

Environmental Services Committee – 12 March 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **12 March 2002** when there were present:

Cllr V H Leach - Chairman

Cllr R S Allen

Cllr K A Gibbs

Cllr Mrs J M Giles

Cllr D R Helson

Cllr Mrs L Hungate

Cllr C C Langlands

Cllr T Livings

Cllr P D Stebbing

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs J E Ford.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson

NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING

Cllr C I Black

DISTRICT OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts – Corporate Director, Finance and External Affairs

S Scrutton - Head of Planning Services

S Worthington - Committee Administrator

COUNTY OFFICERS PRESENT

N McCullagh – Area Manager, Transportation and Operational Services

T Tite – District Engineer

L Harvey – Assistant District Engineer

91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs J M Giles declared an interest as per previous minutes.

92 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Transportation and Environmental Services Committee held on 30 January 2002, the Environmental Health Sub-Committee held on 2 January 2002, the Planning Policy Sub-Committee held on 3 January 2002 and the Transportation Sub-Committee held on 9 January 2002 were received and noted by this

Committee.

93 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING WAITING RESTRICTIONS REQUESTS

The Committee noted the report of the Area Manager, County Highways updating Members on progress with respect to outstanding requests for waiting restrictions. Two minor amendments were noted on page 6.2 of the report:-

“Stambridge Road/Heritage Way, Rochford” should read “Stambridge Road/Lingfield Drive, Rochford”.

“Cheapside West/Victoria Road, Rayleigh” should read “Cheapside West/Victoria Avenue, Rayleigh”.

In response to a Member enquiry, County Officers confirmed that a report on the locally determined programme would be prepared for next month’s meeting of this Committee.

94 RAYLEIGH TOWN CENTRE – OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Committee noted the report of the Head of Planning Services updating Members on a series of outstanding issues arising from meetings of the Rayleigh Town Centre Forum.

Item 2

The painting of seats was nearing completion. County Officers noted that Rayleigh Town Council should be provided with a list of all outstanding items for which the Town Council was responsible.

Item 6

The Chamber of Trade has secured funding from this authority for CCTV; cameras are currently being installed.

Item 8

To be deleted.

Item 10

To be deleted.

Item 14

Officers confirmed that this authority owned the Brooklands open space. It was agreed that the Legal Department should pursue the issue of ownership of the embankment.

Item 23

County Officers confirmed that this item was still outstanding. and agreed that an update would be provided to Cllr D R Helson, with a copy to Cllr Mrs M J Webster.

Item 26

The tree was due to be replaced within the next few days.

Item 31

County Officers noted that two temporary poles needed to be removed by the cemetery, on the approach to Rayleigh from Hockley.

Although this item was not included in the update, Officers believed that the brick bus shelter by King George's field would be replaced by the Town Council and Adshel with a new heritage style bus shelter. Member concern was expressed that the Town Council had disregarded previous discussions on this issue when it was confirmed that the original bus shelter would not be pulled down. It was agreed that an update should be included in the Members' Bulletin.

It was the general consensus of the Committee that updates should be provided more frequently than at six-monthly intervals.

On a motion called by Cllr D R Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs M J Webster it was:-

Resolved

That a Rayleigh Town Centre actions update be provided to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 3 months and that the frequency of updates be reviewed at that meeting. (HPS/County Highways)

95 SOUTHEND CIVIC AMENITY SITE

The Committee noted the report of the Chief Executive updating Members on the current situation with respect to the Southend Civic Amenity Site and Southend Borough Council's policy of charging non-Southend residents.

It was noted that the County Council had not yet come forward with proposals to remedy the situation. It was agreed that this would be pursued.

Resolved

That the progress now being made be noted, with the Council continuing to press the County Council for speedy action on this matter, to ensure that Essex County Council taxpayers do not continue to subsidise those in Southend. (C Exec)

96 **PLANNING: DELIVERING A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE – GREEN PAPER**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services seeking Members' views on the Government's proposals for changes to the planning system. A response was required by 18 March 2002.

The proposals included a reduction in planning policy guidance to a core set of national policies, below which would be a local framework development. A potential gap was identified between the development of local and regional planning frameworks. It could be perceived that the proposed system would offer more advantages to developers than residents in green belt areas.

On a motion moved by Cllr Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Cllr P D Stebbing it was:-

Resolved

That this report forms the basis of the Rochford District Council's response to the Government Green Paper, "Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change," subject to the following Member comments:-

- Concern about new business planning zones with relaxed planning controls.
- Supportive of planning consents being limited to three rather than five years, with applications for renewals being considered afresh.
- It is contradictory for the Government to say that the process for Local Plans should be speeded up, while at the same time seeking more extensive community involvement.
- Concern about a local plan system that had the potential to be changed almost on a day-to-day basis. More stability required.
- There is no indication of whether the District Council or the planning applicant would bear the charge for the responses of statutory consultees.
- Concern to ensure that Parish Councils, Chambers of Trade and other local organisations are not left out of the process.

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- The need to fill the gap between the local development framework and the regional tier.
- Concern that many of the changes proposed in the Green Paper should not be implemented until such time as a regional Government had been properly elected. (HPS)

97 REFORMING PLANNING OBLIGATIONS – A CONSULTATION PAPER

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services seeking Members' views on proposals for alterations to the current system of Planning Obligations (Section 106 Agreements).

In response to a Member enquiry, Officers confirmed that the proposals would not have negative resource implications for this Council. It was likely that the proposals would lead to less administrative effort.

With respect to the tariff approach, Officers confirmed that the frontage of properties would not be of consideration in setting tariffs.

Officers further confirmed that option b of Question 4 in the consultation document related to a per gross floorspace contribution for commercial properties as well as to a per dwelling contribution for residential properties.

Resolved

That the Council's response to the consultation paper, "Reforming Planning Obligations" be based on this report, subject to it being noted that Q.4 b) relates to a per dwelling contributions for residential and per floorspace contributions for commercial. (HPS)

98 USE CLASSES ORDER – CONSULTATION ON CHANGE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services seeking Members' views on the Government's options for changes to the Use Classes Order. A response was required by 18th March 2002.

Resolved

That a response to the DTLR consultation document on the Use Classes Order be sent in accordance with the conclusions of this report. (HPS)

99 CASTLE POINT – LOCAL PLAN ISSUES

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services seeking Members' views on a Local Plan issues report prepared by Castle Point Borough Council.

There was a general consensus that the implications arising from employment land at Rayleigh Weir being converted for shopping purposes were of major concern to this authority.

In response to a Member enquiry about the possibility of conducting a District-wide survey of wildlife and a local environmental appraisal, Officers confirmed that this would be expensive to achieve.

It was generally perceived that organisations such as the Essex Wildlife Trust and English Nature provided valuable sources of information about wildlife habitats.

Resolved

That this report forms the basis for a response to the Castle Point Borough Council Local Plan Issues Paper, subject to the following Member comment:-

- Castle Point Borough Council should seek to work with organisations such as English Nature to conduct an environmental appraisal locally. (HPS)

100 WORLD WAR TWO DEFENCES IN ROCHFORD DISTRICT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services seeking Members' views on a request for a financial contribution towards the completion of a survey of World War II defences in Rochford District.

In favour of the County Council initiative, the point was made that there were many interesting sites within the District which might be worthy of recording. Records were important for future generations.

Against the motion it was argued that the authority's resources would be better spent on services for the residents. Military organisations such as the Army and the Airforce should have records relating to World War II.

It was the general consensus of the Committee that, although the initiative was an important one for the District because of the important part it played during World War II, money should be spent elsewhere, and more directly for the benefit of residents.

Resolved

That no financial contribution be made towards the cost of recording World War II defences in the District. (HPS)

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The Meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman

Date