

## Minutes of Community Services Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 19 July 2011, starting at 6.30pm  
Present: Councillor S Brunskill (Chairman)

Councillors:

J E Alcock	L Rimmer
R Bennett	M Robinson
S Carefoot	R Swarbrick
J Hill	J White (6.45pm)
R Newmark	

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Head of Engineering Services, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services, Head of Financial Services and Waste Management Officer.

Also in attendance: Councillors D Berryman, P Dowson and I Sayers.

### 191 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Knox, G Mirfin, G Scott and R Thompson.

### 192 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 193 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

### 194 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ebrey and Mrs Williamson to the meeting who both wished to speak on Agenda item number 8, Future of Friends Groups.

Mr Ebrey submitted a petition to the Chairman in support of the Highmoor Park initiative to create a formal Friends Group. He informed Committee that several residents had been working together to enhance Highmoor Park, Clitheroe, in partnership with the Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. The works had started with planting and generally enhancing the approach to the estate but requests were now for further and bigger improvements.

Mrs Williamson stated that the Friends of Highmoor Park was not needed as there were an element of the residents that were happy for Ribble Valley Borough Council to continue with the general maintenance of the area. She felt that it was not the place of a Friends Group to make the decisions as far as the

estate was concerned but it was that of the Council. The creation of a Friends Group had left some residents feeling anxious.

The Chairman thanked both Mr Ebrey and Mrs Williamson for their contribution.

195

## FUTURE OF FRIENDS GROUPS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report bringing Committee up to date with the activities of existing Friends Groups asking for Committee's views on setting up a new group for Highmoor Park and asking Committee to consider the establishment of a Common Memorandum of Understanding for all Friends Groups.

He reminded Committee that the first group to be established was the Friends of Clitheroe Castle in 2007 who had met with some success in raising approximately £100,000 towards the redevelopment of the Castle Museum.

The Friends of Brungerley Park had been formed from a group of regular park users and had been successful in attracting grant monies from the big lottery to carry out improvement works in consultation with the Council's grounds maintenance staff.

The Friends of Whalley Moor Woodland had been involved with a consultation exercise on the estate to develop ideas for public open space and were also in the process of applying for external funding.

These groups all had formal constitutions, elected officers and bank accounts and had made contributions to the maintenance/development of Council owned land enhancing rather than replacing existing Council functions.

The Director informed Committee of the current situation with regard to the Highmoor Park estate in Clitheroe which had started out with a number of like-minded residents who wanted to improve certain areas of the estate but who had now developed a much more ambitious list of projects. Although the Council had supported the initial ideas the nature of some of the work now being proposed had implications for health and safety issues. Council Officers were reluctant to take it any further at the present time as the group was not properly constituted and did not appear to reflect the views of all residents. He informed Committee that this was the first request from a housing development to form a Friends Group and this needed to be handled carefully as there was a definite split of opinion on the estate. He felt that this might be an ideal time to standardise the terms of reference for Friends Groups to incorporate clear health and safety issues, the input of officers' time and the parameters of the group.

Other issues also included the use of machinery and equipment where specific qualifications or training and supervision was required as well as insurance matters and the Council's public liability.

Councillors Berryman and Dowson, the Ward Councillors, were given permission to speak on this item and both felt that the Friends Group should be

put on a formal footing if it was to go ahead. Councillor Dowson also indicated that she had been involved with the group as she lived on the Highmoor Park estate.

Councillors were very impressed with the works that had already been carried out which had enhanced the approach to the Highmoor Park estate but felt that the future tasks requested needed to be considered carefully as the ultimate responsibility for the site remains with the Borough Council and there should certainly be no extra costs incurred for the tax payer.

Concern was expressed that there was a divergence of views on the estate and that friends groups were voluntary and that no resident should feel under pressure to take part or contribute financially.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the contents of the report and recognise the work already carried out by Friends Groups;
2. agree to the establishment of a Common Memorandum of Understanding for all Friends Groups;
3. do not consider that the formation of Friends Groups in areas other than designed parks should be encouraged in the future; and
4. ask the officers to act as independent arbitrators between the two groups of residents on Highmoor Park, Clitheroe in order to reach some agreement.

