

Central Area Committee – 16 October 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the **Central Area Committee** held on **16 October 2008** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M R Carter

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr Mrs L M Cox
Cllr M Maddocks

Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr M G B Starke

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs M A Weir – Hawkwell Parish Council
Cllr B Hazlewood – Hockley Parish Council
Cllr Miss A Marriott – Hullbridge Parish Council
R Baxter – Essex Police

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Bugeja – Head of Legal Services
R Evans – Head of Environmental Services
P McKenna – Woodlands and Environmental Officer
J Bostock – Committee Services Manager

291 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs R Brown, Mrs H L A Glynn and K H Hudson.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2008 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.

292 COMMUNITY FORUM

Requests for information had been received and a document summarising these and the responses given at the meeting is appended.

At this point the Committee reconvened into formal session.

293 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Crime and Disorder in the Central Area

Sergeant Richard Baxter presented the figures relating to reported crime and anti-social behaviour for the central part of the District. Whilst there can be a “spike” of anti-social behaviour during the Halloween period, a comparison with last year’s figures demonstrated a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour. Crime figures were also down.

The recent charging of an individual for a graffiti offence at Spa Road had resulted in eight other detections. Operation Lark (high visibility policing in hotspot areas) had contributed to the reduction in figures. Over one in three crimes were now detected, which was a high figure in the context of the County overall.

Responding to questions, Sergeant Baxter advised that:-

- Whilst known issues had already been addressed, an eye would be kept on Plumberow Mount given suggestions that there were some problems involving young people.
- Future statistics would include a Ward related index.
- The rise in overall total crime figures between 2007 and 2008 for the July to September period was likely to be, in part, associated with economic factors. Traditionally, the July to September period saw higher crime rates. The Police were mindful of the need to publicise the value of vigilance and neighbourhood watch schemes and of introducing additional patrols where appropriate. Notwithstanding the increase in figures, the District was notably safe in the national context.
- There is an offence of cycling on footpaths. Concern relating to the Golden Cross area would be discussed directly with a resident.
- Thanks would be passed on to PC Steve Joynes for the valuable work he was undertaking in Hockley.

(2) Update on the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park

The Committee received an update from the Council’s Woodlands and Environmental Officer on the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park. The update was an opportunity to relay information on the Council’s vision for the Country Park and receive the views of residents, final decisions on the way forward having yet to be made.

The update covered proposals for Phase 2 development over the next five years which had yet to be agreed by the Executive. Emphasis was being placed on the provision of a sustainable and accessible environment. Specific reference was made to the planting and wildlife/habitat proposals suggested for each the Park's areas and access considerations.

Responding to questions, the Woodlands and Environmental Officer advised that:-

- Land acquisition arrangements had been approved by the Council over a 5 to 6-year period. Final design and costing proposals would be considered by the Council's Executive in November.
- Whilst some capital monies are likely to be required, grant aid would be significant. Estimated expenditure between November to February was approximately £175,000, although there was already a potential that £110,000 would be available through grant monies. The current 100 acre site was managed within the existing staff resource. An additional member of staff might be required once the whole of the proposed site was in use.
- The Council had received an indication from Natural England that, in view of its conservation value, they would consider making grant funding available for the project (something that is not their usual policy). This was being explored by officers.
- The creation of vehicular access had always been a feature of Phase 2. Access restrictions that had been in place to date had enabled the vegetation to develop some robustness and sustainability.
- Any proposed livestock introduced to specific parts within the extended Park were likely to be beef cattle that could be sustained by the site.
- Design proposals had taken account of demands associated with the anticipated number of visitors.
- Whilst there is no dedicated bus route, the site is not isolated from a bus service.

294 CENTRAL AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the Central Area update:-

Repair of three broken bollards on Betts Farm Estate, Hockley (15/08)

The Head of Legal Services confirmed that a land registry search would be carried out to identify who owns the bollards with a view to appropriate remedial works being undertaken.

Traffic Flow Statistics for the B1013 Main Road, Hockley (17/08)

Cllr D G Stansby had recently counted a high number of vehicles over a ten minute period which highlighted the need to review the statistics.

The meeting closed at 8.44 pm.

Chairman

Date

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Question	Response
<p>D E Hanrahan, Rochford</p> <p>(1) Re. green bin waste – How will residents know what to do, who will advise them, what about other areas in the District. Surely there must be a better way of dealing with the excess liquid. Also, litter bins are still not being cleared regularly. I have reported this to the Council weekly since the return to School. The problem is made worse by residents walking their dogs and depositing their waste in the bins as well as some household waste. Those children who consider the environment are therefore left with nowhere to put their waste.</p> <p>(2) My neighbours and I have asked the Highways Division to put double yellow lines at the T Junction of Boswell Avenue and Spencer Gardens. They have put some on the bend but not on the “T”. This creates the problems we told the Highways Division. People park on the ‘T’ causing the buses carrying pupils to School to mount the corners, where children are walking, as well as damaging the kerbside. I have photographs to show. Could the Committee press for the yellow lines to be placed at this junction please.</p>	<p>The District Council has instructed vehicle operators to avoid the inappropriate composting of waste during rounds whenever possible and this needed to be monitored. Whilst it may be possible to consider the retrofit of equipment to vehicle storage tanks, there would be cost implications. The issue of the regular cleaning of litter bins had been referred to the Council’s street cleansing contractor. The Council’s Environmental Enforcement Officer would be investigating the question of the depositing of inappropriate waste in litter bins.</p> <p>This issue would be referred to County Highways for a response.</p>

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Question	Response
<p>D Fryer Kelsey, Hockley Parish Plan Group</p> <p>(1) From 16 November 2008, Arriva intend to change the No. 7 bus between Southend and Rayleigh through Hockley to an hourly service. This will be of great inconvenience to a number of residents of Hockley. The service is used by mainly elderly residents using the free bus pass. They cannot be expected to go upstairs so overcrowding is inevitable. Will Rochford District Council be approaching Arriva to dissuade them from cutting this service? Will they be supporting other Local Authorities to mitigate the affects?</p> <p>(2) Are Rochford District Council involved in the Essex County Council Tree Pledge to plant 250,000 trees across the County, the trees supplied by Essex County Council. If so, how many trees will Rochford District Council plant and where?</p>	<p>The approach to bus service provision is a matter for Arriva. However, Arriva will be provided with the question, including a suggestion that residents of Greensward Lane had not been consulted, and asked to provide a response.</p> <p>Aspects of tree planting were covered under the presentation on Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (Minute 293(2) refers). A specific response would be provided at the next meeting.</p>