

**COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN AT 7.30 PM ON 7 JUNE 2005**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman.
Councillors E C Abrahams, H D Baker, M L Foley, J E Menell, S
V Schneider, G Sell and F E Silver.

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, D Burrige, and C Roberts.

CL61 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 March 2005 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CL62 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute CL55 (i)- Museum Resource Centre

The Minutes of the meeting of the Museum Resource Centre Project Team were circulated with a diagram of the site option at Thaxted Road referred to in those Minutes.

The Chairman of the Committee explained that the Thaxted Road site had been suggested by the Council's Architect and Property consultant because the land there was not subject to flooding, was closer to the Museum than the Newport site and was in an area which would probably be upgraded and form a prestigious backdrop to the Resource Centre. It was felt that subject to receiving planning permission, the inclusion of this proposed site would enhance the Council's prospects of grant award on application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Members discussed this suggestion which they found very interesting. The Chairman confirmed that the area was comparable with the space at Newport but also provided space for car parking; no competing use was anticipated for that particular piece of land. Members were concerned about the security of the site from vandalism or theft, which might require CCTV, and considered that further information should be obtained about potential land restoration costs particularly in view of the history of the land for landfill and salt storage.

The Executive Manager (Environmental and Cultural Services) advised Members of many potential alternative uses for the Newport site which might be embraced in an overall plan. The Chairman added that the Council's Architect and Property consultant had provided information about measures for flood damage limitation at the Newport site.

RESOLVED

- 1 that officers research valuations for the Thaxted Road and the Newport sites, the area of the Thaxted Road site and any land restoration costs, and clarify the financial and planning aspects of the suggested transaction, and that this

information be mailed or e-mailed to the Members of the Committee for consideration in advance of the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

- 2 that subject to the consideration of the matters in 1 above the Committee approves the choice of the Thaxted Road site as first preference and pursue that option, retaining the Newport depot option as a contingency option.

(ii) **Minute CL55 (iv)– Leisure Centres Surveys – Action Plan Update**

The Leisure Manager updated Members on progress with this action plan.

Councillor F E Silver said that he thought the Leisure Manager was doing a very good job and the Leisure Centres were much improved but that half-price tickets should be issued to needy people at slack times. Councillor M L Foley thought transport costs inhibited many young people from attending the Centres. Members also felt existing discounts were so mean as to be unattractive.

RESOLVED that officers arrange for the January 2006 meeting to be held in one of the leisure centres and for a meeting with Mr Brown of Linteum Leisure at the same time, and that an item about this be entered in the Forward Programme.

(iii) **Minute CL57– Multi-cultural Festival**

The Leisure Manager listed organisations and facilities/sideshow to be involved in this event.

Some Members felt the term “Diversity” would be a better term for the festival than “Multi-cultural”. The Chairman explained that the expression “Cultural Festival” was now being used and differences of ethnicity, disability and age were to be reflected. It was very important to have a large number of children’s activities available.

The Leisure Manager added that a link had been made with the Travellers. She added that a multi-cultural theatre tour was being organised in the Museum grounds.

(iii) **Minute CL59– Leisure Centres Concession Card Scheme**

Members reiterated their concerns about poor concessions in the Leisure Centres and Councillor Silver shared his experience that staff in one centre were uninformed about concessions. Members reiterated their view that off-peak concession should be given at a rate of about 50%.

RESOLVED that officers investigate what Uttlesford and other Leisure Centres do by way of providing concessions and report on this to the next meeting.

CL63 FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Executive Manager (Environmental and Cultural Services) presented a report giving advance notice of the reports which the Committee needed to consider in the coming year. Members noted that the programme was a heavy one.

It was felt that in the light of the need to consider Children's Act a District Council Member should be appointed as the Council's representative on the appropriate organisation.

In answer to a question the Leisure Manager explained that a financial shortfall had occurred as regards the cinema project at Saffron Walden County High School. The target finish date was in September.

CL64 NATIONAL ASYLUM SUPPORT SERVICE – ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

The Leisure Manager presented a report on progress made by national and regional bodies on development of this strategy. Members felt the District was not a prime candidate for dispersal of asylum seekers in view of its lack of services and transport links.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CL65 BEST VALUE REVIEW – YOUNG PEOPLE

An interim report was submitted about this best value review which was due to be completed at the end of June. It described direct and partnership services provided for young people. Issues identified were the need for discounts for leisure and other facilities, better links with transport providers and soap and cleaner toilet facilities in the District's secondary schools.

The Leisure Manager explained that as young people felt very strongly about this issue the Youth Forum had donated a sum of money from its budget to enable soap dispensers to be purchased for Schools. The Youth & Arts Development Officer had progressed this issue and sought commitment from Schools to ensure that soap was provided and that the toilets would be maintained to a better standard of cleanliness.

Members stressed their respect for local schools but were concerned about the need for action to ensure soap and clean toilets. They felt that soap and clean toilets in schools should be a legal requirement and the responsibility of the County Council.

The report added that a comprehensive list of the views expressed by children and young people together with a proposed action plan and details of the financial implications would be provided in September. However, it had been felt that where action could be taken immediately this should be done in order

to demonstrate to young people that their views were being taken into account during the review process.

Members felt that the officers should seek to establish an exchange of information with the Youth Forum and suggest that the Youth Forum approach the County Council as regards soap and cleanliness in school toilets.

RESOLVED

- 1 that the report be noted.
- 2 that the Leisure Team be congratulated on their work.

CL66 OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor M L Foley displayed a leaflet from an organisation called "Streetwise" about a walking to school for health campaign.

In this context Councillor Mrs S Schneider questioned whether planning permission should as a matter of policy be granted for any residential development of school playing fields.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.