

**COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 2 SEPTEMBER 2003**

Present:- Councillor D Morson – Chairman.
Councillors E Abrahams, H Baker, V Lelliott, J Loughlin,
J Menell, J Murphy, S Schneider, G Sell and F Silver.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillors R Copping,
M Gayler and S Jones.

Officers in attendance:- S Chapman, S McLagan, P O'Dell, I Orton,
B Perkins and C Roberts.

7 STATEMENT BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Before the meeting Dr Anderson-Taylor, a resident of the Great Dunmow area, made a statement and the summary of this and of the reply given by the Chairman of the Committee is attached to these Minutes.

8 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman extended a particular welcome to Councillor R Copping, who was present, and paid tribute to his work on the PFI Project which had resulted in, amongst other things, the opening of the new Dunmow Leisure Centre that day. He also congratulated Councillor Row and the officers involved in the project. He welcomed Councillors S Jones and M Gayler to the meeting and the Financial Services and Performance Managers.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Menell declared an interest insofar as she was a member of the Primary Care Trust.

10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 June 2003 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute CL6 – Young Musician of the Year Festival

In answer to a question, the Head of Community and Leisure Services explained that the £1,000 ear-marked for the Festival had been used to produce the U2003 Event which had taken place recently on the Saffron Walden Common.

12 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The Committee received the report of the Policy and Performance Manager that, arising from Best Value and Corporate Self Assessment requirements, the range of performance information and frequency of reporting should be strengthened. Officers therefore submitted a comprehensive performance system with a range of performance measures, performance targets and a traffic lights system to be approved for use in the piloting of the performance management system.

Members discussed the proposals contained in the report and commented that performance indicators should be included or expanded about access for the disabled, speed of response to enquiries and the content and phraseology of correspondence. In addition, the requirements of those suffering from colour-blindness or other forms of visual impairment should be met.

RESOLVED

- 1 that the range of performance measures, performance targets and use of a traffic light system be agreed subject to taking into account the requirements of those suffering from colour blindness or other forms of visual impairment
- 2 that it be noted that comments from all Committees will be incorporated into a report on Performance Management for 2004/5 and referred to all Committees in the early New Year.

13 **POLICY PRIORITIES AND BUDGETS 2004/05: PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Committee considered the report on Policy Priorities and Budgets for 2004/05 as it affected the budget for the Community and Leisure Committee.

Councillor Gayler referred to the overall budgetary situation, which was challenging, and the need to focus on efficiency savings and service improvement.

Members considered the listed budget review item. It was suggested that negotiations should take place with Leisure Connection for a Leisure Card for off-peak cheaper use of leisure centre facilities and that ways should be investigated for generating income from the Museum. Members also commented about the possible need arising from the Leisure PFI contract, for more leisure staff.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the Council's budget base position and agrees the listed budget review items for 2004/05 (as set out in the Appendix to the report), together with information supporting an additional Leisure Officer, be considered further at the Committee's next meeting.

14 **LEISURE AND CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR UTTLESFORD 2003-05**

(Councillor H Baker declared an interest insofar as she was a Member of the Saffron Walden Arts Trust).

The Committee considered a report providing a prioritised resource programme for delivery of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy for Uttlesford over the next two years. Consultation responses were noted. The Head of Community and Leisure Services explained that the consultation with the Access group had resulted in a request to promote social inclusion for the disabled.

The Committee went through the work programme and discussed a number of issues which were noted by officers. These included a presentation on PFI, including a report from Leisure Connection, skateboard parks, work with schools and parishes and the need to ensure balance of services throughout the District. The Head of Community and Leisure Services explained how particular actions were to be achieved, in answer to questions.

A proposal was made, but lost, to include a policy objective to reduce dependence of the Museum on Council funding. The Head of Community and Leisure Services undertook to discuss suggestions on funding with Councillor Murphy and the Curator of the Museum.

RESOLVED that the programme for the delivery of the revised Leisure and Cultural Strategy for Uttlesford 2003 – 05 be agreed.

15 **BEST VALUE INSPECTOR'S REPORT ON LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Best Value inspection of Leisure and Cultural Services and noted the recommendations made for immediate priority and subsequent action.

RESOLVED that the action plan to address the recommendations of the Best Value Inspectors for Leisure and Cultural Services be approved.

16 **COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Committee considered a report advising Members of a request to extend the period of time for Town and Parish Councils to select nominees. As a result specific delegation arrangements needed to be made for this year only because of Committee cycles. The Head of Community and Leisure advised of a request from LA21 to include the presentation of a new environmental award to schools at the Community Achievement Award Ceremony in February. The request was confirmed by the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Community Achievement Award Panel be given delegated authority together with the Chairman of the Committee to

determine nominations for this year only for the Community Achievement Award Scheme 2003

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EMERGENCY PLANNING/FLOODING

The Chairman of the Committee informed Members that the Emergency Planning Officer would make a presentation immediately before the Environment and Transport Committee meeting to be held on 9 September 2003.

The meeting ended at 9.32 pm.

Statement by Dr Anderson-Taylor

Dr Anderson-Taylor read the following question to the Committee.

“Does the Council believe that the appointment of “Leisure Connection” to run the new Dunmow Leisure Centre, which has resulted in swimming lesson charges increasing by 60% to a level around 30% greater than the market rate, serves the most basic need of the local community to provide affordable and potentially life-saving lessons for children?”

The Chairman of Community and Leisure acknowledged that there had been a significant increase in the cost of swimming lessons compared with the previous arrangement. The swimming lessons were now, however, to nationally recognised standards and were provided consistently across the District by quality teachers in accordance with set pupil ratios. 97% of the previous pupils had re-enrolled.

Surveys of customer opinion were going to be made at the end of every term, as well as surveys of local residents’ opinions. It was felt that the new services should be allowed a period to settle, but in due course any appropriate action would be taken as regards pricing. The Leisure Consortium apologised for the lack of notice of the changes in pricing. Thanks were expressed to Dr Anderson-Taylor for the time taken by him to bring a question to the Committee.

Dr Anderson-Taylor agreed that consistency of lessons was desirable, but said that when the provider had a monopoly of the services, customers had no other option. There were waiting lists for swimming lessons elsewhere. He thought that the provider should not be allowed to charge 30% more than other providers.

The Chairman of the Committee undertook that the matter would be carefully reviewed.