

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

6th February 2003

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Southern (Chair), Councillor Lauro (Vice-chair), Councillors Carroll, Dunn, Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Rose, Routledge, Stone, Taylor and Whyman M.B.E.

Conservative Group

Councillors Hood and Lemmon

In Attendance

Councillors Bell and Harrington (Labour Group).

HCS/89. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st November 2002 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

HCS/90. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND REPORTS**

The Chair advised that the Council was a member of the East Midlands Tenants' Participation Forum. It had received a certificate of commendation in the UK Housing Awards. The Award would be presented on Saturday, 29th March 2003 at Melton Mowbray. Representatives of the Tenants Advisory and Consultation Team would accompany the Chair and the Tenant Participation Officer. Other Members were welcome to attend.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/91. **ETWALL LEISURE CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED

That the Open Minutes of the Etwall Leisure Centre Joint Management Committee Meetings held on 15th July and 14th October 2002 be received.

HCS/92. **SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY (SOUTH DERBYSHIRE)**

It was reported that as part of a Derbyshire Sports Facility Strategy, the Derbyshire and Peak Park Sports and Recreation Forum (DPPSRF) had commissioned consultants to research the adequacy of sports facility provision in South Derbyshire. The strategy's purpose was to provide a framework for the provision and development of facilities, a basis for applications for external funding and to give an up-to-date audit of existing facilities. It formed part of a hierarchy of strategies.

The strategy had been based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Data had been obtained through questionnaires and interviews between April

and August 2001. The strategy looked at current provision for 11 different sports. It sought to identify needs, based on existing demand and on likely future demands. The main shortfalls identified in the strategy were appended to the report. Details had also been provided of actions taken or proposed, to address these shortfalls.

The DPPSRF had recently appointed, on a short-term contract, a Facilities Officer. The Officer would work with local authorities to address needs that might have a wider, County perspective. An initial meeting had taken place with this Officer and a number of possible joint working areas were suggested. Several options were being explored by Officers, in terms of how the strategy could be utilised.

A Midway Ward Member spoke about the availability of the Chestnut Avenue recreation ground. This playing field had been drained unsuccessfully on two occasions and there was an adjacent area of land which had yet to be brought into use. This could be a suitable site to overcome some of the current facility shortfalls. Another Member suggested that increased use could be made of school playing fields. The Leader of the Council asked whether the total cost of meeting the facility shortfall was known and how the Council would attract the required funding to meet this shortfall. Councillor Lauro was the portfolio holder on the Sports Forum for Facilities. He spoke of the development work being undertaken, the County-wide approach to provide facilities and the efforts to make better use of existing facilities. Officers explained that the total cost of meeting the facility shortfall should be known within approximately two months. Section 106 planning agreements might provide a possible funding opportunity to meet the facility shortfall. Members felt that a list of the facility shortfalls and indicative costs would be useful.

Further issues raised were the benefits that the Council had received through membership of the DPPSRF, the possibility of providing a centre of excellence, based at Etwall and the disappointment that local junior football teams were having to relocate to Burton, because of the lack of suitable pitches in South Derbyshire. The provision of an artificial pitch and identifying a site for noisy sports were also considered.

RESOLVED:-

That Members' views be submitted to the Derbyshire and Peak Park Sport and Recreation Forum on the third draft of the Derbyshire Sports Facility Strategy.

HCS/93. **LOTTERY FUNDING FOR CHILDREN'S PLAY**

Members were advised of a joint consultation paper issued by the Department for Education & Science and the Department of Culture and Media Studies. The consultation document followed the announcement by Government in June 2001. Some £200 million of lottery funding had been directed to children's play via the New Opportunities Fund. It was likely that the funding would be available to spend in 2005. A summary of the consultation had been circulated with the Agenda and it detailed the elements of public provision that would be included in the review. Also identified was that disadvantaged areas and groups of children with limited play opportunities were a priority for the review.

Members considered a suggested response to the consultation paper. Clarification was provided on the nature of the consultation, its wide remit and the need for a partnership approach, to bring children's play provision up to an acceptable standard. It was questioned whether the proposed funding could be used to replace current play equipment that was not considered to meet European standards. This seemed unlikely and responsibility for existing play equipment remained with the land owning authority. Whilst the allocation of £200 million was welcomed, when dispersed nationally, this sum might have limited effectiveness. A Member commented on the conflict caused through small areas of public open space being used as play areas. A view was expressed that local authorities should continue to receive the majority of funding to enable them to provide play equipment. The Leader of the Council felt that any opportunity to secure additional resources, to provide much needed facilities for young people, should be welcomed. He asked that the consultation response be strengthened to reflect this. He spoke of the links to housing and regeneration and future planning needs, to ensure the supply of adequate play facilities for communities.

RESOLVED:-

That Members' comments be submitted in response to the consultation on Lottery Funding for Children's play.

HCS/94. **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SCHEME**

Under Minute No. HCS/75 of 21st November 2002, the Committee established a Task and Finish Working Panel to consider changes to the scoring system and scoring criteria for the Community Partnerships Scheme. As a result of its meeting, it was decided that all applications for funding should be scored at the same time by an appraisal panel. This comprised three Members and the Partnership Development Officer and the panel suggested that the scoring system be amended to give more impact to community involvement.