196

#### REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report regarding a review of energy use in Ribble Valley Borough Council facilities that had been prepared by a Working Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had resolved to share the findings of the report with the Community Committee as the Committee responsible for most of the facilities where the energy usage had been investigated.

He reported that officers continue to investigate ways of reducing energy use and ways of making our use of energy more efficient than previously as an ongoing issue.

Committee considered the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group which included the innovative measures that have already been taken to reduce energy use by the Council, levels of consumption, summaries on several Council facilities and suggestions for future actions to continue with the constant updating of energy usage.

Members of the Committee were impressed by the report done by the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group and felt that this was something that needed further attention.

Councillor Berryman was given permission to speak on this item as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the content of the excellent report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee "Review of Energy Usage in RVBC Facilities"; and
2. recommend to the Leader of the Council the formation of a Working Group to research further means of energy savings and efficiencies.

197 SUMMARY REPORT ON PROPERTY DISPLAY ENERGY CERTIFICATES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for Committee's information on the latest energy efficiency assessment of the Council properties and in particular an across the board improvement in the ratings of the Council's Building Display Energy Certificates. These had been introduced in 2008 to raise public awareness of energy use and to inform visitors to public buildings about the energy use of a building. The ratings ranged from A to G where A is very efficient and G is the least efficient. The report outlined the ratings for the Council Offices, Castle Museum, Platform Gallery and Ribblesdale Pool, all of which had improved.

Councillor Ian Sayers was given permission to speak on this item.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

198 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE CENTRES – LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION AND RELATED ISSUES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report advising Committee on the impact on this Council of the closure of Petre Arms, Langho Household Waste Recycling Centre and seeking guidance on the Council's response to the issues contained in the Lancashire County Council consultation document for the further rationalisation of household waste recycling centres.

He reminded Committee that the household waste recycling centre at Petre Arms, Langho had closed on the 31 March 2011 and that residents within the catchment area had been advised that one of the alternative sites to use following closure was the Great Harwood HWRC. Following the closure of the Petre Arms, Langho site, concerns had also been raised with regard to the increased incidents of fly tipping and this has now been proved to have happened within the catchment area of that site. Although earlier correspondence from the County Council had given some assurances that they would assist with meeting the cost of clearing fly tipping adjacent to the site, those negotiations were still underway.

It was noted that none of the four recommended sites for closure were actually located within the Ribble Valley but although residents had been encouraged only very recently to use the facility at Great Harwood it was now one of the recommended sites for closure in the future. The consultation document also suggested that should it be practical, further consideration should be given separately to the review to further refining and improvement of the HWRC network by replacement of both the Longridge and Clitheroe facilities with a single new HWRC more centrally located and better sized to accommodate the tonnages and visits generated within the district.

The report also stated that the assessment of closure options had endeavoured to ensure that as many households as possible in each district remain within 6 miles of a HWRC. The report showed that it was already clear that a substantial part of the Ribble Valley area was already outside a 6 mile radius and that this should be taken into account in the review of the Clitheroe and Longridge sites being replaced by one differently located site as this would only exacerbate the distance required for residents to travel to a HWRC.

Members expressed grave concern about these proposals and were disappointed that having being directed to an alternative site on the closure of Petre Arms, Langho, that this site was also earmarked for proposed closure. It was felt that Ribble Valley Borough Council's reputation was also at risk here as residents do not always understand that this is a Lancashire County Council responsibility.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the report; and
2. instruct officers to respond to the consultation document objecting to the closure of these sites and commenting on the concerns raised in the report in the strongest possible terms.

199

#### DOG FOULING ON COUNCIL OWNED PLAYING PITCHES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report informing Councillors of a growing problem with dog fouling on playing pitches and to seek approve to introduce new measures to exclude dogs from those areas. He informed Committee that the Council had been dealing with the problem of dog fouling on public open space in the Ribble Valley for some time but that it creates particular problems where those spaces are used for playing sport. Two areas in particular were the football pitches at Edisford Road in Clitheroe and Mardale playing fields in Longridge. He informed Committee that the pitches were usually marked out on Thursdays prior to fixtures for the weekend and that at this time inspections for dog fouling were carried out. However, by the time of the games it had increasingly become necessary for each team to inspect the pitch and remove dog faeces before any games could be played.

