
ISSUES ARISING FROM ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 2002

(1) PLANNING: DELIVERING A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE – GREEN PAPER (Min. 119/02)

Pursuant to Overview & Scrutiny Rule 15, Cllrs R Adams, M G B Starke and P F A Webster had requested that the decision of the Environmental Services Committee relating to the Green Paper (Minute 96/02) be referred to this Committee for consideration.

The Committee discussed suggested wording aimed at strengthening the observations of the Policy Committee and agreed that it would be appropriate for consideration to be given to submitting observations to the Government on the local autonomy aspect of the Green Paper and on the relatively short timeframe within which comment on the Green Paper had been required. The Committee recommends:-

- (1) That the wording in the bullet points to Minute 96/02 be strengthened so that the resolution reads:-

“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:-

- Disagreement with the proposal that there should be new business planning zones with relaxed planning controls.
- Support for the proposal that planning consents be limited to three rather than five years, with applications for renewals being considered afresh.
- It is totally 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.
- Disagreement with a local plan system that can change on a day-to-day basis, stability being essential to any planning system.
- A major omission is that there is no indication of whether the District Council or the planning applicant would bear the charge for the responses of statutory consultees.

-
- It is fundamentally desirable that Parish Councils, Chambers of Trade and other local organisations are not left out of the process.
 - There is a specific requirement 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 a Regional Government has been elected by popular franchise. (HPS)

(2) That the Government should also be advised:-

- (i) That more time should have been given for responses to this fundamentally important Green Paper.
- (ii) This Council would have liked further clarification on what is actually meant by the opportunity for more autonomy in planning at local level with specific examples of how local autonomy could be carried forward. (HPS)

(2) PUBLIC TRANSPORT INITIATIVES – INVITATION FOR BID SUBMISSIONS TO THE RURAL AND URBAN CHALLENGE FUNDS (Min. 121/02)

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive on information received from the County Council seeking bid submissions under the Rural and Urban Challenge Fund initiatives.

Noting the value of being able to research the type of statistical information which could be used in support of any bid submissions, Members recommend to the Environmental Services Committee:-

That the Rayleigh Association of Voluntary Services be approached on the possibilities for joint working to establish the feasibility of submitting Challenge Fund bids aimed at addressing transport in areas of demonstrable need within the District. (CE)

(3) ROCHFORD DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN – NEW SECTIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR DEPOSIT (Min. 122/02)

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Planning Services which sought views on sections to be included in the First Deposit Draft of the Replacement Local Plan and addressed timetabling issues.

Noting that it was important for appropriate time to be given to

producing Local Plan documentation, Members endorsed the suggestion of the Chief Executive that Committee Members should each submit any specific observations they have on the report appendices to the Head of Planning Services and recommended:-

- (1) That the Environmental Services Committee be advised that time and resource pressures are such that it is unlikely the Local Plan First Deposit Draft will be finalised before September 2002.
- (2) That Members of this Committee submit any specific observations they have on the report appendices to the Head of Planning Services so that these can be compiled and reported for detailed consideration to the next meeting. (HPS)

Head of Administrative & Member Services

Background Papers:

None.

For further information please contact Sonia Worthington on:-

Tel:- 01702 318141
E-Mail:- sonia.worthington@rochford.gov.uk