

West Area Committee – 22 October 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the **West Area Committee** held on **22 October 2009** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J M Pullen
Vice-Chairman: Cllr S P Smith

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr C I Black	Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr D Sperring	-	Rayleigh Town Council
Cllr A Matthews	-	Rawreth Parish Council
B Wahl	-	County Fire and Rescue Service
A Hilsdon	-	Essex County Highways

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Fowler	-	Head of Information and Customer Services
S Scrutton	-	Head of Planning and Transportation
M Power	-	Committee Administrator

263 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J Dillnutt and P F A Webster.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

At this point the Committee adjourned the formal meeting to move into the community forum to hear contributions from members of the public.

264 COMMUNITY FORUM

Questions raised during the Community Forum and the responses given are summarised in the appendix to the Minutes.

At this point the Committee re-convened into formal session.

265 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Rayleigh Weir Community Fire Station

The Committee welcomed Bob Wahl from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, who provided an update on the Rayleigh Weir Community Fire Station. The new fire station will be opening tomorrow, 23 October 2009, at which time the existing fire station will close. In response to a previous question as to whether the existing station should remain in operation until completion of the road works in Rayleigh High Street, it was stated that the Fire Service had no concerns about residents' safety as operational responses had shown that delays in blue light response times through the road works had been negligible. Response times would, however, continue to be monitored over the next few months. Fire appliances will also be despatched via separate routes through the High Street to ensure the quickest response. The new station was in close proximity to where the old station had been situated. Updates from the Fire Service could be brought to future West Area Committee meetings, if required.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- It had been decided to locate the rescue tender and aerial ladder platform in Southend, rather than at the new station in Rayleigh, as the main risks for high rise and industrial emergencies existed in the Southend area. This had followed consultation involving professional crews of surrounding stations. A high reach appliance has always been located in Southend and the accommodation in Southend is better suited to this appliance. It was confirmed that there would be a blue light response time of 8 -10 minutes for this appliance to the Rochford District and no detriment to fire cover in the area. The aerial ladder platform is not a first response appliance, so location of the ladder platform is not dependent on response time.
- Following concerns that the closure of the existing Fire Station would affect response times during times of heavy traffic, the Fire Service has responded to incidents on a 'blue light' through the road works on a Friday evening during rush hour, which has shown negligible delays through the road works. Procedures were in place to ensure that any two responses to the Rayleigh area would be split, with the attending fire appliances going via two different routes. Fire crews from surrounding Stations would provide a back up if both Rayleigh appliances were being used.

(2) Update on Highways Localism

The Committee considered the report of the County Highways District Manager, South providing an update on Highways Localism.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- In respect of Section 2 of the report, which provided details of the schemes to be considered for the 2010/11 programme, items not selected by the Committee for implementation during the year in question would not automatically be included in the list for consideration during the following year. It would be up to the Committee to identify priorities for each financial year.
- The delay to completion of the works in respect of a 7.5 weight limit and junction protection at Roach Avenue/Glasseys Lane, Rayleigh was because of continuing gas and water works being undertaken in the area.
- The District Manager would confirm direct to Cllr Mrs Mockford where the request for waiting restrictions at Tillingham Way/Willingale Avenue, Rayleigh had originated from.
- The District Manager would confirm the status of the upgrade to the existing lighting at Downhall Road, Rayleigh.
- The proposal for 2010/11 to erect traffic signals at Battlesbridge Bridge, Rawreth, although not favoured by the adjacent Parish of Rettendon, was on Rawreth Parish Council's wish list. There is a lot of traffic, including buses and lorries, especially in peak hour traffic, on this single carriageway. In the past there had been work towards bringing together a joint forum of representatives from Rochford and Chelmsford to look at issues such as this, which related to both Councils. The Council's Head of Planning and Transportation would look into this and report back.
- It was noted that, although the report showed 2009 as the year the proposal was submitted to upgrade the lighting at the footpath between Bardfield Way and Langham Drive, the issue had in fact been ongoing for several years. Indicative costing for the works could be provided by County Highways.
- Although there was no funding available to carry out the major resurfacing required to Church Road, Rayleigh, there was a request that minor repairs be undertaken to the road surface. A County Highways inspector would visit the site and contact Cllr Mrs P Aves to ascertain the defects identified.
- It was confirmed that the Section 106 agreement in which Asda would be providing funding towards a crossing at the top of Downhall Park Way specifically includes a sum of money for equestrian facilities, which would cover the Pegasus crossing element of the scheme. As a result, it would not be feasible to build a crossing without equestrian facilities. The proposed crossing would have demand buttons at appropriate positions for pedestrians, horseriders and cyclists. It was noted that the existing traffic lights at this junction do not have a pedestrian phase.

