

**COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 8 JANUARY 2002**

Present:- Councillor Mrs J E Menell – Vice-Chairman in the Chair
Councillors Mrs C A Bayley, R J Copping, Mrs D Cornell,
R C Dean, D W Gregory, D M Miller, A R Row and G Sell.

Also present:- Councillor R P Chambers.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillors A Dean and
M A Gayler.

Officers in attendance:- J B Dickson, Mrs L J Crowe, Mrs S McLagan and
B D Perkins.

CL13 VICE CHAIRMAN'S ANOUNCEMENTS

Members and Officers stood in silence as a mark of respect for Clive Cooper the Community Safety Officer who had died recently.

CL14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E C Abrahams and Mr N B Newman.

CL15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Cornell declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of the Community Achievement Panel and of the Saffron Walden Day Centre Management Committee. Councillors Mrs Bayley and Mrs Menell declared interests as Members of the Community Achievement Panel.

CL16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community and Leisure Committee held on 30 October 2001 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CL17 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute CL12 – Draft Budget 2002/03

Councillor Copping reminded Members of the need to investigate the possible charitable status of the Museum. Councillor Mrs Menell reminded Members that this would be part of this year's Best Value Review. Councillor Copping said charitable status could have financial and efficiency benefits. Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the possible charitable status of the Museum be investigated as soon as possible.

CL18 COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT PANEL

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Achievement Panel held on 29 November 2001 were received.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Community Achievement Panel be approved and adopted including approval of all the nominations submitted in Minute CA4.

CL19 USE OF DAY CENTRE KITCHENS BY WRVS

The Head of Leisure and Community Services presented a report detailing the request from the Womens Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) to utilise the Day Centre kitchens at Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow on an annual lease for the management and delivery of Meals on Wheels. In reply to Members' questions the Head of Leisure and Community Services said that the Council was negotiating the transfer of staff and the terms of an annual lease. The County Council would be responsible for the service and the District Council would have no responsibility. The lease would produce an income for the Council.

RESOLVED that the Council agree to the annual lease of the kitchens and associated environs to the WRVS for the purpose of the management and delivery of Meals on Wheels, subject to satisfactory terms to be agreed by the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

CL20 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

Councillor Mrs Cornell presented a report updating Members on the Review following decisions at the last Committee meeting and Council. The report concentrated on one aspect of the original action plan and recommended a preferred staffing structure following a reconvening of the Best Value Member Reference Group. Three posts would have specific primary roles and would work closely as a team. The Community Development Manager would co-ordinate the roles and the emergency planning function would be retained in-house. Although the Community Development Manager would co-ordinate the posts he would continue to develop and expand partnerships with outside bodies.

RESOLVED that three officers designated Emergency Planning and Community Officer, Community Safety Officer and Community Development Officer report directly to the Community Development Manager and the job descriptions be revised accordingly.

Councillor Chambers declared an interest in the following item as Vice-Chairman of the Essex Police Authority.

CL21

THAXTED COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTRE

Members received a report on the use made of the Thaxted Community Information Centre after six months of operation. The report recommended that the hours of operation be extended to meet the identified demand.

Officers had undertaken a number of surveys and sought feedback from partner organisations about the impact and usefulness of the Centre and the demand for extending the operating times of the TCIC. The survey had suggested that a cash machine should be provided. There were also suggestions for Council Tax/Rent paying facilities and that a Housing Officer Service should be available for longer than one hour a week. Councillor Mrs Cornell raised the question of whether the Thaxted Parish Council contributed to the Community Information Centre. The Head of Community and Leisure Services advised that Thaxted Parish Council made no financial contribution towards the Centre. Councillor Copping queried the extent of the Police presence and whether this was to be made permanent. In response, the Head of Community and Leisure described the current occupancy by the Police but could not advise whether there was any intention for a permanent service. Councillor Copping also said that the Council could not afford to overspend on this facility. The possible use of existing staff was raised but the Head of Community and Leisure said this would mean taking staff away from the Great Dunmow CIC and affecting service delivery. It was confirmed by officers that what was proposed was within approved budgets. Councillor Row proposed that officers should be instructed to take no further action in connection with the provision of a cash machine at the Centre.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the opening of the Thaxted Community Information Centre be extended to a maximum of fourteen paid staff hours per week,
- 2 the post of part-time Community Information Centre Assistant be established with immediate effect on a Future Contract basis for fourteen hours per week (initially ten hours whilst being trained),
- 3 The provision of financial services (rents and Council Tax) at Thaxted be investigated, and
- 4 The provision of a cash machine be not pursued.

CL22

BUDGET AND SERVICE PLANS 2002/2003

The Director of Resources presented the Draft Revenue Estimates for final consideration by this Committee. The detailed figures included savings approved at the last meeting on 30 October, internal charges and development since 30 October 2001. The figures were subject to final checks for consistency and accuracy and did not include any new growth or savings

items, the implications of any new capital programme items or the impact on internal charges of any growth or savings. In answer to a question, the Head of Community and Leisure said that the staff at the Museum applied for grants frequently but projects carried out did not always fit the criteria for the grants. Reference was made to the additional costs of the £12,000 for the Best Value Review of Community Safety and Emergency Planning and £25,000 in connection with the loss of the Meals on Wheels contract. However no further savings were identified. Officers explained the consequences of the loss of the Meals on Wheels contract.

RESOLVED that the Draft Revenue Estimates be approved and forwarded to the Resources Committee meeting on 24 January 2002 for consideration.

CL23

SEASONAL WISHES

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee wished Members and Officers a Happy New Year.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.