



A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

23 JUNE 2010

PRESENT:-

P.M. Posnett (Chairman)
P.M. Chandler, M.C.R. Graham MBE
S. Dungworth, M.R. Sheldon, J. Wyatt, D.R. Wright

As Observer
Councillor J.T. Orson

Chief Executive
Corporate Director (KA)
Head of Social and Economic Development, Chief Accountant
Democracy Officer

C11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dean, Freer and Holt.

C12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C13. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 19 May 2010 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

C14. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Minute Number P89. Policy, Finance and Administration Committee (270110 – Affordable Housing Project)

It is requested that the Community and Social Affairs Committee investigates a policy that looks at withdrawing from providing garage facilities to enable land to be released for affordable housing.

The Chairman stated that a garage management policy would be created and then presented to the September Community and Social Affairs Committee. Councillor Graham enquired what the perceived outcome of the policy would be. The Chairman confirmed that it would be to ascertain the best use of garage sites.

C15. TASK GROUPS

(a) a 'Housing Landlord Services' task group be formed to have the same terms of reference of the previous individual tasks groups of the Sheltered Housing, Housing Consultation and Housing Options Task Group respectively, as currently they all link into services around current and potential housing tenants. Members on this task group be as follows :-
P.M. Chandler, P.M. Posnett and Councillor Moncrieff.

(b) the Committee reconstituted the following Task Groups as detailed below.

Task Group	Terms of Reference
Telephony Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review use of the new telephone system to ensure it meets the needs of all stakeholders working practice, procedures and work allocation of specific areas that are identified <p><u>2009/10 Membership</u> P.M. Chandler, A. Jackson, M. Moore and D.R. Wright</p> <p><u>2010 11 Membership</u> P.M. Chandler, A. Jackson, M. Moore and D.R. Wright</p> <p>The Corporate Director (KA) stated that a lot of the task groups areas of productivity was moving into the Efficiency Task Group's remit. The Corporate Director (KA) further stated that he would bring a report back on the matter to the Community and Social Affairs Committee in September.</p>
Task Group	Terms of Reference
Housing Repairs Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the new Housing Repairs contract. <p><u>2009/10 Membership</u> M. Moore, J.T. Orson ,P.M. Posnett and Pru Chandler</p> <p><u>2010 11 Membership</u> M. Moore, J.T. Orson ,P.M. Posnett and Pru Chandler</p>

C16. FAIRMEAD REGENERATION PROJECT- UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

The Head of Social and Economic Development submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated) to:-

- update Members on the progress that had been made in relation to a regeneration project for the Fairmead Estate;
- seek approval on the next phase of the Fairmead Regeneration project, which would enable the project to progress to project planning and potential investment

The Head of Social and Economic Development stated that the project would be subject to feasibility studies. Councillor Graham enquired if the Council could afford to go forward with the project now and if the project could go out of date.

The Head of Social and Economic Development stated that there were affordability issues but the capital programme had been earmarked to meet the decent homes standard and there was a certain allocation for a stock condition survey; the costs for which were less than originally estimated. The Head of Social and Economic Development further stated that if the Council waited until 2013/14 it was possible that some revalidation work would be required.

Councillor Wyatt considered that the Council had spent a lot of money on the project already and noted that it would provide extra housing for other schemes. Councillor Illingworth agreed with Councillor Wyatt and noted that momentum had to be maintained to ensure the Council was in a position to act when funding was available.

Councillor Chandler enquired where the existing tenants would live whilst the works were being undertaken. The Head of Social and Economic Development stated that there would be some detailed discussions with the affected residents.

The Head of Social and Economic Development confirmed that decisions would be sought from Members about non-allocation of properties. The Chairman enquired how many owner occupiers would be affected. The Head of Social and Economic Development stated that there would be extensive consultation with property owners and any resulting costs would be built in.