Due to the protracted nature of the process to implement the scheme, it was requested that the Head of Planning and Transportation asks the District Council's Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation to progress the matter with the County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

Following discussion relating to the loss of the original Section 106 monies for this project, it was requested that the Head of Planning and Transportation provides a written update on all monies currently in the development process.

266 WEST AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the West Area Update.

9/09 Rubbish Being Deposited in and Around an Unused Turning Bay at the End of London Road, Rawreth

A site meeting with Lyn Harvey had taken place and a way was being sought to deal with various issues in this area and to meet all the needs of the users of the highway.

24/09 Scheme to Bring the Unmade Road of Eastwood Rise, Rayleigh Avenue and Sandhill Road, Rayleigh up to an Adoptable Standard

A letter outlining the proposals would be sent to the residents affected to ascertain their views before any decisions could be made. It was noted that this situation had been going on for 3 years. The County Council was aware that the Section 106 monies attached to the scheme had a time limit of early April 2010.

25/09 Junction Improvements at the Entrance to Fairland Close, Rayleigh

A meeting on site between Cllr R A Oatham and County Highways would be arranged.

The following responses were given to questions raised, as follows:-

- In respect of a request for double yellow lines at the Worcester Drive junctions with Essex Close, Warwick Road and Lesley Road, the County Highways District Manager advised he had met with Cllr Humphries earlier in the week and the matter had been added to the list for future consideration.
- Minor repairs to holes in the footpath at Hatfield Road, Rayleigh would be investigated by County Highways. The issue of the flooding of the footpath at the bottom of Hatfield Road, as a result of the surface of the road being unable to drain properly following heavy rain, could be considered under the Localism agenda if the Committee decided to add the item to the wish list.

West Area Committee – 22 October 2009

- Following a request that the phasing of the traffic lights in Websters Way be looked into due to safety concerns for pedestrians, the District Manager advised that these lights conformed to a new standard of mandatory 'all red' periods for lights. However, County Highways would monitor the phasing timings of the lights and report back to the next meeting.
- County Highways was asked to investigate and report back on timings of the light phasing of the traffic lights at the bottom of Hatfield Road and Victoria Avenue, Rayleigh and also pedestrian lights further up London Road and Pearson Avenue as it was felt that some elderly residents did not have enough time to cross the road.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

Question

Response

B Lovett, Rayleigh

(1) We are unhappy with the Council's decision to remove the fence at the turning head of Swallow Close, Rayleigh

The fence had been removed because it was in very poor condition and covered in graffiti. Additional barriers had been put in place to prevent cars gaining access from the car park.

It was noted, in response to additional concerns raised, that not only did the removal of the fence change the appearance of the street but it also reduced the sound proofing of the railway. It was requested that planting in the area where the fence used to be would improve the appearance of the area and help to conceal the car park from residents' houses. The Head of Planning and Transportation would ascertain whether this would be possible and report back to the next meeting.

Regarding the comment that the parking restrictions in Swallow Close caused inconvenience to residents, it was noted that similar parking restrictions were in place across the District in order to deal with the problems of commuter parking etc. In response to a request that the Council considers issuing residents with parking permits, although the Council had concluded in the past that it would not be appropriate to introduce such a parking scheme in this area, it was noted that the Council's Review Committee is currently looking at issues of car parking and may examine this District-wide issue as part of its work.

(2) There are issues with emergency access to Swallow Close from The Approach, including emergency access being inadequately marked and cars parking in places that would obstruct emergency vehicle access.

The Head of Planning and Transportation had raised the issue of emergency access with Andy Dellar, the Traffic Engineer, Area Management South to see the traffic orders that would be most appropriate in this area. A full response would be provided at the next meeting. The Committee could consider if this should be considered as a priority for 2010/11 under the Localism agenda.

West Area Committee – 22 October 2009

Question

M Vanner, Rochford

With regards to the proposed closure of Rayleigh Fire Station, do the Councillors realise that by closing Rayleigh, the actual fire ground covered by the new Weir station will double in size? Are they sure that this is a right way to treat their residents?

Should this move not work, the Fire Authority should not make a quick decision to sell the station or the area that it stands on.

Response

The new station is a key station, whereby if the two existing fire appliances are both out for longer than 20 minutes, appliances from other areas will move in to make sure there is adequate cover. Currently there are no plans as to what the future use of the existing Rayleigh Station will be.