It was felt that the issuing of fixed penalties under the Council's existing arrangements was particularly difficult as most dog fouling occurs early in the morning and/or evening when staff are unavailable. It had therefore been concluded that a complete prohibition of dogs from playing pitches might be the only sustainable way to provide a safe and quality environment for local sports teams. The report explained the process needed to introduce such an exclusion zone by means of a Dog Control Order which would require consultations for publishing of notices be identification of specific land and the opportunity for representations to be made.

It was acknowledged that not all dog owners act in an irresponsible manner though whilst imposing a prohibition would lead to some inconvenience, this should be balanced against the fact that there is other open space in the borough for dog walkers to use.

Another important issue to be considered is that of the implications for people's health in that dog faeces can carry the toxicara virus which can cause a range of symptoms from general aches and pains to complete blindness in extreme circumstances. It was also felt that given the level of resources and cost involved in making a Dog Control Order, it might be sensible to consider other play areas and recreational grounds to be included.

The Councillors highlighted several areas within their own wards that consideration should be given to in the inclusion of a Dog Control Order but also felt that on making an Order enforcement would be necessary as well as better signage.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the contents of the report;
2. approve the making of a Dog Control Order to include the Council's playing pitches at Edisford and Mardale and that in consultation with Councillors and interested groups other recreational areas should be considered.

## 200 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report advising Committee on the Council's current guidance on the provision of public open space and to encourage Committee's involvement in the development of new policies/guidance to support the Core Strategy and delivery of development proposals.

He informed Committee that although responsibilities for the development of the new strategy lies with Planning and Development Committee, the provision of public open space on new residential sites had a potential impact on this Committee as it has historically taken over responsibility for such spaces through the provision of a commuted sum from the developer.

He reminded Members of the current policy in the Districtwide Local Plan which refers to the provision of open space on residential sites over 1 hectare and suggested that this might need to be reviewed.

He felt it was also necessary for Committee to consider its ability to take over the future management of any new open spaces given the Council's financial constraints and suggested that it would be useful if a Working Group could be set up to develop policies/guidance to inform the delivery of the Core Strategy to enable the Council to respond to existing development pressure.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the contents of the report;
2. agree to the formation of a joint Working Group consisting of three Councillors each from Planning and Development Committee and Community Committee to develop future open space policies in the new Core Strategy that might also be used in the interim period.

201 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2010/11

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the final outturn on the Capital Programme for 2010/11 for this Committee.

The Capital Programme for this Committee had consisted of 27 schemes of which there were 7 with slippage. Details of these were highlighted for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the requests for capital slippage on the 7 schemes outlined.

202 ROEFIELD ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for Committee's information which included a report from the Roefield Management Board. He informed Committee that the report had little detail possibly because Roefield had not been trading for a full year as yet under the most recent agreement.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and interim figures be requested for a six-month period.

203 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Director of Community Services submitted a report updating Committee on issues relating to Waste Management in the Ribble Valley. These included initiatives to improve the quality of comingled recyclate, replacement of wheeled bins, a response to the cost sharing review and operational issues at Farrington Waste Technology Park.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

204 CAPITAL MONITORING 2011/12

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the progress with the Capital Programme for the first quarter of this financial year. This included details of four capital items.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

205 REVENUE OUTTURN 2010/11

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the actual position for the revenue budget for the year ended 31 March 2011 for this Committee. The report detailed by cost centre a comparison with the revised estimate which showed an overall underspend of £211,218 on the net cost of services. Details of the underspend was highlighted in the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

206 REVENUE MONITORING 2011/12

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the position for the first three months of this year's revenue budget as far as this Committee was concerned. The report included a comparison by cost centre between actual expenditure and the original estimate for the period.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

207 GENERAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report informing Committee of the progress on the arts development service. He encouraged all Councillors to attend the open evening of the new exhibition at the Platform Gallery.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact John Heap (414461).