

NORTH EAST (OUTER) AREA COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 26TH OCTOBER, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor G Wilkinson in the Chair

Councillors A Castle, R D Feldman, Mrs R
Feldman, A Lamb, J Procter and A
Shelbrooke

Apologies Councillor P Harrand and R Procter

32 Apologies

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Harrand and R Procter.

33 Declaration of Interests

The following declarations of interest were made:-

- Councillor A Lamb – Agenda item 13 (Min No. 37 refers) – Proposed Children's centres in Wetherby and Boston Spa – personal interest in his capacity as a Governor of Wetherby High School.
- Councillor G Wilkinson – Agenda item 14 (Min No. 42 refers) – Application for funding in respect of environmental improvements to Deighton Road flats, Wetherby – prejudicial interest in his capacity as a Director of Leeds East/North East Homes ALMO.

See also later Minute No. 42.

34 Open Forum

The agenda made reference to the provision contained in the Area Committee Procedure Rules for an Open Forum session at each ordinary meeting of an Area Committee, for members of the public to ask questions or to make representations on matters within the terms of reference of the Area Committee. On this occasion, no matters were raised.

35 Minutes - 21st September 2009

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

36 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Footpath and Green Space Adjacent to Moor Allerton Golf Course (Min No. 22 refers)

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Monday, 7th December, 2009

RESOLVED – That this matter be referred to the next Alwoodley Ward Members' meeting.

37 Proposed Children's Centres - Wetherby and Boston Spa

Further to Minute No. 28, 21st September 2009, the Committee considered an update report submitted by the East North East Area Manager.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the progress report in respect of the proposed development of Children's Centres at Wetherby and Boston Spa be noted.
- b) That in respect of the Boston Spa site at Deepdale, Option (b) is the Committee's preferred option, involving the proposed demolition of the existing East Building.
- c) That approval be given to the proposed contribution of £105,000 to the Boston Spa Children's Centre from the Committee's capital Wellbeing budget (Wetherby).

38 Community Centres Report

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a comprehensive report regarding the portfolio of community centres transferred to the control of Area Committees in 2006, and containing Area-specific details of the four community centres which were the responsibility of the NE Outer Area Committee – Boston Spa Youth Centre, Barleyfields Community Centre, Wetherby, Deepdale Community Centre, Boston Spa and the Treetops Community Centre, Alwoodley. Of these, the Deepdale Centre was currently leased out to a community association.

Liz Jarmin and Trudie Canavan, Regeneration Team, Environment and Neighbourhoods Department, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main points of the discussion were:-

- The controllable and non-controllable elements of the budgets and current historic anomalies, such as the way in which caretaker costs were allocated in the budget.
- The fact that there was a City-wide maintenance budget for community centres which was controlled by the Council's Corporate Property Management team (CPM). All Area Committees would receive regular update reports from CPM and would be able to input in terms of organising priorities. There was, however, a substantial backlog of maintenance issues in respect of community centres across the City,

and details of this Committee's backlog were set out at Appendix 4 to the report.

- Area Committees could keep up to 100% of any capital receipts from the possible sale of community centres, but any disposal worth £100,000 or more had to go to the Executive Board for a decision.
- Prior to the transfer of community centres in 2006 to be the responsibility of Area Committees, overall, centres across the City had been operating at a substantial revenue deficit. The aim was now for Area Management Teams to work closely with local Members to try to ensure that centres in their areas were operating at break-even or better, and any revenue savings which might be achieved would be available for use in the following year to improve centres/services in that area. It was presently unclear as to whether the converse would apply, and whether Area Committees would have to subsidise, from their existing annual revenue budget allocations, any revenue deficiencies.
- The Area Committees had already been involved in establishing lettings and charging policies for centres in their areas, and what was required now was transparency, accountability, sustainability and consistency across the City in terms of the charging policy and subsidy levels, etc. This included issues such as rental support for leased-out centres, such as Deepdale, and for users of office accommodation in centres (no office-users currently in the Committee's area).
- Whilst welcoming the news, some surprise was expressed at the backlog budget figures contained in Appendix 4 in respect of the Barleyfields Community Centre in Wetherby, as Members had been informed that there was no money available when it had been suggested that Wetherby Town Council should assume responsibility for the Centre.
- Whilst acknowledging the comprehensive nature of the general report before them this evening, Members wished to see an equally detailed Area-specific report submitted to a future meeting, with a view to developing an action plan in respect of the centres which this Committee had responsibility for.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the update report on Community Centres within the Committee's control be noted;
- b) That a further Area-specific report be brought back to a future meeting, addressing the issues raised during the course of the discussion on this item.

39 Grounds Maintenance - Procurement Strategy Update

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Monday, 7th December, 2009

Following well documented problems in recent years surrounding the operation of the grounds maintenance contract across the City, the Chief Environmental Services Officer submitted a report outlining proposed changes to the contract specification prior to the new contract being let with effect from 1st March 2011. The grounds maintenance contract basically covered grass cutting, shrub beds maintenance and hedge trimming on Council - owned and ALMO controlled land, and areas adjacent to highways throughout the district.

