

**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

30 June 2011  
2.00 - 4.31 pm

**Executive Councillors:**

Councillor Cantrill, Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places

Councillor Bick, Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

Councillor Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

**Scrutiny Committee Members:** Councillors Kerr (Chair), Al Bander, Blackhurst, Brown, Moghadas, O'Reilly, Reiner and Todd-Jones

**Non-voting co-optees:** Diane Best and Brian Haywood

**Officers Present:**

Liz Bisset, Director of Customer and Community Services

Chris Humpris, Principal Accountant

Alan Carter, Head of Strategic Housing

Debbie Kaye, Head of Active Communities

Trevor Woollams, Head of Community Development

Toni Ainley, Head of Streets and Open Spaces

Paul Necus, Head of Specialist Services

Alistair Wilson, Green Spaces Manager

Toni Birkin, Committee Manager

<b>FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL</b>
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**11/39/CS Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Kightley and Tenant Representative Kay Harris

**11/40/CS Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011 and the special meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011, were approved and signed as correct records.

**Change to Published Agenda Order**

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Chair used her discretion to alter the order of the agenda items. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes will follow the order of the agenda.

### 11/41/CS Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Item	Interest
Blackhurst		Personal interest as a Member of Trumpington Residents Association and his wife is Secretary of that Association which has links to Trumpington Pavilion, part of the leisure management contract.
Al Bander		Personal interest as a Member of Trumpington Residents Association which has links to Trumpington Pavilion, part of the leisure management contract.

### 11/42/CS Public Questions (See information below)

Public questions are detailed with the relevant agenda items.

### 11/43/CS 2010/11 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances

#### Matter for decision:

The officer's report presented a summary of the 2010/11 outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Arts and Recreation portfolio (now Arts, Sport and Public Places), compared to the final budget for the year.

#### Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places:

- I. Agreed the carry forward requests, totalling £186,140 as detailed in Appendix C of the report, to be recommended to Council for approval.
- II. Agreed to seek approval from Council to carry forward capital resources to fund rephased net capital spending of £415,000 from 2010/11 into 2011/12 and of £135,000 from 2011/12 into 2010/11 as detailed in Appendix D of the report.

**Reason for the Decision:**

As detailed in the Officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not Applicable

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

In response to member's questions the Principal Accountant explained that a consultant had been employed to investigate business rent rebates and had achieved significant savings for the council.

Staff restructures were discussed. A conservative approach had been adopted and was on target with its timeframes.

The Scrutiny considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None****11/44/CS Future Leisure Management Options and Arrangements****Public Speaker****Stuart Newbold – Cherry Hinton Residents Association**

The Royal British Legion (RBL) currently owns a building in Cherry Hinton that is not meeting current needs. The building is listed as a community facility and this is causing difficulties with any plans to redevelop the site, possibly for housing use.

The RBL would like to work with the Cherry Hinton Village Centre (CHVC) to share profits and develop facilities. Forming a Community Trust could facilitate partnership working with the Council to deliver the objectives of both organisations.

The Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places responded. The strategy for sport and leisure facilities was to work with local communities and

groups to provide a range of facilities. The aspiration was to use the current cost as a baseline while adding capacity and enhancing the role of the Council as a provider. CHVC was used by people from across the City, primarily as a Sports venue. The Executive Councillor expressed a willingness to meet local groups and examine options.

**Matter for decision:**

The City Council is considering how its leisure facilities and associated activities will be run from October 2013 onwards. Work has begun to identify relevant and affordable options that would enable continuation of a range of quality services for residents and visitors in the future.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places:**

**Agreed**

- I. To authorise the Director of Customer and Community to undertake a procurement exercise and to award contracts for an external leisure consultancy agency and external legal advisors to provide expert guidance to the Council in connection with the implementation of new arrangements for the management of the Council's leisure facilities.
- II. To instruct Officers to commence work on the development of a procurement strategy including contract specifications, contract evaluation and award processes for any future leisure management provision, in line with the recommended approaches identified in sections 3.9 and 3.10 of this report, subject to guidance from appointed consultants and legal advisors.
- III. To instruct officers to bring to Community Services Scrutiny Committee in January 2012 a report for approval authorising procurement of external or alternative management arrangements for the leisure management portfolio from October 2013 onwards.

**Reason for the Decision:**

The Council has a current leisure management contract in place to run its portfolio of leisure facilities within the city. Sport and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) is the current provider and this contract with the Council will expire at the end of September 2013.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

To end the end of the contract term all of the facilities return to direct management by the City Council and all Cambridge based SLM staff are transferred under TUPE to the City Council. The primary benefit to the Council would be direct control of the service. However, this option is deemed not viable and is not recommended, primarily due to the considerable increased

costs to the Council above the current baseline. These would include loss of National Non Domestic Rate Relief (NNDR), VAT savings, and additional VAT Exempt issues, along with increased staffing on costs and pension arrangements. There may also be a negative impact on the Council's VAT de minimus position.

