

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY  
11 MARCH 2014, AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor Mrs D Hollebon (Chairman)  
Councillors R Beeching, J Mayes, P Moore,  
N Symonds and C Rowley

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors L Haysey, P Ruffles and  
S Rutland-Barsby

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Claire Bennett	- Manager of Housing Services
Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Mark Kingsland	- Leisure Services Manager
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Falko	- SLM Limited
Mathew Nicholson	- SLM Limited
Chris Yearly	- SLM Limited

584 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor J Jones. It was noted that Councillor C Rowley was

substituting for Councillor J Jones.

585 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

586 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor D Hollebon welcomed all those present. The Chairman stated that this was the last meeting of Community Scrutiny Committee for the civic year. She thanked Members and Officers for their continued interest, support and professionalism.

587 HEALTH AND WELLBEING PANEL

Councillor N Symonds, the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Panel, provided a verbal update on her recent activities on behalf of the Panel including her involvement with Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny on the Frances Report and in scrutinising NHS hospitals.

Councillor Symonds referred to a visit to the psychiatric unit at Kingfisher Court and said that she was most impressed by it. She referred to a tour of the Princess Alexandra Hospital and was concerned about some things she had seen there.

The Chairman, Councillor D Hollebon stated that it had been a very busy year for Councillor Symonds and said that, on behalf of the Committee, she appreciated all the hard work which had been undertaken on behalf of the Council.

Councillor C Woodward referred to an exchange of emails between himself and Councillor Symonds regarding some health information leaflets which had been circulated around Bishop's Stortford which contained incorrect and misleading information. Councillor Symonds said that she

would respond in detail, as soon as she had further information.

RESOLVED – that (A) the verbal update be received; and

(B) the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 December 2013 and 18 February 2014 be noted.

588 ANNUAL LEISURE CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2013

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The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report on the fifth annual review of the Council's ten year leisure contract with Sports & Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) trading as "Everyone Active", the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted and Essential Reference Papers. The Leisure Services Manager stated that it was a successful partnership and summarised the key points in terms of performance, service, satisfaction levels, throughput, finance, successes and new developments.

The Leisure Services Manager referred to the management tools (QUEST and GovMetric) used by SLM in order to help managers improve the quality of service provided and the new system which had been introduced called Net Promoter Score (NPS) which was a way of measuring customer satisfaction (loyalty). He provided background information concerning how NPS worked, and how the value scores were arrived at.

The Leisure Services Manager provided a summary of customer throughput in relation to gym and swim usage. Overall, there had been an increase at the five sites with 725,000 visitors using the facilities. In terms of financial performance, it was noted that total income from the five sites was £3.89Million and that SLM had incurred expenditure of £3.84Million. The threshold for a profit share with the Council had not been achieved in 2013.

The Leisure Services Manager provided a qualitative summary of notable activities to promote and encourage sport

and exercise within the last 12 months.

Councillor C Woodward acknowledged the financial performance and “excellent” service provided. In response to a query regarding the introduction of swimming for the disabled at Grange Paddocks, Mathew Nicholson advised that a time slot had been identified but that he was hoping to focus this around families and SLM’s preference was to identify a time on a Sunday. He hoped to introduce the arrangement within the next two to three months.

Councillor R Beeching congratulated Officers on the report and sought clarification on the reference to Leventhorpe sitting within the “Fair” Band. The Leisure Services Manager advised that there had been some problems at the gym which were being addressed. The Head of Environmental Services explained that the NPS score in this instance was about the number of people who would promote the site as “Fair” and that it was a scoring system used to target people who would actively promote the service to others and not to be confused with how the Council evaluated performance through an individual customer’s level of personal satisfaction with the service.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching regarding accountancy checks, the Head of Environmental Services explained that SLM provided annual accounts to the Council which were audited independently. Additionally, monthly income reports were provided, which the Council was able to check against annual figures.

In response to a further query concerning service delivery set out in Essential Reference Paper “C”, which had been summarised using GovMetric and the new NPS method, the Head of Environmental Services explained that the NPS system was a completely different method of measuring customer satisfaction. He explained the risks associated with GovMetric and reminded Members that NPS was a marketing tool which identified promoters who would be prepared to tell people how much they liked the facilities being provided. The Head of Environmental Services explained “poor” was not

poor service, but an aid to get more people to promote the service and that it was of more relevance to SLM than it was to the Council.

Chris Yearly referred to the cleanliness issues at Hartham which were currently being addressed.

In response to a query from Councillor P Moore concerning keeping fit for those on low incomes, Mathew Nicholson agreed to provide information to Members concerning concessionary rates. The Head of Environmental Services also referred to the Council's range of activities within its open spaces, including equipment, Trim Trails and Orienteering. He referred to the fitness stations at Sacombe Road.

In response to a query from Councillor N Symonds and the concerns of young people and their body image, or religious persuasion and the possibility of wearing a T-Shirt in the swimming pool, Mathew Nicholson stated that this was not permissible in the swimming pool from a Health and Safety viewpoint but agreed to review the matter with the Head of Environmental Services.

Councillor C Woodward referred to the need to build up and take forward, the good progress made so far and referred to the need to provide more football sites which might generate funding. He referred to a meeting which he had attended recently with Bishop's Stortford Football Club and queried whether SLM could work in partnership in relation to increasing football provision.

Councillor Woodward also referred to the lack of indoor sports facilities and queried whether leasing was something which could be explored. The Head of Environmental Services explained that the Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services had been discussing matters with Bishop's Stortford Football Club about how to move forward. He was also looking at how development land might be made available in terms of the Bishop's North proposals.

