

# Report to the Council

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 27 September 2005

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor J Knapman

**Item:** 5(c)

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## 1. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2005-06

### Recommending:

(1) That a supplementary revenue estimate of £100,000 be approved from the District Development Fund to meet the costs of carrying out works to clear land rear of Langridge Cottages, Paynes Lane, Nazeing of rubbish which has been placed on site; and

(2) That a supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £18,000 be approved to address the problems associated with the overheating of the Boiler and Plant Rooms at Loughton Leisure Centre.

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### Paynes Lane, Nazeing - Land Rear of Landridge Cottages

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Community Travellers Task and Finish Panel has considered the remediation of the Paynes Lane site following the departure of its occupants.
- 1.2 The Panel concentrated on the practicalities of the Council taking steps to secure the compliance with the requirements of Enforcement Notices recognising that those Notices did not require or enable the land to be fenced during or after any of the steps set out in the Notices. The Panel reflected that works to the site fell into different categories, attracting different costs; for example clearance of rubbish presently on the site, compared to the excavation of the top layer of material. They also noted that a simple clearance of the top layer would bring a quick improvement to the visual appearance of the site, whilst excavation would be likely to take the site into a position where fencing for Health and Safety reasons would be required.
- 1.3 Members were concerned that undertaking the more extensive work, which would be very expensive, would be risky if the site was not brought under public control.
- 1.4 Another matter of concern to members was how easy or difficult it was now to get access to the site.
- 1.5 The Council's consultants have provided the following estimated costs:
  - (a) removal of surplus debris, materials, buildings etc - up to £100,000; and
  - (b) fuller remediation to agricultural use - between £300,000 and £450,000.
- 1.6 Whilst the Council has no legal duty to do so, the Panel concluded that there was a moral obligation upon the Council to undertake some works on the site, but that

these works should be the minimum required at this stage. It also concluded that steps should be taken to establish a legal charge on the land so that it might be possible to recover some of the Council's costs in the event of the land changing hands.

- 1.7 The Panel further concluded that if public money was to be spent in undertaking such works, it was important that its future use should be controlled and that this would best be achieved by bringing the land in to public ownership, either through an agreed purchase or if not by using compulsory purchase powers.
- 1.8 The Cabinet agrees with the conclusions of the Panel and is seeking a supplementary estimate to carry out works to remove the surface debris, materials, buildings, etc.

### **Loughton Leisure Centre – Boiler and Plant Room**

- 1.9 As a result of inadequate ventilation to the Boiler and Plant Rooms, conditions are at times unbearable and certainly unacceptable for working. Also, the incidence of plant failures as a result of the high temperatures is causing disruption to the operation of the two pools.
- 1.10 The existing ventilation provision is clearly deficient in that the temperatures being experienced are way in excess of those recommended in BS6644 and as the Filtration Plant/Room has no ventilation provision and relies upon spillage from the Boiler Room for ventilation, which is neither adequate or acceptable.
- 1.11 To rectify the ventilation deficiency, a design has been developed, the cost of which is estimated at £18,000. With the imminent transfer of the Leisure Centre to external management, it is considered imperative to rectify the defect prior to the transfer in order to avoid the risk of any claim being made against the Council.