### **Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Head of Arts and Recreation introduced the report regarding Future Leisure Management Options and arrangements.

The committee made the following comments;

- I. Community engagement has generated suggestions for improved use of facilities, such as out of season use of Jesus Green Pool.
- II. Right to acquire would be discussed with legal and the consultants at a later stage of the project.
- III. In response to member questions the officer confirmed that the consultant had suggested a 10 to 15 year contract, as this is the norm. It also adds value as procurement is expensive and allows carbon reduction measures to generate a payback for the provider and the Council. The contract would have break clauses.

Consulting on alternative management arrangements for CHVC was discussed. The officer stated that such facilities required specialist management. The risks of alternative structure were too great and the costs, in terms of subsidies, would be very high.

Councillor Cantrill confirmed that the option being recommended represented the best solution as it would encourage enhanced facilities and deliver value of money. The decision represents a balance between the specification, financial constraints and the level of resources across the City. While the council is happy to listen to community groups it was unlikely that a community management structure would be considered. The Council had a duty of care to provide high quality sports facilities to all users.

Councillor Todd-Jones proposed the following amendment to add and additional recommendation:

As part of the procurement exercise and strategy, to instruct officers to examine the option of separating out the management of Cherry Hinton Village Centre from the current management contract to enable consideration of alternative management models for the Cherry Hinton Village Centre

The amendment was lost by 3 votes to 5.

The Scrutiny considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None**

## **11/45/CS Cherry Hinton Hall Grounds Improvements**

### **Public Speakers**

#### **1. Andrew Varley on behalf of City Farms**

The City Farm group were grateful that the proposal had been taken seriously. They were disappointed that the farm could not be located in Cherry Hinton Hall but were keen to explore other options. What level of support could be expected from the council in future?

The Executive Councillor responded. Whilst there is support for the plan to have a City Farm, it did not fit with the Master plan for Cherry Hinton Hall and the needs of other users such as the Folk Festival. Officers would work with the group to identify an alternative location. Practical support would be available long term with the aspiration that this project could meet other City Council objectives and mitigate allotment supply.

#### **2. Bob Daines on behalf of Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall**

The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall are keen to take the Master plan forward and will work with other users to achieve the best results, as this will attract other users to the special space that is Cherry Hinton Hall. The City Farm project has merit but does not belong in Cherry Hinton Hall.

#### **3. Stuart Newbold on behalf of Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall**

The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall would like to express their gratitude for the work of active communities team and the consultants, Phil Backs Associates.

**Matter for decision:**

- I. Community Service Scrutiny Committee of the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010 recommended on that Officers commissioned an independent report on the site feasibility of a City Farm at Cherry Hinton Hall.
- II. The finalised report at Appendix A - 'A City Farm for Cambridge' (The Report) has researched and provided a comprehensive overview of the consultation completed to date and through a series of new individual stakeholder meetings specifically relating to the City Farm proposal, provided details of the differing, and opposing views on the proposition at Cherry Hinton Hall.
- III. 'A City Farm for Cambridge' concludes with recommendations on whether or not Cherry Hinton Hall is a feasible site for a City Farm as well as providing indicative suggestions as to other possible sites within, and close to Cambridge City, outlining the possible factors and criteria which should be considered in assessing these.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places:**

#### **Agreed**

- I. To instruct Officers to proceed with project appraisals and funding applications in respect of the hard, soft landscape and public buildings of the central area of Cherry Hinton Hall Park as outlined in the original Masterplan.
- II. To instruct Officers to work with the Folk Festival Management where possible to mitigate the impact of these proposals on the festival layout. This not to compromise any strategically placed landscape features outlined in the original Masterplan which will enable the Council to preserve and enhance the grounds, ensuring the primary function of a public park continues for current and future generations.
- III. To provide support to the City Farm group in researching the possibility of locating a City Farm at an alternative site within the city.

#### **Reason for the Decision:**

In conclusion the report recommended that a City Farm was not feasible at Cherry Hinton Hall for the following reasons:-

- I. Incompatibility with the continuation of the Folk Festival annually at the Hall;
- II. Although the City Farm concept was supported well during the Masterplan consultation in 2010 there was equally strong support to develop the masterplan which had already been presented. This has created a divergence of opinion, weakening the likelihood of gaining wider community support needed for success; and
- III. The risk and implications to the Council should the City Farm venture not be successful.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

Members expressed support for the Master plan. The timeframe was explained and a further version of report would return to this committee when costings were completed. Alternative funding sources were being explored.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report unanimously.

The Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None****11/46/CS 2010/11 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances****Matter for decision:**

The officer's report presented a summary of the 2010/11 outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Community Development and Health portfolio compared to the final budget for the year.

