

**APPENDIX A**

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **22 October 2002** when there were present:

Cllr T G Cutmore (Chairman)  
Cllr T Livings (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley  
Cllr G A Mockford  
Cllr C G Seagers

Cllr M G B Starke  
Cllr J Thomass

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr J R F Mason

**REPRESENTING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

Mrs J Helson – Rayleigh Chamber of Trade  
Mrs J Mears – Rayleigh Chamber of Trade  
H Squier – Rochford Chamber of Trade  
J Sheaf – Essex Chamber of Commerce  
K Wickham – Federation of Small Businesses

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren – Chief Executive  
R Crofts – Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)  
J Honey – Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)  
S Fowler – Head of Administrative & Member Services  
H Drye – Corporate Policy Manager  
S Rom – Economic Development Officer  
M Martin – Committee Administrator

**504 CHAMBERS OF TRADE AND COMMERCE AND FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES**

**Note:** Cllr M G B Starke declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being a business proprietor.

The Chairman welcomed members from the Chambers of Trade and Federation of Small Businesses to the meeting in order that their representations be received. A list of these had been appended to the report of the Chief Executive.

In noting these, the following responses were made.

### **Federation of Small Businesses**

- The federation asked the Council to consider providing small business units or an enterprise centre in the area. Officers advised that discussions have taken place with the East of England Development Agency and the owners of Rochford Business Park in respect of providing a Business Enterprise Centre or units for small businesses.
- Business Watch Scheme – The Crime and Disorder Partnership are looking in to this joint initiative to reduce crime in business areas.
- In noting the financial difficulties experienced by small businesses in recycling their waste, it was agreed that, as recycling centres are run by the County Council, this view can be referred to them and information sought to help businesses with waste collection and recycling. This Council will soon be appointing a new Recycling Officer.
- In response to concerns that the Council may be selling services to the community cheaper than local businesses, the County Council confirmed that it has contracted out all its major services and, therefore, there is no capacity to sell in competition with local businesses. However, this Council seeks to give a majority of its business to local contractors - these are mainly from within the District and South East Essex.

### **Rayleigh Chamber of Trade**

- The Chamber raised a number of issues relating to car parking in the Town. A key debate during this Municipal Year will be around the various car parking issues. The skateboarding event held during the recent School Summer holidays had been a major success and alternative venues may be considered in the future.
- The Chamber identified the need for a contingency fund for town centre maintenance to address any outstanding issues from the Town Centre Monitoring Group. The County Council have been invited to the next meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 19 November to discuss outstanding issues relating to Town Centre enhancement schemes.
- Skateboarding – the Chamber advised the Council that Fairview Park, Rayleigh has been suggested by the Police and the local Member of Parliament as a possible site for a skateboarding area. This has also met with the approval of the Chamber of Trade and local young people.
- The Chamber reported that local businesses sited on the Brook Road Industrial Estate, Rayleigh were very pleased to receive funding from the District Council. It is the view of the Chamber of Trade that this estate has the potential to be developed as a window in to the District. They felt that further work would be required to take advantage of this opportunity.
- In respect of crime issues on the Industrial Estate, it was felt that it should be possible to link this in with the Business Watch scheme identified by the Federation of Small Businesses.
- Further funding for industrial estates may be available via the Thames Gateway South Essex partnership.

- A number of sites were identified by the Chamber of Trade as requiring Dog Bins as litter bins were being used for the purpose at present. The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) agreed to investigate the possibility of providing additional dog litter bins in Rayleigh town centre.
- The Chamber were pleased to note that the issue of chewing gum on the pavements in the town centre had been discussed by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee and that action was being taken to address it.
- Issues around the Windmill site were to be discussed later on in this meeting.
- The Chamber requested the Council to encourage Essex County Council to provide more brown signage to indicate the shopping area and other facilities as well as the industrial estate.
- An update on Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) was requested. The Police have monitored Grove Road and Hambro Hill shopping parade areas over the last 6 months and concluded that the installation of CCTV could not be justified on the basis of the number of incidents noted. Home Office research now published suggested that the impact on crime rates through the use of CCTV is inconclusive. However, it had been shown to be of benefit when used in tandem with improved lighting, particularly in car park areas.
- In response to the Chamber's request for a Taxi Shelter, the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) informed the meeting that the Rayleigh Town Centre Sub-Committee had concluded that the issue of a taxi shelter within the Boots Lagoon area in Rayleigh High Street was a matter for the taxi trade and the Chamber of Trade.
- The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) agreed to ask Essex County Council to look at pruning certain trees in the town centre area which were becoming dangerous, particularly for the partially sighted.
- The issue of public toilet facilities in Rayleigh would be considered as part of the redevelopment of the Civic Suite, in the light of the closure of the existing facilities in the Civic Suite to the public.

The members of the business community noted that the points they had raised would be taken forward where appropriate and considered as part of the budget process. They would be invited back again during this process.

## **505 CONSULTATION WITH THE DISTRICT CHAMBERS OF TRADE AND BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which advised members on the view of businesses and their representatives on consultation with Rochford District Council.

At the meeting of this Committee held on 23 July, Members had resolved that representatives of the business community and a sample of non-represented businesses should be consulted and asked their views on how the Council should consult with them.

Officers had undertaken discussions with the Chambers of Trade and Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses at their regular meeting with District officers on the 6 August 2002.

Fifty companies in the area had been surveyed to ascertain their views on consultation with the Council and whether they would like to be consulted on the Community Strategy. During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Members of the business community were concerned that they are often given very little time in which to respond to consultation, particularly as some groups only meet monthly or bi-monthly.
- The results of consultations are always taken into account by the District Council.

On a Motion moved by Cllr M G B Starke and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore it was:-

**Resolved**

- (1) That a formalised consultation protocol with representatives of the Chambers of Trade, Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses be developed by officers for consideration by this Committee.
- (2) That the large employer be invited to join the Local Strategic Partnership. (CEx)