

Central Area Committee – 17 June 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the **Central Area Committee** held on **17 June 2010** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs L M Cox

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr K H Hudson
Cllr M Hoy
Cllr Mrs C A Weston

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs M A Weir	-	Hawkwell Parish Council
Cllr B Hazlewood	-	Hockley Parish Council
Cllr Miss A Marriott P Bennett	-	Hullbridge Parish Council Essex Fire and Rescue Service

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Evans	-	Head of Environmental Services
N Khan	-	Principal Solicitor
J Bostock	-	Member Services Manager

164 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M R Carter, M Maddocks, P R Robinson and D G Stansby.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn declared a personal interest in item 12/10 of the Central Area Update (Railway Embankment Works) by virtue of living in the vicinity.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Cllr Mrs C A Weston was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

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

165 COMMUNITY FORUM

Questions raised during the Community Forum and the responses given are set out in the Appendix to these minutes.

To clarify the latest situation with regard to the subject matter covered by the first four questions, the following information contained within a District Council news release issued on 17 June 2010 was provided to all attendees at the meeting:-

‘Rochford District Council acknowledges the statement made by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government regarding the future of Regional Spatial Strategies and looks forward to the new planning policy and guidance promised in the Decentralisation and Localism Bill.

The Government is expected to provide clear guidance shortly on the transitional arrangements moving from the current to the new planning system. In the meantime, we are obliged to keep on course with our Core Strategy in order to comply with the legal requirement to provide a five year supply of developable land.

The Government appointed Inspector with the responsibility for determining the soundness of the Core Strategy is due to return to Rochford on 7 September 2010 for a session on affordable housing. In the meantime, she has written to all parties involved in the examination asking for comments on the implications of the proposed abolition of regional spatial strategies as well as the change to the definition of previously developed land and the removal of minimum densities for new housing development.

We now await further direction from government within this breathing space. In particular, we need to understand the arrangements for assessing housing need and how such assessments will inform future housing provision. We will, however, prepare a statement responding in detail to the Inspector’s request, and make this available by 19 July 2010.

It is important for the Council to have a clear planning policy framework in place to help prevent hostile applications from developers who may very well use any opportunity to push forward with proposals that are wholly unacceptable to our communities.

In conclusion, we are keen to see new planning policies and guidance in place as quickly as possible so that our plans for future housing development can be adjusted to reflect the needs of our communities and no more.’

In clarifying the content of the news release the District Council’s Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, Councillor K H Hudson, referred to the historic background in relation to housing needs assessment. The previous Government had introduced a system whereby County Council’s determined housing need, followed by the East of England Regional Assembly. The Regional Assembly is no longer in existence. The District Council had not envisaged that the Core Strategy as it currently reads will be

the finalised item. Any reference in the media to Councils being rewarded for agreeing to new housing is pure conjecture at the current time.

At this point the Committee reconvened into formal session.

166 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Fire Cover within Rochford District

Station Officer Peter Bennett, retained Group Manager for Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Southend and Rochford Community Command, provided an update on fire cover within the Rochford District. A schedule of the number and nature of calls to the Fire Service between the period 1 January 2010 to 17 June 2010 was tabled.

Responding to questions, Mr Bennett advised that:-

- The Home Fire Safety Check (obtained through phoning 01702 614433) was free to all residents. Whilst the Service has no jurisdiction within people's homes, it would be helpful to be advised of any premises at which smoke detectors/alarms are not being utilised.
- The importance of ensuring that Fire Officers are fully cognisant of the extent and appropriate access points to Magnolia Park and nature reserve would be emphasised with the Local Command Office.
- False alarm statistics included sheltered housing accommodation (where alarms are very sensitive) and instances of malicious calls. The latter have reduced significantly since the Fire Service's partnership with mobile phone companies.
- Fire Statistics covered a variety of premises, including warehouses. The figures can be broken down further as appropriate.
- Information could be provided on the different types of detector in use (such as ionisation / optical) and their application.

(2) Update on Highways, Localism and Other Highways Matters

It was noted that a Highways representative was not in attendance in view of work currently ongoing to establish the localism budget for 2010 / 11.