**Decision of Executive Councillor Community Development and Health:**

- I. Agreed the carry forward requests, totalling £155,810 as detailed in Appendix C of the report, are to be recommended to Council for approval.
- II. Agreed to seek approval from Council to carry forward capital resources to fund rephased net capital spending of £85,000 from 2010/11 into 2011/12 and rephase budget of £10,000 from 2011/12 into 2010/11 as detailed in Appendix D of the report.

**Reason for the Decision:**

As detailed in the officer's report

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not applicable.



**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Principal Accountant introduced the report. Members questioned the low take up of Safer City Grants. This was thought to be due to a lack of understanding and awareness of the grants. It was suggested that there was a role for Area Committees in promoting such grants.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None****11/47/CS Community Facilities in East Area****Matter for decision:**

A new approach to allocating funding to enhance the provision of local community facilities was considered by East Area Committee in August 2010 and had been operating consensually between ward councillors and the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health since this time.

The Community Services Scrutiny Committee was asked to support this approach by waiving its right to pre-scrutinise decisions about the allocation of funding from developer contributions for enhancing local community facilities within East Area.

**Decision of Community Services Committee:**

Agreed to recognise that scrutinising the policy framework remains part of the pre-scrutiny function but agreed to waive its pre-scrutiny function for making decisions (including project appraisals, where required) about funding improvements to 'off-site' community facilities in the East Area that are funded from developer contributions.

**Reason for the Decision:**

The policy of allocating developer contributions for the provision and improvement of community facilities had been in place for several years. The allocation of off-site contributions, by area, provides a response to the

challenge of providing and enhancing facilities as close as possible to the location of the development. It also speeds up the decision making process and enhances the Council's approach to the localism agenda, enabling local residents to shape provision in their neighbourhood.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not applicable

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Head of Community Development introduced the report. Members this approach as it had help clear a back-log of projects and was welcomed.

In response to member questions, the officer explained that off-site referred to developer S106 contributions towards facilities and improvement to be delivered in the area but not on the development site. Lessons had been learnt from the North Area Committee pilot and from the work already completed using this approach in the East Area. This would contribute to future work on devolved decision making.

Councillor Todd-Jones proposed the following amendment to the recommendation (additional wording underlined and in italic):

*The scrutiny committee recognises that scrutinising the policy framework remains part of the pre-scrutiny function* but agrees to waive its pre-scrutiny function for making decisions (including project appraisals, where required) about funding improvements to 'off-site' community facilities in the East Area that are funded from developer contributions.

The amendment was agreed unanimously.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the amended recommendations unanimously.

**11/48/CS 2010/11 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances**

**Matter for decision:**

The officer's report presented a summary of the 2010/11 outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Housing portfolio compared to the final budget for the year.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:**

- I. Agreed the carry forward requests, totalling £120,990 as detailed in Appendix C of the report, are to be recommended to Council for approval.
- II. Agreed to seek approval from Council to carry forward capital resources to fund rephased net capital spending of £7,000 from 2010/11 into 2011/12, as detailed in Appendix D of the report.
- III. Agreed to seek approval from Council to rephase capital expenditure of £32,000 in respect of investment in disabled facilities grants into 2011/12.
- IV. Agreed to seek approval from Council to rephase capital expenditure of £423,000 from 2010/11 into 2011/12, in respect of investment in the creation of the Assessment Centre, and to increase the overall budget sum by a further £125,000 to meet identified additional costs of the project, resulting in £2,797,000 being available to be spent in 2011/12 and 2012/13 to complete the project. The additional £125,000 investment had been fully funded by an increase in the CLG contribution towards the project.
- V. Agreed to seek approval from Council to carry forward capital resources to fund rephased capital spending of £6,159,000 between 2010/11 and 2011/12, in relation to investment in the Housing Revenue Account, as part of the Housing Capital Investment Plan, as detailed in Appendix E and the associated notes, with the resulting need to increase the use of revenue funding of capital expenditure by £951,000 in 2011/12.
- VI. Agreed to seek approval from Council to rephase anticipated capital income of £308,000, from 2010/11 to 2011/12, in the form of the final tranche of Homes and Communities Agency Grant (£25,000) and an element of prudential borrowing (£283,000), both required to complete the 7 units of new build affordable housing.

**Reason for the Decision:**

As detailed in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not Applicable

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Principal Accountant introduced the report. The committee made the following comments:

- I. Members questioned the carry forward requests, which were unusually large even when Brandon Court figures were removed.
- II. Improved budget management was suggested as a way forward.

The Director of Community Services confirmed that all directors were examining the detail of slippages. A late arriving grant for CLG had skewed the figures for the end of year.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by a vote of 5 to 0.

