

Review Committee – 6 January 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **6 January 2015** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M Hoy
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs T J Capon

Cllr J C Burton	Cllr B T Hazlewood
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr J L Lawmon
Cllr R R Dray	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr J D Griffin	Cllr Mrs M H Spencer

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr M J Steptoe

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs A V Hale and Mrs J A Mockford.

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Evans	-	Head of Environmental Services
A Bugeja	-	Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
A Thomas	-	Asset Manager
P Gowers	-	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
M Power	-	Committee Administrator

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

2 DOG FOULING AND STRAY DOGS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services, which provided an overview of dog control activities undertaken by the Council's Environmental Services, with particular emphasis on dog fouling and stray dogs.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- There are no enforcement officers assigned specifically to deal with dog fouling issues. As part of the Council's forthcoming redesign, responsibility for enforcement of dog fouling issues could be added to the role of the Civil Enforcement Officers and enforcement could be targeted to areas known to have had issues of dog fouling.

- The Council's street cleansing contractor rotates the duties of its staff from time to time and this may result in dog bins being missed at times. However, as the contract is performing well, ongoing problems can be raised with the contractor. The grounds maintenance contractor has responsibility for emptying dog bins in the open spaces.
- 'Dogs on a lead' posters will be given to the Parish/Town Councils for their notice boards.
- During a previous consultation on dog control activities consideration was given to restricting the maximum number of dogs that could be walked on a lead at any one time; however, due to objections from the public, the Council decided not to impose such a restriction. Members requested that officers provide more information on this so that the matter could be reconsidered.
- Officers work in partnership with the Friends of Cherry Orchard group to encourage responsible dog ownership in the Country Park.
- It is realised that the various campaigns aimed at reducing instances of dog fouling in the District are not sustainable in the longer term due both to a natural reduction in impact over time and the Council's limited resources. It may be appropriate to follow up education/warnings with prosecutions of offenders.
- There is no lower age limit for a dog walker, unless it is a defined 'dangerous dog'; legislation allows the Council to challenge the dog owner if there are issues.
- Members could report dog fouling 'hot spots' where it would be useful to place extra signs. Specific issues of dog fouling can be reported via the Clean Streets app or by contacting the appropriate Council department. The Council's contractor will deal with complaints of fouling; instances of excessive fouling will be dealt with the same day.
- A breakdown identifying whether dog fouling reported relates to the street scene or in the open spaces was requested.
- There was concern that merging with neighbouring authorities in respect of the collection of stray dogs may result in higher costs to the Council.
- Rochford District Council does not have the resources to provide a dog warden service. Parish/Town Councils could contact the Head of Environmental Services to discuss how joint working could help to alleviate the issue of dog fouling. This would be raised by the Council's representative at the meeting of Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils on 22 January.

Resolved

- (1) That the matter of setting a restriction on the maximum number of dogs that could be walked on a lead at any one time and whether a minimum age could be specified for walking a dog be reconsidered.
- (2) That the potential for partnership working with the Parish/Town Councils around the issue of dog fouling be raised at the next Parish Summit and at the January meeting of Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils and that the 'We're Watching You' posters be provided to Parish/Town Councils via the RHALC.
- (3) That a breakdown be provided that identifies whether reports of dog fouling are on the street scene or in the open spaces. (HES)

3 KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

Members reviewed the Key Decision Document and noted its contents.

4 WORK PLAN

The Committee considered and approved its work plan.

During discussion on the issue of potholes, it was suggested that supermarkets that park their vans on pavements when delivering on-line shopping could be asked to pay towards the cost of repair.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the next item of business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

5 REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL ASSETS

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services, which looked at the assets held by Rochford District Council and the effectiveness of their management: in particular, vacant premises, surplus land and interaction with the Essex County Council's One Public Estate project.

Discussion centred around the Council's asset register and the Government's 'One Public Estate' project, which maps publically owned land and identifies areas that merit further consideration in terms of the feasibility of developing the sites.

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The Portfolio Holder would encourage Members to approach him if they have any ideas for usage of particular assets that may have been overlooked so the potential can be explored further.

Areas of discussion are set out in the exempt appendix to this Minute.

Resolved

To note the contents of the report. (HLEMS)

The meeting closed at 10.03 pm.

Chairman

Date

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