The publicity arrangements were considered to be sufficient, but it was suggested that parish councils be informed through the area meetings when details of any scheme for 2003/04 were known.

In total, nine applications were received asking for funding of £94,778 against the budget of £50,000. Further details of each project were appended to the report. The panel assessed and ranked the applications according to the new criteria. A table was submitted which showed the weighted scores, the total score and the ranking of each project. The panel had taken into consideration a number of factors and had made a recommendation to fund six of the nine projects. It suggested that three projects receive the full amount requested and three receive grants pro rata to their requests, from the remaining budget. The three unsuccessful projects would be invited to resubmit their applications if the scheme continued into the next financial year.

The Working Panel had suggested the retention of the assessment and recommendation process, using the updated scoring matrix, if the Community Partnerships Scheme continued into the next financial year. As

any budget for 2003/04 would operate over a full year, it was suggested that the Panel meet at least twice, with additional meetings called, dependent on the volume of applications received. Some interest had already been shown in the possibility of securing grants if the scheme continued.

The Chair of the Panel hoped that the Scheme would develop in future years and he spoke of the benefits to local communities from the Partnerships Scheme. He felt that all applications had been considered fairly. Midway Ward Members were disappointed that the application from St. John's Parochial Church Council had not received funding. They spoke of the local fund raising and the restoration works already completed at the Church. Providing a car park was one of two remaining projects. There had been confusion over the ownership of the land required for the car park and subsequent successful negotiations with the landowner. If the requested grant had been approved, the scheme would have proceeded. Comment was made on this grant application. Subject to the Community Partnerships Scheme continuing it was suggested that advice be provided to the group, to enable the submission of an improved bid for consideration in the next financial year.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) ***That the Committee approves the recommendations made by the Community Partnerships Scheme Assessment Panel to award grants totalling £50,000 to:-***
 - ***All Saints Parochial Church Council – Hatton;***
 - ***Linton Youth Facility Working Group;***
 - ***Lullington Cricket Club;***
 - ***Church Gresley Methodist Church;***
 - ***Overseal Parish Council; and***
 - ***Newhall Central Methodist Church***
- (2) ***That the amended system of assessment recommended by the Task and Finish Working Group and used by the Assessment Panel this year, be used in any continuation of the Scheme.***
- (3) ***That the Assessment Panel be retained for a further period of 12 months and meet at least twice to consider grant applications, dependent upon the volume received.***

Note: At 6.45 p.m. Councillor Routledge left the Meeting.

HCS/95. **DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES**

It was reported that at present, a Notice of Intention to Seek Possession of a Council dwelling could only be served after seeking authority from the Committee. There had been an increase in the number of incidents relating to antisocial behaviour and a shift in focus regarding the processes that should be employed to tackle this behaviour.

Authority was sought to allow the Advice, Liaison and Sheltered Housing Manager to issue the Notice of Intention to Seek Possession in appropriate circumstances. This would avoid the current delays caused through the need to seek Committee approval. To ensure probity, it was proposed to consult the Chair of the Committee and appropriate Officers prior to the

service of a Notice. It was also planned to submit a six monthly monitoring report to the Committee detailing the number and categories of Notice served.

It was felt that local Ward Councillors should also be kept informed of the service of Notices in their area. Members requested information on the procedures leading to the service of a Notice. In some cases, minor breaches of the tenancy agreement might not warrant possession proceedings. A revised tenancy agreement was being produced, which should provide better controls, using appropriate powers under the Housing Act. It was questioned whether Members could be informed prior to the service of a Notice and this would need to be researched.

RESOLVED:-

That the Advice, Liaison and Sheltered Housing Manager be authorised to serve Notice of Intention to Seek Possession in all cases where there has been a serious breach of the Conditions of Tenancy, after discussing the intention with the Chair of the Committee and local Member(s).

HCS/96. **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 Meeting held on 21st November 2002 were received.

ETWALL LEISURE CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (Paragraph 7)

The Committee received the Exempt Minutes of the Etwall Leisure Centre Joint Management Committee Meetings held on 15th July and 14th October 2002.

THE HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995 LOFT INSULATION SCHEME (Paragraph 8)

The Committee was informed of the success of energy saving measures for the current financial year's capital expenditure and it approved the suspension of the Financial Procedure Rules.

SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE (Paragraph 7)

The Committee approved a response to the draft Audit Commission Report for the Sheltered Housing Service, following its re-inspection.

BARS AND CATERING PROVISION – GREEN BANK LEISURE CENTRE (Paragraph 7)

The Committee approved in principle proposals to amend the delivery of food and beverage services at the Green Bank Leisure Centre.

PROPOSED MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME FOR COUNCIL HOUSING 2003/04 (Paragraph 9)

The Committee approved a strategy for maintenance, refurbishment and improvement to the Council's housing stock for 2003/04 and subsequent years.

R.W. SOUTHERN

CHAIR