Councillor M Wood referred to the planning proposals for

Bishop's Stortford over the next 10 years and the possibility of 5,000 new homes being built. He stated that Grange Paddocks would not be able to cope with the proposed increase in population. The Head of Environmental Services agreed that Grange Paddocks would not be able to cope given its limited capacity, adding that further provision might be provided privately.

Councillor M Wood referred to the need to provide Pulmonary Rehabilitation classes at Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford. The Leisure Services Manager explained that further discussion was needed with the Primary Care Trust on this issue. The Chairman commented that it could be very difficult for some people to travel to Hartham and Saffron Walden where this was currently being provided and that local provision should be addressed. She encouraged Officers to open dialogue with the Primary Care Trust.

The Committee received the report and requested that the concerns now detailed be progressed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the performance of the leisure contract be noted; and

(B) Members' concerns as now detailed, be progressed, specifically in relation to:

- the introduction of swimming lessons for the disabled;
- clarification of concessionary rates for those on low incomes;
- wearing of t-shirts in swimming pools;
- negotiation regarding working in partnership to provide more football sites and increasing indoor sports provision; and
- introduction of Pulmonary Rehabilitation classes at Grange Paddocks.

589 REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS: POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE AGAINST PROTOCOLS IN RELATION TO VULNERABLE TENANTS

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The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report setting out the provision of services to vulnerable tenants housed via the Council to Registered Providers (RP) in East Herts specifically, South (Circle) Anglia and Riversmead Housing Associations and the range of services provided by those providers to support vulnerable tenants.

The Manager, Housing Services, explained how the information was collated.

Councillor N Symonds thanked the Officer for the report, but expressed concern that it did not address the question of repairs and especially repairs for those who were vulnerable. She referred to specific individual issues and suggested that meetings needed to take place urgently with Housing Associations, Members and senior officers to air Members' concerns.

The Manager, Housing Services, referred to a range of regular meetings which currently took place between the Council and RPs and explained the difficulties the Council had in influencing RPs and that she did not have access to information on repairs and timeframes. The Council also had Members on the Boards of South Anglia and Riversmead Housing Associations.

Various Members also expressed concern about South (Circle) Anglia and the time taken to carry out repairs and their internal problems associated with issuing work dockets.

The Manager, Housing Services agreed that there were issues with South (Circle) Anglia and problems associated with repairs. She referred to the need for Members to attend the regular RP member forum meetings. The Manager, Housing Services reminded Members that the issue of the

repair services had been discussed at the last forum meeting of South Anglia recently.

The Chairman reminded Members that Tracy White of South (Circle) Anglia's Management Board had stated that as a first contact, Members should contact her. The Chairman encouraged Members to contact Ms White regarding their concerns.

Councillor N Symonds suggested that RPs be invited to a meeting with two or three Members and senior Council Officers, including the Director of Neighbourhood Services to speak to them on repair issues and Members' concerns. The Chairman said that Members should submit their nominations to the Scrutiny Officer for consideration via a selection process in order to ensure that there was appropriate geographic representation.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support reminded Members that forums did take place every quarter and encouraged Members to attend these forums to voice their concerns and said that South Anglia had already been asked to submit their repair and processing data for Members' consideration.

Members requested that their frustration and concerns regarding the repairs service of registered providers be recorded and conveyed to the RPs directly. Members supported the suggestion that RPs be invited to a meeting with two or three Members and senior Council Officers, including the Director of Neighbourhood Services, to speak to them directly on repair issues and Members' concerns.

RESOLVED – that (A) the range of support and services for tenants offered by the registered providers be noted;

(B) Members' frustration and concerns of scrutiny be conveyed to the Registered Providers in respect of their repairs service and these concerns should be expressed through direct meetings between



representative Councillors, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and their Chief Officers; and

(C) nominations from Members for consideration and selection be forwarded to the Scrutiny Officer.

590 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY HEALTHCHECK TO DECEMBER 2013

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The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the performance of indicators for the period October 2013 – December 2013, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted and the attached Essential Reference Papers.

Members were advised of an update in relation to EHPI 181 (Time taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims and Change Events) in that a December 2013 figure of 13.7 days should be inserted and that the figure of 13.1 days actually applied to January 2014.

Councillor N Symonds praised Officers regarding an improvement in the time taken to process claims and changes and asked that Members' thanks be passed on to Officers. This was supported.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the reported performance for the period October 2013 to December 2013, as amended, be received; and

(B) Members' thanks regarding the improvement in the recent figures for processing housing benefit new claims be forwarded to the Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Services and her team.

591 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the future work programme for Community Scrutiny Committee for the civic

year 2014/15. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the report on an “Update on Actions under Ageing Well Agenda” would now be considered at the meeting on 24 June 2014 to allow the outcomes of a Local Strategic Partnership meeting to be included within that report.

It was noted that Community Scrutiny Committee was the designated committee to consider crime and disorder issues but that so far, no topic had yet been identified for scrutiny. The Scrutiny Officer advised that a workshop would take place on 25 March 2014 to discuss potential topics.

Councillor R Beeching stated that Licensing Committee on 13 March 2014 would be considering the issue of enforcement and proposed this as a prospective subject. The Chairman stated that some Members had suggested that David Lloyd, the Police Crime Commissioner be invited back to provide Members with an update following his first full year report. Members supported a suggestion that he be invited back to provide Members with an update.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED - that the work programme as now detailed, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....