

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

8th June 2006

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

Councillor Southern (Chair), Councillor Richards (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Dunn, Jones, Shepherd, Tilley and Whyman M.B.E.

**Conservative Group**

Councillors Mrs. Hood (substituting for Councillor Harrison), Hood, Mrs. Littlejohn and Shaw.

**Independent Member**

Councillor Mrs. Walton

**In Attendance**

Councillors Bell and Wilkins (Labour Group).

**APOLOGY**

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Harrison (Conservative Group).

HCS/1. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th April 2006 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

HCS/2. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND REPORTS**

(a) Citizens Advice Bureau

The Committee received a verbal report from Councillor Carroll on the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Members were advised that at present, the Citizens' Advice Bureau was solvent and it was important that the Bureau retained the Service Level Agreement with the Council. Councillor Carroll paid tribute to the work of the Bureau and advised that it had been very successful in attracting volunteers. It was confirmed that the Annual General Meeting of the Bureau would take place on 26th July 2006, to which all Members would be invited.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the content of Councillor Carroll's report on the Citizens' Advice Bureau be noted.***

(b) Association of Retained Council Housing

The Committee received a verbal report from Councillor Richards on the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH). Councillor Richards advised that an inaugural Meeting of ARCH had taken place and that a National Executive Board had been appointed. Members were informed that the full

membership of ARCH was for those local authorities which had made a decision to retain council housing signed off by the relevant government department and associate membership was for those authorities waiting for the decision to be signed off.

The aims of ARCH were confirmed as:-

- To lobby government for a sustainable long term financial strategy to support residents' choice for retention of council housing in local authority ownership and management.
- To share good practice and exemplify the success and long term benefits of a local authority ownership and management.
- To champion the content of a comprehensive housing service and the integral role of retention of council houses as a local authority's strategic and enabling role.
- To promote opportunities for collaborative working and joint commissioning of services and policy development to support the objectives of stock retention.

Councillor Richards confirmed that he would report back to this Committee on a regular basis on the work of ARCH.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the content of Councillor Richards' report on the Association of Retained Council Housing be noted.***

(c) Survey of Travellers Needs

The Chair requested that Derbyshire County Council be requested as a matter of urgency to prepare the appropriate survey of traveller needs as this was an important piece of work when the District Council was considering planning applications relating to travellers.

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that he would pursue this matter with Derbyshire County Council.

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

HCS/3. **GREEN BANK LEISURE CENTRE – PRESENTATION: SPORT AND LEISURE MANAGEMENT**

The Committee was advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda as one of the presenters of the item unfortunately could not attend the Meeting due to a family bereavement.

HCS/4. **END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report which provided information to Members on the end of year position for housing services and which indicated the proposed deleted indicators and targets for the next three years.

The Committee was advised that the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) were nationally set targets for housing services to report on. In addition to these targets, the Council had its own local indicators to show priorities within housing services.

Members were informed that this year had been a positive one in terms of Best Value Performance Indicators for housing services. 72% of all indicators with a target had been achieved and only 15% of those were below target (shown in red in the report).

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Committee:-***

- (1) Notes the end of year performance and targets for Housing Services.***
- (2) Accepts the next 3-year targets.***
- (3) Notes the proposed deleted indicators [highlighted grey in the report] for 2006-07, subject to it being agreed that any grey indicators which in future show a five percent minus variation will be reported back to the Committee.***
- (4) Requests that Performance Reports in future include information on the Council's performance in relation to regional and national benchmarking.***
- (5) Requests that a report be submitted to a future meeting on whether it is possible for an alternative method to be introduced for dealing with small debts in respect of tenant arrears.***
- (6) Requests Officers to contact Community Transport to see if the organisation can provide any assistance or information which may assist in the letting of "hard to let" properties.***

HCS/5. **MANAGEMENT OF THE GREEN BANK LEISURE CENTRE**

The Committee considered a report on the contract in respect of the Green Bank Leisure Centre.

Members were advised that the Council's contract with Sport and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM Ltd) commenced on 1st April 1998 for a period of five years, with an option subject to the agreement of both parties to extend for a further five years. This option had been taken and the current contract was due to expire on 31st March 2008.