Giles Jeffs, Regeneration Team, Environment and Neighbourhoods Department, and Anne-Marie Broadhead, Leeds East/North East Homes ALMO, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments.

The Committee was critical of most of the proposed specification changes – enhanced grass, shrub beds, rough and sight line grass and hedge trimming – regarding them as a deterioration in the standard of service, which was already poor. The outline proposals contained in the report were rejected in their entirety, and Members wished their strong reservations to be recorded and taken into account. Reference was made to the desire of some local Councils to be actively engaged in the process, either as direct providers of the grounds maintenance service themselves, on the grounds that they felt that they could do a better job, or in terms of monitoring the effectiveness or otherwise of the service, and these matters deserved serious consideration. Nor did the Committee accept that a huge, City-wide contract was necessarily the best, or most effective or cost efficient method of getting the job done to an acceptable standard. Serious consideration should be given to separate contracts, say for different wedges in the City, and within this arrangement local Councils should be given an opportunity to bid for or carryout work in their area.

Other comments were made regarding a lack of value for money since the Parks and Countryside Division no longer undertook this work, the condition of shrub beds, which only seemed to receive attention outside of the grass cutting season, and criticisms expressed at a Coroner's Inquest into a fatal road crash regarding the unsatisfactory and hazardous conditions appertaining in respect of sight lines at that junction. Reference was also made to inadequate supervisory and monitoring arrangements and financial sanctions in respect of the contract.

RESOLVED –

- a) That this Committee rejects the outline proposals contained in the report and wishes its views and comments to be taken into consideration by the Project Team and ultimately the Executive Board during the process of finalising the specification and other details of the proposed new contract(s).

- b) That the Committee receive a report back at an appropriate point in the process updating the Committee on the proposals and how its views have been taken into consideration.

40 PFI Round 6 Update - Lifetime Neighbourhoods for Leeds

The Chief Regeneration Officer, Environment and Neighbourhoods Department, submitted a report informing Members of a successful Council bid for Government PFI Round 6 funding to provide high quality, sustainable homes for residents aged 55+ across various parts of the City. At present, it was not possible to be more specific regarding possible areas of the City which would benefit from this type of development, but a further report would be brought back to the Area Committees in due course.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

41 Review of Adult Day Care Services

As part of an extensive, City-wide consultation process, the Director of Adult Social Services submitted a report outlining proposals for the rationalisation of adult day care services across the City, including the proposed closure, change of use or disposal of several existing Council day care centres.

The report also contained details of numbers of current service users in the Committee's area and which day care centre they currently attended.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

42 Well-Being Fund 2009/10 - Update

The East North East Area Manager submitted a report which updated Members on the Committee's revenue and capital wellbeing budget, including Small Grants and Environment Fund grants approved since the last meeting, projects in development and applications for funding before the Committee tonight for determination.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the update report be noted, including the current revenue and capital allocations and balances, the Small Grants and Environment Fund grants made to date and the projects in development;
- b) That the following decisions be made in respect of those applications before the Committee for determination this evening :-

Revenue

- i) Deighton Road flats, Wetherby – external improvements - £2,125 – Refused

- ii) Wattle Syke (Harewood) – environmental improvements - £1953 – Approved
- iii) New grit bins (Alwoodley) - £2,850 – Approved

Capital

- iv) Alderton Heights CCTV (Alwoodley) - £35,000 – Deferred
- v) Bardsey playground renovation - £10,000 - Approved
- vi) Barwick Miners Institute (Harewood) – disabled toilet - £15,000 – Refused
- vii) Scarcroft Village Hall (Harewood) - £1,900 – Refused (possible assistance from Ward-based Initiative Fund)
- viii) Shadwell Scout H.Q. (Harewood) - £10,675 – Refused (possible assistance from Ward- based Initiative Fund)
- ix) Bramham Sports Pavilion (Wetherby) – £27,000 – Deferred, move to ‘ projects in development ‘ category.

(N.B. 1. Councillor Wilkinson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to the application for funding for environmental improvements at Deighton Road flats, Wetherby (see Min No. 33) and left the meeting during the discussion of that particular application (Councillor J Procter in the Chair for that item);

2. Councillor J. Procter declared a personal interest in respect of the application for funding for improvements to Bardsey playground, in his capacity as a Bardsey resident and the parent of young children).

43 Area Delivery Plan 2008 - 11- Update

The North East Area Manager submitted a report updating the Committee on progress on issues contained n the Area Delivery Plan 2008-2011.

RESOLVED – That the update report be noted, and Moor Allerton be agreed as the priority neighbourhood area for the Outer North East area.

44 Dates, Times and Venues of Future Meetings

Monday, 7th December 2009, 5.30 pm, Civic Hall, Leeds

Monday, 8th February 2010, 5.30 pm, Civic Hall, Leeds

Monday, 22nd March 2010, 6.00 pm, Treetops Community Centre, Alwoodley

The meeting concluded at 7.42 pm.

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Monday, 7th December, 2009