167 CENTRAL AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the Central Area Update.

Item 2/10 – Units of Dental Activity within Southend Borough and Rochford District

In terms of plans for Capital Expenditure, all resources appeared to be going to Southend Borough. For example, a new Urgent Care Centre. It would be of interest to know the PCT's plans for capital investment within the Rochford District over the next ten years.

Item 11/10 – Hockley Woods

It was noted that discussions in relation to a proposed cycle track related to the side of the road away from Hockley Woods.

Item 12/10 – Railway Embankment adjacent to Magnolia Road between Lincoln Road and Rochford Rugby Club

The need for ditch clearance at the front of the embankment remained. This would be raised with Network Rail as a matter of urgency.

Item H7/10 – Litter around edges of car parking area for shops at the bottom of White Hart Hill

Consideration would be given to the possibility of enforcement action by the District Council.

Item H9/10 – Poor State of Hawkwell Parade and associated public safety issues.

Further consideration would be given to addressing this issue.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Chairman

Date

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

Appendix

Question	Response
<p>Brian Guyett, Hockley</p> <p>Can the Council please advise residents of how they intend to progress the Core Strategy following the recent letter from the Secretary of State, Mr Pickles, abolishing the quotas previously imposed by the East of England Assembly? In particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will reduced housing allocations be adjusted to maintain the fair allocation across the entire District which the Council has always maintained as a key aspect of its strategy? • What plans are there for improving the infrastructure and how will this be funded if housing numbers are reduced (given that reduced numbers will affect the level of standing charges previously indicated)? 	<p>Minute 165 refers.</p>
<p>Alan James, Hockley</p> <p>Could we have an update at the meeting on the Core Strategy after the many recent events – general election, appeals, hearings etc?</p>	<p>Minute 165 refers</p>
<p>Edward Short, Hawkwell</p> <p>With the Regional Spatial Strategy and centrally imposed housing targets being abolished, would Rochford District Council reply to the PIN's letter to its Inspectors, possibly under Annex B item 7 of the letter, that the housing appeal at Rectory Road, South Hawkwell, better known to this resident as West Hawkwell, should be suspended as, until we know the new housing targets, 175/330 homes may not be required for this location.</p>	<p>Minute 165 refers</p>
<p>T Gleadall, Hockley</p> <p>Councillor Hudson has repeatedly stated that the Core Strategy will change after</p>	<p>Minute 165 refers.</p>

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Question	Response
<p>the General Election. Could he please tell us how it will change with particular reference to Hockley and Hawkwell and HAAP.</p>	
<p>A James, Hockley</p> <p>Why have the minutes of previous Central Area Committee Meetings been removed from the RDC Website? The Link still clearly states 'Central Area Committee Membership, Agenda's and Minutes' but the minutes are no longer there. This means that questions that are not answered at the meeting (which means most of them) are not only unanswered direct to the questioner by post or email, but are not even now available on the website.</p>	<p>The Minutes (together with Agenda's and Reports) of all the Council's meetings, including the Central Area Committee, remain on the Rochford District Council Website. Clicking on the link in question brings up the detail of the current municipal year. All previous years can be interrogated. Residents should not hesitate to contact Members Services at the Council offices if they have difficulty identifying information.</p>
<p>A James, Hockley</p> <p>When are you going to issue a new 'Recycling Collection Calendar' as the current one – including the one on the website – ends at the end of August? In the past we have had one printed in Rochford Matters but it has not been included in the summer issue.</p>	<p>The next calendar is in the process of formulation. Publication arrangements will include insertion in the next edition of the Council's newspaper, Rochford District Matters. There will be no significant changes to frequency.</p>
<p>P A James, Hawkwell</p> <p>Who is responsible for the clearance of litter in the car park area of the shops at Main Road Hawkwell? May whoever is responsible please make arrangements to clear it on a regular basis.</p>	<p>This issue will be looked into and contact made with the questioner/an update at the next meeting.</p>
<p>P A James, Hawkwell</p> <p>Hawkwell Churchyard is not as well tended re grass cutting as in the last few years. Is there is a reason for the long grass?</p>	<p>Hawkwell Parish Council has arrangements in place for cutting the grass in the Churchyard regularly when weather permits.</p>