The Committee was informed that in order to allow sufficient time to undertake a procurement process for a partner to manage the leisure centre, it was important to commence this as soon as possible. Members were advised that for the next Meeting of the Committee, Officers would produce a detailed timetable for the contract process together with recommendations on how the process would be managed.

The Green Bank Leisure Centre was the Council's most well used public building and one of its most significant assets. A key element in developing the current contract arrangements was Members' involvement in ensuring that their vision for the Centre was reflected in the contract documentation produced and the partner appointed. The Committee was asked to nominate Members to

serve on a working group which would work with Officers at key stages in the contract process to agree strategy, prior to reporting back to this Committee.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Committee:-***

***(1) Notes the content of the report.***

***(2) Approves the appointment of a Working Group comprising Councillors Southern, Richards and Dunn to work with officers during the procurement process for the future management of the Green Bank Leisure Centre.***

HCS/6. **MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR MAURICE LEA MEMORIAL PARK**

The Committee considered a report on the Management Plan for the Maurice Lea Memorial Park.

The Committee was advised that the capital works at the Maurice Lea Memorial Park were now substantially complete, but before the Heritage Lottery Fund would formally sign off the project and release the remainder of the grant funding, a Ten Year Management Plan for the site would have to be approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Members were informed that the Management Plan for the Park site had evolved over time, meetings had been held with key stakeholders and evidence obtained from public consultation exercises as the restoration project had been developed. From the consultation and discussions, a key overriding objective of “to increase use, appreciation and enjoyment of the Park, its history and facilities by local people” had been identified.

In order to meet the above objective the following issues had been highlighted:-

- Develop the audience for the Park in its widest sense.
- Tackle the social problems the Park faced and address any conflicts that existed between users of the site.
- Address the financial resource issues that affected the Park.
- Address the skill resource issues that affected the Park.

Members were informed at the present time, no additional revenue funding was sought to implement the Management Plan. Since 2004/05, £24,000 per annum had been set aside in the General Fund Reserve Account to fund additional work at the Park site. It was confirmed that it was anticipated that this would be sufficient to fund the majority of actions identified in the Management Plan.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the main actions identified in the Management Plan for the Maurice Lea Memorial Park be approved by the Committee and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee be authorised to sign documents to this effect on behalf of the Council.***

**HCS/7. PLAY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report which sought the agreement of Members for the Strategic Sports Group to develop a Play Development Strategy and outlined the process for allocating Big Lottery Funding for Play.

The Committee was informed that the Big Lottery had allocated £200,000 to South Derbyshire and the allocation would be dependent upon the development of a Play Strategy and a multi-agency co-ordination group to enable this funding to be allocated. The provision of a further £100,000 per annum for three years capital funding from the District Council, added to the £30,000 per year from the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership for youth play provision meant that Play had become a major issue for the District. To ensure that the development of Play was recognised at a strategic level and had appropriate representation, it was proposed that the Strategic Sports Group managed the process and reported to the Lifelong Learning and Culture Theme Group of the South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership.

The Committee was advised that the Big Lottery had placed Play on the strategic agenda of local authorities which would stimulate a co-ordinated and exciting programme of activities and facilities to support the development of young people across the district.

Members noted that the proposed Play Development Strategy and creation of a Play Partnership would ensure that children's play was at the forefront of Council service delivery and would contribute to the improved health of young people and a reduction in youth-related nuisance and crime. It would also assist the Council in achieving its Corporate and Community Plan targets and consequently support the Best Value Review of Cultural Services and Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) inspection.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Committee authorises the Strategic Sports Group to develop a Play Development Strategy and develop and deliver a process for the allocation of Big Lottery Play funds in South Derbyshire.***
- (2) That the Play Development Strategy be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.***

**HCS/8. 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 Minutes held on 27th April 2006 were received.***

**PROVISION OF NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A PREFERRED SUPPLIER (Paragraph 3)**

***The Committee considered a report and approved proposals in respect of the provision of new play equipment and the appointment of a preferred supplier.***

R.W. SOUTHERN

CHAIR