Review of Open Space and Recreation Section 106 Programme

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/53)

Following the adoption of the new Cambridge Local Plan and the updating of the Council's Open Space Standards in July 2006, the programme for implementation of Section 106 Open Space and Recreation funded projects was being reviewed.

The current programme had initially been approved in 2002 and out of 64 approved projects, 20 are now completed. Many of these originally approved projects had been suggestions that arose from consultation between members of the public, ward councillors and officers. A total of 30 additional schemes had been suggested in the last 18 months. It was the view of the Council's Corporate Urban Growth Group (CUGG) that both sets of projects required strategic assessment in order that the list could be 'pruned and prioritised' to ensure the programme has an up to date verification. In addition, officers had been asked to identify a more efficient, timely and cost effective method of delivery.

The proposals for the revised list, programme and procurement process had been presented to Area Committees during the autumn cycle, and the comments received from Members and members of the public had been collated and considered in detail during preparation of this report.

The Head of Active Communities had been advised by the Director of Environment & Planning that, if approved, the revised list of projects would be taken forward in the Planning Obligation Strategy (POS) report to the Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport in the March 2007 Environment Scrutiny Committee cycle. The POS was then subject to public consultation prior to final approval in July 2007. This meant that previously unapproved schemes referred to in the open space and recreation list (i.e. 'new' projects) could not be endorsed or funded until final approval was given to the POS. The timing for the POS review set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) had had to be adjusted, in common with a number of other Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The revised timings were set out in the amended LDS to be reported to Environment Scrutiny Committee on 07/11/06 and reflected revised workload implications.

Members acknowledged the work done by officers in bringing the developments to a prioritisable format. There was some doubt about the points system that had been devised to assess the worth of each scheme, but it was accepted that some form of system had needed to be devised to enable the initial assessments to be undertaken. The Director of Community Services said that this would enable the schemes to be given individual consideration and a more structured approach to be taken.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/61 Management of Events on Midsummer Common

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/54)

In response to a request from Councillor Durrant, the report detailed how the Licensing team, Active Communities, Arts and Entertainments, Statutory Agencies and the Organising Committee of Strawberry Fair had responded to changes in the licensing of regulated entertainment.

The Licensing Act 2003 had intended to legislate 'licensable activities' rather than events. Large events in close proximity to local residents had an impact. How these were assessed and arrangements put in place to mitigate the consequences of holding events such as Strawberry Fair and Midsummer Fair were detailed and documented in the Event Control Procedures, Structures and Documentation, post event Safety Advisory Group minutes and reports.

The Premises Licence held by Active Communities and the Open Space Event Agreement operated by Active Communities were both intended to regulate the activities and detail the controls and measure to be put in place by both the Hirer and Cambridge City Council to ensure compliance with the Premises License, Health and Safety and therefore minimise the impact of the event to residents in the vicinity.

Officers from Arts and Entertainments and Active Communities had been made aware of concerns from local residents and elected members from this year's Strawberry Fair and Midsummer Fair, and agreed further work needed with Hirers and Statutory Agencies to address these identified issues and concerns. The report detailed the approach to be used to address these requirements.

Members asked what arrangements were suggested for their local input as complaints were frequently made to them. The officers confirmed that there would be opportunities provided for ward councillors and residents to comment on issues.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/62 Additional Consultation on Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground

(See Record of Decision 06/CS/55)

The Chair read a statement by Councillor Taylor, Ward Councillor, who had hoped to be present at the discussion but had had to leave before it started. The statement expressed Councillor Taylor's support for the proposed facility on Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground.

In considering the report Members took into account the comments by the residents.

In July 2006, the Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation had considered a project appraisal in relation to the proposed construction of a multi use games area at Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground and had made the following decisions:

'1 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.

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

Over the autumn period, RBA Research Limited had been commissioned to undertake the additional consultation. This report outlined their findings and make recommendations for action.

The report covered the methodology employed by RBA Research to assess the views of young people and residents and the findings as a result of the consultation. And the conclusion of the consultation:

In conclusion, RBA's research with young people verified that the plans for a multi use games area are still relevant. Although young people do have some reservations about the potential for a multi use games area to potentially attract vandalism, they do not feel that this possibility should override the need for the provision.

RBA's consultation with residents reveals deep opposition amongst a significant number to the plans. Whilst the RBA report provides an indication of a number of ways in which the Council might alleviate residents' concerns, the consultants felt that it was not really possible to hold a constructive discussion around this issue given residents' entrenched standpoint.

Members were reminded that the project would require planning approval and the process of consultation with residents normally undertaken would provide an opportunity for further dialogue with residents and other interested parties.

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

The Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation approved the recommendation.

06/CS/63 Forward Plan

The Committee noted that there was no non-key decisions listed on the Forward Plan to be published on 17 November for consideration at this stage.

06/CS/64 Records of Executive Decision

In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee noted the below Records of Decision which related to decisions made by the listed Executive Councillors without prior scrutiny.

- Employment Foundation Service (Executive Councillor for Community Development & Health)
- Re-tendering of Street Outreach and Assessment Services (Executive Councillor for Housing)
- Procurement of IT System for Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings (Executive Councillor for Housing)
- Grant & Loan Policy Amendment (Executive Councillor for Housing)
- Ditchburn Place and Stanton House Extra Care Services (Executive Councillor for Housing)

CHAIR