

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

10th March 2005

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Southern (Chair), Councillor Richards (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Isham, Lauro and Taylor.

Conservative Group

Councillors Harrison, Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Renwick.

In Attendance

Councillors Bambrick and Mulgrew (Labour Group) and Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group).

APOLOGY

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Mrs. Walton (Independent Member).

HCS/92. MINUTES

The Open Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 6th January 2005 and of the Meeting held on 3rd February 2005 were taken as read, approved as true records and signed by the Chair.

HCS/93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harrison declared a personal interest in the Community Partnership Scheme item regarding a Recreational Facility Pre-Build Project at Aston-on-Trent.

HCS/94. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND REPORTS

Councillor Isham reported that the Sure Start building at Woodville had been opened officially that day and the facility would predominantly support families with young children. This was an excellent facility for the District. Councillor Taylor advised that he was very proud of the investment in Woodville.

Councillor Lauro reported that he had recently attended the last Meeting of the Derbyshire Peak Park Recreation Forum. This organisation was now to be known as Derbyshire Sport and the staff structure and committee structure had been refined. Derbyshire Sport would meet three times a year. Councillor Lauro undertook to provide a more comprehensive report on the funding of this body to a future Meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Bambrick submitted a question with the permission of the Chair regarding Alma Road, Newhall. He advised that the Housing Department had received a quotation from Derbyshire County Council to undertake repairs to a section of road approximately 100 metres from Oversetts Road to Ashleigh Avenue and Oakleigh Avenue housing stock which was owned by the Council together with a section of land that ran parallel with Alma Road, Newhall. Councillor Bambrick was mindful that this was not in accordance with the Budget Procedure but asked if funds of approximately £50,000 could be

identified to assist the residents of this area to have reasonable access to their homes. He also suggested that the Council consulted with Derbyshire County Council regarding the possibilities of making this a 'no through road' to cut down on traffic. The Director of Community Services advised that a report on this issue suggesting a way forward would be submitted to the next Meeting of the Committee.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/95. PRESENTATION BY SPORT AND LEISURE MANAGEMENT (SLM)

The Committee received a presentation by Charlie Crane (Centre Manager), Dan Carvell (Banana Fitness Manager), William Walsh (Food and Beverage Manager) and Simon Fearn (Area Manager)(Hinckley Centre Manager). Mr. Crane advised of the 'Quest' and 'Feel Alive' scheme operating at the Leisure Centre. He reported that currently there were 1,150 individuals on the 'Aquarius Swim Development' scheme. Special events such as the 'School Safety Day', Inter-Town Sports and Derbyshire Youth Games had been held at the Leisure Centre. Additional posts of Customer Services Manager, Aquarius Co-ordinator (part-time) and Marketing and Programming Officer had been appointed.

Mr. Carvell advised that the 'Banana Fitness' scheme currently had 1,260 members. Officers were to introduce the junior membership 'Mad for It' during 2005 and two schools currently used the facility. On 16th April 2005 free classes and personal training was to be offered with a view to increasing use of the 'Banana Fitness' suite.

Mr. Walsh advised that the 'Stir Café' was now open, the bar function room had been refurbished and healthy options were on the menu at the Leisure Centre.

Mr. Fearn advised the Committee that SLM were hoping to win more contracts in the future. An exciting scheme called 'Oxygen' was to be introduced at the Leisure Centre by the end of 2005 and an 'Aphelion' computerised booking system was to be introduced.

Councillor Carroll asked what plans the Leisure Centre staff had to encourage people with disabilities to use the Centre. Mr. Crane advised that disability groups currently used the facility every day and Officers were currently working on access issues arising from the Disability Discrimination Act. Councillor Carroll asked what advertising for the service was undertaken across the District and was advised that the Centre advertised in newspapers, undertook leaflet drops and advertised on radio stations.

Councillor Lauro referred to the 'Get Active in the Forest' project and asked if Mr. Crane envisaged a chance to form partnerships with other such organisations. Mr. Crane advised that he was currently working with Pam Baskerville, Debbie Charlton and Stuart Batchelor in this regard. Councillor Richards queried the status of the GP Referral Scheme and was advised that this was currently under review. Staff were to be trained in early April 2005 regarding this scheme and thereafter it would be operational again.

The Chair thanked the representatives of the Green Bank Leisure Centre for their presentation.

HCS/96. AIR TRAINING CORPS (ATC) BUILDING – EUREKA PARK

The Committee was advised that the ATC had been long-standing tenants of the Council at Eureka Park, Swadlincote. They currently had two temporary timber buildings located at the Park with a link between the two blocks. They had a lease agreement with the Council that covered the land on which the buildings were located. This lease was currently in the process of being renewed. The ATC were seeking and had the necessary planning approval to erect a more appropriate single modular building with brick slip cladding to walls and a hipped roof, on the same site as the existing building.

The main reasons for the work from the ATC's viewpoint was that the current buildings were beyond economic repair, no longer suitable to meet the needs of a modern youth organisation and presented a poor image for attracting and retaining recruits. From the Council's viewpoint, whilst the ATC were excellent tenants the existing buildings were aesthetically unattractive in a park setting and replacement of the buildings would be a positive step forward.

The Committee was advised that one of the conditions of the planning permission was the felling and replacement of 20 mature Poplars and a Crack Willow that currently screened the building. They would be replaced with native species, standard trees. This condition was based on advice from the consultant used by the Council's Planning Department. Negotiations had taken place with the ATC and the Council's own in-house horticultural expert to identify whether there were other options available that would retain some screening whilst at the same time allow the newly planted trees to mature. It was reported that unfortunately the Poplars and the Crack Willow were over-mature and whilst pollarding would extend the life of the trees for a number of years there was a strong possibility that it would introduce fungal infections throughout the standard trees. Therefore, the only practical option open if Members wished to approve the ATC's request was to fell 20 mature trees and agree to their replacement with two heavy standard trees and 15 standard trees native to this country. It would be the responsibility of the ATC to plant and maintain the trees until they become fully established.

Councillor Taylor expressed some concern regarding the felling of the trees but was advised that established trees would be replanted as replacements.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the ATC's request to replace their existing temporary buildings at Eureka Park, Swadlincote be approved.***
- (2) That in accordance with (1) above, permission be granted for the ATC to fell a number of mature trees and replace them with standard trees to facilitate the erection of the building and its continued safe use.***

HCS/97. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

The Committee was advised that three applications were received for the fourth bidding round of 2004/05 asking for £27,296 against the remaining budget for the year of £35,108. Two applications were recommended to receive a grant and one recommended to receive additional scrutiny prior to resubmission. The Committee was advised that the scoring of the grants was undertaken when the Assessment Panel had been quorate, however, when the recommendations for grant approvals were made only the Chair remained present at the Panel Meeting. Councillor Carroll stated that she was not comfortable that the Panel had been inquorate and suggested that the matters be referred back to the Panel for reconsideration.

RESOLVED:-

That this matter be referred back to the Community Partnership Scheme Assessment Panel for consideration.

HCS/98. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**RESOLVED:-**

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Special Meeting of 6th January 2005 and of the Meeting held on 3rd February 2005 were received.

MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND REPORTS

Members of the Committee raised various questions regarding the staffing of the Grounds Maintenance Service.

STRATEGY FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF PLAY EQUIPMENT (Paragraph 8)

The Committee received a detailed report regarding the Strategy for the Procurement of Play Equipment. The Procurement Strategy was outlined and a recommendation made to the Finance and Management Committee accordingly.

R. W. SOUTHERN

CHAIR