

**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on TUESDAY 3 APRIL 2001**

Present:- Councillor A R Row – Chairman.  
Councillors E C Abrahams, Mrs C A Bayley, Mrs D Cornell, Mrs C M Dean, R C Dean, Mrs S Flack, D W Gregory, A J Ketteridge, Mrs J I Loughlin and D J Morson.

Also present:- Councillor D M Miller.

Officers in attendance:- R Chamberlain, J B Dickson, P Hunt, Mrs S McLagan, B D Perkins, M T Purkiss and Mrs C Roberts.

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**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M A Hibbs and Mrs J E Menell. Declarations of interest were made by:-

- |                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Councillor Mrs C Dean       | - | Item about Large Scale Grant funding as regards application by Stansted Parish Council.  |
| Councillor A J Ketteridge   | - | Item about Large Scale Grant funding for Uttlesford Crossroads and item about BMX Cycle Track, as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council.                           |
| Councillor Mrs S Flack      | - | Item about Large Scale Grant Funding as regards the application by Aythorpe Roding Recreation Committee.   |
| Councillor Mrs C A Bayley   | - | Item about Hatherley House, Saffron Walden as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council and item about BMX Cycle Track as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council. |
| Councillor Mrs J I Loughlin | - | Item about Large Scale Grant Funding as regards the application made by Stansted Parish Council.   |
| Councillor Mrs D Cornell    | - | Item about BMX Cycle Track as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council.   |

311 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2001 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

312 **BUSINESS ARISING****Minute 250 – Friends of Bridge End Gardens - Representation**

In answer to a question from Councillor Mrs S Flack, Councillor D J Morson confirmed that he had accepted the nomination to the Executive Committee of the Friends of the Bridge End Gardens.

313 **MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE**

The Committee considered a report updating Members on Essex County Council's decision to introduce a range of improvements following a Best Value Review of the Meals on Wheels service.

The Head of Leisure and Community Services described a range of options put forward by the Uttlesford District Council's Best Value Sub-Committee at its meeting on 27 November 2000. It was noted that the Essex County Council (ECC) had indicated that Uttlesford was one of the six best Districts in terms of service provision. The County Council was inviting districts to submit tenders for the management and operation of a Meals on Wheels service by the end of May 2001, but the invitation raised four main issues:-

- (a) the requirement to bid on the basis of a fixed price per meal per client
- (b) the requirement to provide liveried vehicles and the wearing of uniforms
- (c) ECC's objective to see that the service was delivered from six strategic locations covering surrounding geographic areas.
- (d) the inadequate amount of time available in which to submit tenders taking into account (c) above.

As a result of the Best Value Review Members had agreed that the Council should continue to provide a Meals on Wheels service in Uttlesford. This decision, however, had pre-dated the ECC decision to invite tenders.

Some Members expressed concern about the requirement for liveried vans and uniformed staff, which they felt would increase costs and could prejudice the security of both the deliverers and vulnerable recipients of the service. Essex County Council would be advised of these concerns. Some Members expressed the view that the Council should not try to deliver this service to the whole of the Braintree District which might result in the service to Uttlesford residents suffering. Councillor Gregory considered that if an adequate service

was to be provided in the Braintree District a cooking point in that area was required.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Council submits a tender for the delivery and management of the Meals on Wheels service in Uttlesford subject to the agreement of the Essex County Council that appropriate provision be made by that Council for any potential deficits.
- 2 Officers discuss with the Essex County Council the issues raised and opportunities for tendering for all or part of the Braintree District.
- 3 the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Services Committee, be given delegated authority to determine the most appropriate course of action for the delivery and management of a Meals on Wheels service in all or part of the Braintree District, as appropriate.

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#### **HATHERLEY HOUSE SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Committee received the report of the Housing Services Manager about Essex County Council's intentions for Hatherley House. He reminded the meeting that Hatherley Court, which belonged to the District Council, was connected to Hatherley House by a number of jointly used areas of accommodation. It was necessary for agreement to be reached on the future use of this accommodation if the County Council was to negotiate with an independent provider for the continuation of the service to elderly persons at Hatherley House. If a solution was not found it could mean that Hatherley House would no longer be able to function as a residential home.

It was also pointed out that the County Council was having difficulty in providing a warden service and was now reliant on agency staff. It was recommended that the District Council took over the warden service at Hatherley Court.

RESOLVED that the Committee agrees in principle that

- 1 in an endeavour to keep Hatherley House open, the Council will work with an independent sector provider and allow continued use of the link block subject to details of an agreement being mutually agreed by officers of the involved parties, and
- 2 at an agreed negotiated time, the Council takes over the direct provision of the warden service to Hatherley Court.

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#### **LAND DRAINAGE AND FLOOD DEFENCE**

The Committee received a report, advising Members of a Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fishery requirement to publish a flood defence policy.

An appended statement set out the Council's policy for flood defence and a new leaflet providing advice on what to do in the event of flooding had been issued as well as a reprinted information leaflet on land drainage legislation.

RESOLVED that the policy statement on flood defence be adopted.