The Executive councillor for housing approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None**

### **11/49/CS Shared Home Improvement Agency (HIA)**

#### **Matter for decision:**

The report recommended the establishment of a shared home improvement agency with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council from April 2012. The City Council would be the lead authority for the shared service.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:**

- I. Approved the implementation of a shared home improvement agency with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council.
  
- II. Delegated authority to the Director of Customer and Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Resources and the Head of Legal Services, to agree a legal protocol to govern the shared service.

#### **Reason for the Decision:**

The shared service is proposed to offer the best opportunity to sustain the current levels of service for city residents giving value for money initially and in the future.

#### **Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not applicable

#### **Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Scrutiny Committee expressed support for the proposals and were happy that staff would be retained. The new service would have economies of scale while retaining a personal service.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report unanimously.

The Executive councillor for housing approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None**

## **11/50/CS Affordable Housing Programme**

### **Matter for decision:**

In June 2010, the Executive Councillor for Housing approved a three year rolling programme of housing sites in the Council's ownership for consideration for development, redevelopment or disposal.

The report provided a review of the programme and specifically seeks approval of a revised three year rolling programme that includes sites to be investigated in 20011/12 to 2013/14. The programme included for the first time a number of garage sites.

The report sets this request for approval to the revised three year programme in the context of;

- I. The delivery of Affordable Housing through the planning system
- II. The new Council housing programme
- III. The new regime for funding Affordable Housing through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:**

- I. Noted the progress of the Affordable Housing Programme
- II. Approved the revised three year rolling programme of housing sites in the Council's ownership to be considered in 20011/12 to 2013/14 for development, redevelopment or disposal.

### **Reason for the Decision:**

Maximising the delivery of new housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures ensuring that current standards are at least maintained" is a Strategic Objective in the Housing Portfolio Plan. Most new Affordable Housing is delivered through the planning system. However, to provide some balance to this, two recent programmes of work have been about making the best use of housing land in the Council's ownership to deliver new Affordable Housing and

understanding the viability of a providing new Affordable Housing direct by the Council through City Homes (as opposed to through Registered Providers).

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not applicable

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Head of Housing Strategy introduced the report. The committee made the following comments:

- I. The factors under consideration for future decisions on garages were discussed. These would include, location, condition, void rates and proximity to alternative parking.
- II. Members expressed concern that loss of garages would increase pressure on on-street parking.
- III. The viability of maintaining garages which were used for storage was questioned.
- IV. Under use of some garages was the result of poor security.
- V. Increased use of electric cars would generate a need for garages with a hook up point.

The officer explained that the width of cars had increased over time resulting in older garages no longer able to accommodate them. The list included all locations being examined, however, not all will be developed. Any scheme proposed for redevelopment will be brought back to the Committee for specific approval.

The sensitive nature of some of the sites was discussed. Sensitive ways to deal with residents concerns had been agreed in advance and hand delivered letters would ensure the correct information was shared as soon as possible.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report unanimously.

The Executive councillor for housing approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None**

**11/51/CS Decisions by Executive Councillors**

**13a Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau - Grant Application**

The committee noted the decision made by Executive Councillors.

## **11/52/CS Refurbishment of former Crematory**

### **Matter for decision:**

The Mercury Abatement project at the City Crematorium (SC379) creates a new crematory to house mercury abatement equipment and three new cremators. This would leave the old crematory without an operational function and with no direct site access should works be undertaken in the future.

This scheme is to undertake the refurbishment of the former crematory whilst the site is still accessible for projects of this scale to maximise the use of the space created and provide modern facilities for the bereaved, mourners, staff, officiants and funeral directors. It is also planned to provide a glazed roof above the Cloisters, again whilst the site is accessible, allowing covered access to floral and other tributes.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health:**

#### **Agreed:**

Financial recommendations –

- I. To recommend this capital scheme (which is not included in the Council's Capital Plan) for approval by Council, subject to resources being available to fund the capital and revenue costs associated with the Scheme. The total capital cost of the project is £206,000, and it is proposed that this funded from Repairs & Renewals.
- II. There are no net Revenue implications

Procurement recommendations:

- III. Approved the carrying out and completion of the procurement of this project as outlined at 1.3 of this report.
- IV. If the tender sum exceeds the estimated contract value of £206,000 by more than 15% the permission of the Executive Councillor and Director of Resources will be sought prior to proceeding.

### **Reason for the Decision:**

To make effective and efficient use of Council buildings and to accelerate the building works timetable to benefit from the current dispensation from HMRC which will allow £500,000 to be returned to Reserves.

### **Any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Head of Specialist Services tabled slightly amended recommendations. In response to member questions he confirmed that a favorable planning decision from South Cambs District Council was expected shortly. The timeframes suggested were tight but achievable.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report unanimously.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None**

The meeting ended at 4.31 pm

**CHAIR**