

**COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 7 JANUARY 2003**

Present:- Councillor A R Row – Chairman.  
Councillors E C Abrahams, R J Copping, Mrs D Cornell,  
R C Dean, Mrs J I Loughlin, Mrs J E Menell, D M Miller and  
G Sell.

Also present:- Councillor R P Chambers

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillors D J Morson,  
R J O'Neill, and Mrs S V Schneider.

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

**CL26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members declared their respective interests as detailed below and did not take part in the discussion of or voting on the items concerned.

Councillor Mrs D Cornell – as a member of the Saffron Walden Day Centre Management Committee and as a trustee of an organisation which hires the Day Centre.

Councillor Mrs J E Menell as a member of the Buffy Bus Association, the Hearing Help Association and the Primary Care Trust.

**CL27 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 November 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the amendment of line 8 of Minute CL20 to read "Councillor Sell – As his mother is the Secretary".

**CL28 DAY CENTRES CHARGING POLICY**

The Committee received a report on Day Centre charging policy, in response to Members' view, expressed at the meeting in November, that more income should be derived from Day Centres.

Members considered that a change to the charging policy was an inevitable step and that the suggested target for additional income of £5,000 was not unreasonable. Further, they anticipated that action would be taken to encourage increased numbers of bookings and they suggested a change of name to 'community centre', for example, would more closely reflect the role of the centres.

Councillor Copping proposed that the words “and provision of additional services for the elderly” should be added to the end of the recommendation but this proposal was not carried.

RESOLVED that the Council amend the Day Centres Charging Policy to introduce charges for all users in order to achieve the Council’s target for additional income of £5,000.

CL29

**BEST VALUE REVIEW LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES –  
REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE NO 1 (MINUTE S1.31)**

Members considered the Leisure and Cultural Services Best Value Review Final Report and Improvement Plan, which had been considered by and referred from Scrutiny Committee 1. Councillor R J O’Neill presented the report.

The Committee was in agreement with the reasoning set out in the Review Team’s Final Report, with the exception of the suggestion that the Museum Society be asked to contribute to capital projects and capital costs relating to buildings’ maintenance. It was noted that the Museum Society should not be asked to contribute to capital costs and that this suggestion was to be deleted from the final report.

In addition, the following points were made:-

- (i) Examination of the structure of Community and Leisure Services was to be carried out to ensure it was focused on key priorities.
- (ii) Any change to working arrangements with the Museum Society would occur only after discussions with the Society.
- (iii) the possibility would be researched of using the Museum school room for TIC and retail sales.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Committee’s thanks be recorded for the hard work and diligence shown by the Members of the Best Value Reference Group in their examination of the whole matter
- 2 the Leisure and Cultural Services Best Value Review Final Report and Improvement Plan be approved.

CL30

**BUDGETS AND SERVICE PLANS 2003-4**

The Committee gave final consideration to a report on draft revenue estimates as updated by inclusion of internal charges, savings, growth items approved at the meeting on 5 November 2002 and developments since then. Members were asked to reconsider the estimates including identifying further savings before their submission in the overall budget report to the Resources Committee.

Members were informed that Essex County Council had now deferred its council tax figures precept meeting until 18 February. They were reminded that in order to achieve the Council's target, the Committee needed to make savings of £116,000 further to the previous meeting of the Committee when grants related savings had not been agreed. They were informed of the resignation of a member of staff.

The Leader informed the meeting that the Council's financial settlement with the Government was the lowest possible and would endure for this and the next two years. Arising from the resignation of a member of staff a post of Leisure Officer might be frozen at a saving of approximately £33,000. It was important to achieve savings without a huge impact on services to the majority of the Council's customers. The PFI Leisure scheme provided a significant new resource for all groups within the community.

The Leader proposed that the following savings be made:-

- (i) £33,000 from not filling the post of Leisure Officer.
- (ii) £13,000 from reduction of Youth Initiatives budget from £28,000 to £15,000.
- (iii) £3,000 from Ad Hoc grants. Underspend in 2002/03 leaves £1,330 to be used if necessary.
- (iv) £5,000 from requirement for day centres to fund expenditure by increasing income.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Committee adopts and approves the proposed savings set out in (i)-(iv) above and recommends them for inclusion in the overall budget to the Resources Committee meeting on 23 January 2003.
- 2 of the £15,000 in the Youth Initiatives budget £1,000 be earmarked for the Young Musician of the Year event 2003, with any additional costs being met from sponsorship.

CL31

## **COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE – DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered a report advising Members of progress made towards the adoption of the Mid North Essex Community Legal Service Partnership Strategic Plan. The Committee noted that preparation of this Strategic Plan was required by law and agreed that improvements in service provision to the young and elderly in particular should be sought.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the draft Mid North Essex Community Legal Service Partnership Strategic Plan, and approves the comments made in the report.