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### **BMX CYCLE TRACK – LORD BUTLER FITNESS AND LEISURE CENTRE**

The Committee received a report advising Members of the wish of Saffron Walden Town Council to lease land adjacent to the Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre to provide a BMX cycle track, with copies of letters from the Town Council and from Leisure Connection, the prospective tenant of the site. The report set out advantages and disadvantages of this use of the site and dealt with the ongoing negotiations with Linteum Leisure, the consortium appointed as preferred bidder for the PFI Leisure Scheme, and the likely use to be made of the relevant piece of land as a result of the finalisation of these negotiations.

The Council, as a public landlord, had to decide what was the best use of the land in the public interest. Officers considered that there were considerable concerns regarding the provision of a BMX track at the Lord Butler site. Whilst acknowledging that there was demand for such a track, the Council had to take into consideration the impact of this facility on the residents in the vicinity of the site, the community and the users of the Leisure Centre and Turpins. Councillor Miller considered that other more suitable locations should be investigated.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the application from Saffron Walden Town Council to lease land at the site of the Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre, Saffron Walden to provide a BMX cycle track be refused.
- 2 as a matter of urgency, Officers offer to work in partnership with Saffron Walden Town Council to consider alternative sites for a BMX cycle track.

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### **EXTENSION OF LARGE SCALE PROJECT GRANT FUNDING PERIOD**

The Committee considered a report on requests received from recipients of Large Scale Project Grants for the carry forward of grants into the 2001/2002 financial year. It was noted that Members of the District Grants Advisory Panel had considered all the relevant applications and that a majority of them had supported the application in the case of each grant.

RESOLVED that grants to the following organisations be permitted to be carried forward to 2001/2002, taking account of the views of Members of the District Grants Advisory Panel:-

Aythorpe Roding Recreation Committee £3,500 for a new sports pavilion in 1999/2000

Stansted Parish Council	£2,000 for skateboard equipment in 1999/2000
Newport Village Tennis Club	£1,040 for repair of a tennis court.
High Easter Parish Council	£3,500 for cricket nets.
Radwinter Parish Council	£240 for feasibility study for a pavilion/recreation room.

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**CONTRACTORS' APPROVED LIST**

The Committee received a report by the Property Services Manager recommending approval of a list of civil engineering contractors for Council works.

RESOLVED that the following list of contractors be approved as the standing list of contractors for civil engineering works:-

- (1) Contract Services
- (2) Forward Spread Limited
- (3) John Henry (Civil Engineers) Limited
- (4) J F Knight (Roadworks) Limited
- (5) P Knight Construction
- (6) May Gurney (Construction) Limited
- (7) Miller Bros (Romford) Limited
- (8) Pro-Mac Surfacing Limited
- (9) Shairwood Contracts Limited
- (10) C B Wilson Construction Limited

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**AMENITIES SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Sub-Committee held on 15 March 2001.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Amenities Sub-Committee held on 15 March 2001 be approved and adopted including the recommendation contained in Minute AM44(i).

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**HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Services Sub-Committee held on 20 March 2001.

**(i) Minute HS49 – Member Consultation in Allocation**

The Director of Community Services referred to the resolution and said that the discussion at the Sub-Committee meeting had clarified the issue. It advised that the process was not one of consultation but one of informing

Members. This clarified that Members were not involved in the allocation process. In this context it seemed difficult to justify a seven day period for informing Members and it was suggested that three days was much more reasonable.

Councillor D M Miller suggested that the practice would be better dropped altogether since there was extensive acceptance throughout the country that it was not good practice. Councillors E C Abrahams and Mrs C A Bayley, however, considered that Members should be informed before the decision was taken by the Housing Services Manager.

RESOLVED that the period for informing Members of the allocation process regarding vacancies in Council housing and nomination to registered social landlords be reduced from seven to three days.

**(ii) Minute HS50 – Security at Elderly Persons’ Accommodation**

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs S Flack for drawing to Members’ attention the problems of security in elderly persons’ accommodation

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Services Sub-Committee held on 20 March 2001 be approved and adopted including the recommendations contained in Minute HS52 (Former Tenant Rent Arrears – Write-offs):

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**DISTRICT GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meeting of the District Grants Advisory Panel held on 26 March 2001.

**(i) Minute DG4 – Applications for Voluntary Organisations Support Grants**

Councillor Mrs S Flack asked that, for the purposes of future meetings of the District Grants Advisory Panel, Members be sent only those parts of grant application papers which were strictly relevant, the rest of the papers being made available at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the District Grants Advisory Panel held on 26 March 2001 be approved and adopted including the recommendations contained in Minute DG4.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Services Sub-Committee held on 13 March 2001.

323           **LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 14 March 2001.

324           **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

The Director of Community Services reported that Dr Linda Hastings had been appointed to replace Dr Ronni Ooi as officer responsible for communicable diseases within Uttlesford.

325           **LAST MEETING**

This was the last meeting of the Committee in the current municipal year and the Chairman thanked Members and officers for their support and hard work over the past year.

The meeting ended at 9.08 pm.