The Chief Executive asked if there was any merit in asking for the consultant's professional opinion about the lifespan of the document. The Chief Executive stated that Members had received a letter from Mr Skerritt noting that funds could have been spent on other areas which were equally as important. The Head of Social and Economic Development responded that he had had a meeting with Mr Skerritt and the discussion was based around the investment required in housing stock.

Councillor Sheldon moved the recommendations within the Committee report. Councillor Dungworth was a seconder for this proposal

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried with 3 in favour (3 Members abstained from voting.)

RESOLVED that

- (1) the current progress being made in relation to the Fairmead Regeneration Project be noted;
- (2) the next phase of the project, which would be the scheme finalisation project be approved;
- (3) an increase to the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of £25k for 2010/11 to fund this next phase funded from Housing Revenue Account capital receipts (paragraph 5.0 refers) be approved.

(Councillor J.T. Orson here left the meeting.)

C17. PROVISIONAL YEAR END POSITION - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

The Chief Accountant submitted a report on behalf of the Head of Financial Services (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) to provide Members with information on the provisional year end position for 2009-10, which was subject to external audit certification, and the implications for the working balance on the Housing Revenue Account.

Councillor Chandler stated that there was great concern about void properties and some of the voids needed to be sold or repaired for people to move back into. Councillor Graham enquired about the employee related savings. The Head of Social and Economic Development stated that the savings were from an interim period where the repairs team was not fully complimented. The Head of Social and Economic Development further stated that they had been unable to recruit to the post of Senior Housing Maintenance Officer and they were looking to develop the current team to address the skills shortage.

Councillor Sheldon enquired if the service could be shared to which the Chief Executive replied that it would this would be difficult.

RESOLVED that

(1) the variations to the 2009-10 original estimates and the latest approved estimates as set out in the attached paper and the effect on the working balance be noted;

(2) the updated Housing Revenue Account Improvement Plan be noted.

The Chairman stated that a special meeting of the Committee would be required to consider the Government offer of Housing Revenue Account reform as a response was required by 6 July 2010.

C18. VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT- REFRESH CONSULTATION

The Head of Social and Economic Development submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated) for Members to consider the Compact Leicestershire document between the Leicestershire Public Services Agencies (PSA) and the Voluntary and Community Sector in Leicestershire and to respond to the document as part of the consultation process.

Councillor Sheldon enquired how the tax freeze would affect the voluntary sector. The Head of Social and Economic Development stated that it may be a point of clarification within the response.

The Corporate Director (KA) noted that the locality agenda needed to be reflected within the document. Councillor Graham requested that the final report be brought back to Members. It was agreed this would be facilitated at a Member consultation meeting.

RESOLVED that

(1) the Compact Leicestershire document be noted;

- (2) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Social and Economic Development, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee to formally respond to the consultation on the Compact Leicestershire document.

C19. PERFORMANCE REPORT- COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Head of Social and Economic development submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated) to update Members on community safety performance and the activity of Melton Borough Council and its Partners in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour during 2009/10.

Councillor Graham requested a quick response on the Melton Court closure consultation. The Chairman requested that Officers be commended for their hard work and cross agency approach. Councillor Chandler agreed the work had been very good but requested further support in villages on anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the successful performance during 2009 be noted;
- (2) the changes within the Community Safety arena as a whole be noted.
- (3) the importance of Safer Melton as a priority be confirmed.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the Public be excluded during the consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Access to Information : Exempt Information) under paragraph 3.

The Chairman, in exercising her statutory powers, agreed that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency due to the issue being raised following despatch of the agenda

C20. URGENT BUSINESS - EXIT STRATEGY : FREE SWIMMING

The Head of Social and Economic Development submitted a report.

The Chairman suggested retaining free swimming for young people until September. Councillor Sheldon was a seconder for this proposal. The Chairman requested that a press release be issued to confirm the decision.

RESOLVED that free swimming for under 16's be retained until the end of the summer school holiday for 2010.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman