

Environmental Services Committee – 7 July 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **7 July 2005** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M G B Starke
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs L Hungate

Cllr R A Amner
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr P R Robinson
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs T G Cutmore, K J Gordon and C G Seagers.

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
S Clarkson	- Head of Revenue and Housing Management
S Scrutton	- Head of Planning Services
D Byrne	- Waste Management Officer
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICERS PRESENT

P Grimwood	- District Manager, County Highways
L Harvey	- District Engineer, County Highways

266 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

267 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr C J Lumley declared a personal interest in item 13 of the agenda by virtue of being a School Governor.

Cllr M G B Starke declared a prejudicial interest in item 14 of the agenda by virtue of his interest in a property with access rights via Quys Lane and left the Chamber during discussion of that item.

268 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions.

Car Parks Customer Survey – Results

There was a general consensus that there would be merit in deferring this survey until March 2006, in light of the introduction of new car parking charges and improvements to the Websters Way car park during the summer.

Websters Way Environmental Enhancement Scheme

Members noted that there was a need to appoint a panel to judge the entries to the Rochford Design, Heritage and Conservation Awards for 2005.

It was noted that Cllrs Mrs R Brown and Mrs M J Webster would be happy to sit on the panel.

Resolved

That 5 Members, comprising 3 nominations from the Conservative Group, plus Cllr C J Lumley and Cllr Mrs M S Vince, form a panel to judge the 2005 Rochford Design, Heritage and Conservation Awards. (HPS)

269 LATEST REVIEW OF LOCALLY DETERMINED PROGRAMME 2004/2005 AND PRESENTATION OF LOCALLY DETERMINED PROGRAMME 2005/2006

The Committee considered the report of the Area Manager, Transportation and Operational Services informing Members of progress on the locally determined programme 2004/2005 and asking Members to approve the locally determined programme for 2005/2006.

County officers advised that, as the result of an administrative error, within the report the second scheme in section 4 should be transposed for the sixth scheme in section 5, both of which are for junction improvements.

In response to a Member concern relating to signage for the Pooles Lane car park, County officers confirmed that they would explore the possibility of permanent signage indicating the change in entrance to the car park.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the Anne Boleyn Estate scheme, County officers advised that, given the likelihood of high costs associated with the scheme, it had been included in the Local Transport Plan list of schemes for consideration.

During debate, there was a general consensus that, in the event of it not being possible to progress the Main Road junction with Folly Lane junction improvements, the scheme for a zebra crossing on the Southend Road junction Great Eastern Road, Hockley should be added to the 2005/6 locally determined programme of works.

Resolved

- (1) That the programme of Locally Determined Schemes for this financial year, as shown in Section 4 of the report, be approved, subject to inclusion of the zebra crossing – Southend Road junction Great Eastern Road, Hockley scheme in the event of not being able to progress the junction improvements scheme at Main Road junction Folly Lane, Hockley.
- (2) That the rolling programme of reserve schemes, as shown in section 5 of the report, be approved. (County Highways)

270 ROCHFORD DISTRICT HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/2006

The Committee considered the report of the Area Manager, Transportation and Operational Services updating Members on progress with respect to the Rochford District highway maintenance budget allocation for 2005/2006.

County officers advised that at paragraph 9.1 of the report the cycle link to Rochford was at Bradley Way, and not at Hall Road.

During debate, concern was raised about the drains in London Road, Rayleigh, relating to siltage and grass growing out of them.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to alley ways, County officers confirmed that, as part of the adopted programme, alley ways were inspected on an ad hoc basis. Inspections were also made on the basis of specific complaints.

In response to a Member enquiry about weeds, County officers confirmed that issues relating to weeds growing on highways land would always be addressed by County Highways.

In response to a Member concern relating to pools of water outside Rayleigh railway station at the bottom of Crown Hill and raised drainage covers and odours there during recent wet weather, County officers confirmed that they would raise the matter with Anglian Water.

County officers advised that there was insufficient funding to address all the drainage problems within the District.

In response to a further concern raised relating to water pooling during wet weather in the Stambridge Road on the corner with Malting Villas County officers confirmed that the contractor would be asked to investigate this problem.

Resolved

That the highway expenditure in 2005/2006 for the Rochford District, as set out in the report, be noted. (County Highways)

271 TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME – USAGE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management asking Members to consider the year three analysis and comparison of data before its release to Essex County Council.

Members all concurred that the scheme was a great success, which should be publicised. Other Local Authorities had expressed an interest in the scheme and had come to see how the scheme worked. Officers confirmed that a press release would be issued shortly.

Resolved

That the continued growth in the usage of the Taxi Voucher Scheme and its positive impact on those sectors of Rochford's community who are unable to use conventional forms of public transport be noted. (HRHM)

272 ESSEX SCHOOLS ORGANISATION PLAN 2005 – 2010

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services seeking Members' comments on the latest draft Essex School Organisation Plan 2005-2010 and outlining the implications for Rochford District.

During debate, Members expressed reluctance to endorse the Plan. They were concerned about the data contained within the Plan, perceiving it to be inaccurate and out of date, given that some children were having to attend school outside the district due to a shortage of places. Those schools in the district that had received good Ofsted reports were having to respond to a high demand for places from parents living outside the district.

Resolved

That this report forms the basis of the Council's response to the consultation on the Schools Organisation Plan 2005-2010, subject to it being stressed that this Authority does not endorse the Plan and that there are instances of parents living in the District not being able to send their children to schools within the District. (HPS)

273 QUYS LANE, ROCHFORD

(Note: The Vice-Chairman was in the chair for this item of business.)

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) asking Members to consider the proposal to upgrade Quys

Lane, Rochford, currently a private unmade footpath / vehicular access, to an access of satisfactory standard for pedestrian and vehicular use.

Members were delighted that it was now possible to address the issue of Quys Lane, which was heavily used as a shortcut to Rochford town centre, but were disappointed that work would not commence until March 2006.

Responding to a Member concern relating to a time limited grant awarded to the Parish Council to provide lighting in Quys Lane, officers confirmed that work would be co-ordinated to ensure that the grant would not be compromised.

In response to a further concern about large holes in the surface of Quys Lane, officers advised that, while mindful of the Council not becoming liable for the maintenance of Quys Lane, possibilities would be explored to solve this problem in the interim period.

Resolved

- (1) That the upgrade of Quys Lane, as proposed, be agreed, to be funded from the money set aside for the Rumbelows site, subject to local consultation with the Parish Council, Local Chamber of Trade, residents and businesses affected by the scheme.
- (2) That, subject to there being no negative feedback which causes a major redesign from the consultation exercise, the scheme be tendered with a view to commencing on site in spring 2006. (CD(F&ES))

274 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES – THE WAY FORWARD

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) seeking the endorsement of Members on the proposals to spend the additional monies identified in the budget for 2005/06, to deal with environmental issues that affect the street scene of the District.

During debate, Members concurred that it would be beneficial to work in partnership with the Parish Councils to tackle the hot spots identified in the report, particularly with respect to litter.

In response to a Member concern relating to chewing gum on the pavements in Rochford, officers advised that it was customary for the appropriate Parish Council to contribute 50% of the costs of cleaning chewing gums from pavements.

There was a general consensus among Members that there would be merit in writing to the Local Government Association General Assembly asking for support in lobbying chewing gum manufacturers to pay a levy on chewing gum, to be used by Local Authorities to help fund the costs of removing chewing gum from pavements.

Members identified the following additional hot spots:

- Roche Avenue/Daws Heath Road – litter
- Millview Meadows: pavements – weeds

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed campaign of action to improve the environment be endorsed.
- (2) That a letter be sent to the Local Government Association with respect to lobbying chewing gum manufacturers to pay a levy on chewing gum to help fund the costs of removing chewing gum from pavements.
(CD(F&ES))

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Chairman

Date