

Environmental Services Committee - 5 February 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **5 February 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr Mrs L Hungate (Chairman)
Cllr J E Grey (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr R G S Choppen
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr T E Goodwin
Cllr A J Humphries

Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr G A Mockford

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs M A Starke

VISITING

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton - Head of Planning Services
S J Clarkson - Head of Revenue & Housing Management
N McCullagh - Area Manager, County Highways and Transportation
Group, Essex County Council.
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

41 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 MOTION ON NOTICE FROM CLLRS MRS M S VINCE, MRS M A WEIR AND R A AMNER

The Proper Officer reported that the following Motion had been received from Cllrs Mrs M S Vince, Mrs M A Weir and R A Amner:-

“Since the changes to the traffic flow of vehicles wishing to park in Rochford Town Square, traffic congestion has so worsened that frequent tailbacks the length of South Street, the main road into Rochford Town, are now a regular occurrence.

Other roads, such as North Street, are similarly affected.

These frequent tailbacks have an adverse effect on the public transport serving Rochford, deliveries to shops and businesses and private motorists trying to access their homes.

As a matter of urgency, will this Council request that County Highways consider all measures, including reversing the traffic flow within Rochford Square, to address this growing problem, and report back with their conclusions."

During debate it was recognised that concerns had been raised by both pedestrians and drivers and that problems arose from Monday through to Saturday. Whilst a new entrance arrangement into Back Lane Car Park might bring future improvement, residents would be hoping for an indication that concerns are being addressed.

A Member indicated that the extent of problems could vary throughout each day and that it would be inappropriate to assume that all problems at this location were a result of the traffic flow changes. Reference was made to the behaviour of some drivers in not complying with parking restrictions and to the associated need for greater Warden/Police activity. Reference was also made to the lack of signage to alternative parking facilities in the Town.

A Member observed that the motion did not suggest reversal of the traffic flow arrangement, but that reversal was a possible measure which should be considered along with others. It was also observed that the Council had previously given detailed consideration to the possibilities for adjusting parking arrangements with a view to the Town Square being for Taxis/Disabled Persons Vehicles only.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that:-

- The Town Centre road network was under the control of the County Council as Highways authority.
- It was hoped that the legal position relating to ownership of the strip of land under consideration as a new access to Back Lane Car Park would be finalised very soon.
- An aspect of the Town Centre Enhancement brief was the avoidance of signage clutter. However, given problems being experienced, the question of appropriate signage was under review.

- There are often no perfect solutions for busy Town Centres. Account needed to be taken of the effect of changes on strategic issues - such as the maintenance of bus services.

The Committee agreed an amendment to the motion, moved by Cllr M G B Starke and seconded by Cllr T E Goodwin, and it was:-

Resolved

That the following be agreed:-

"Since the completion of the Rochford Town Centre Enhancement Scheme, traffic congestion has worsened with frequent tail backs into South Street from West Street which also affects North Street. This has an adverse effect on public transport and deliveries to shops and businesses.

As a matter of urgency, this Council request that County Highways closely monitor the situation vis-a-vis the recent changes in traffic flow into Rochford Square and also give their urgent attention to improved signage to alternative parking facilities in the Town". (Area Manager - County Highways)

43 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the schedule relating to Progress on Decisions.

Junction at High Street/Websters Way, Rayleigh (Minute 144/02)

The Head of Planning Services confirmed that all Members of the Council would be advised of the forthcoming County presentation to the meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 March.

Town Centre Enhancement Schemes - Funding Arrangements (Minute 469/02)

The Head of Planning Services confirmed that work to address outstanding matters was continuing. Rochford Parish Council was to be approached to see if they would be willing to undertake responsibility for the upkeep of Rochford Town Square railings. The Area Manager (County Highways) advised that, subject to formal confirmation of land ownership arrangements, it was hoped that work on the creation of a new access to the Back Lane Car Park could be carried out during the current financial year.

Taxi Ranks - Consideration of Objections (Minutes 590/02)

The Head of Revenue and Housing Management advised that, following consultation with the Chairman, it was proposed to submit a report on the possibilities for locating the five taxi bays proposed for the Back Lane Car Park, Rochford to a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the next cycle.

Outstanding matters would be carried forward.

44 DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT – UPDATE

The Committee considered the six monthly report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE).

The Head of Revenue and Housing Management updated Members on the background to proposals for the introduction of DPE within the District. He was pleased to report that the Council's new Parking Supervisor had commenced duties. Of particular note was recent correspondence from the County Council's Parking Co-ordinator who was advising that, subject to the continued performance of funding stream arrangements, it would be possible for the District to consider introducing DPE on 1 October 2004, or earlier. The Head of Service would now be consulting colleagues on the possibilities of achieving this date or earlier and reporting back as appropriate.

Resolved

- (1) That the six monthly update report be accepted, subject to the further submission of an Action Plan for implementing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE).
- (2) That a further report on DPE be submitted in July 2003.
(HRHM)

45 OLD SHIP LANE, EAST STREET, ROCHFORD – PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Area Manager, County Highways and Transportation Group, Essex County Council, on an objection received to the formal consultation relating to proposed Waiting Restrictions, Old Ship Lane, East Street, Rochford.

Resolved

That an Order be made on the basis set out at Appendix A in the report of the Area Manager. (Area Manager - County Highways)

46 LEASWAY, RAYLEIGH – PROPOSED VARIATION TO EXISTING WAITING RESTRICTION

The Committee considered the report of the Area Manager, Highways and Transportation Group, Essex County Council on objections received to the formal consultation relating to proposals for varying an existing waiting restriction, Leasway, Rayleigh.

On a Motion, moved by Councillor Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Councillor J E Grey, it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That an Order be made on the basis set out at Appendix A in the report of the Area Manager.
- (2) That the situation is monitored after the revised waiting restrictions have been implemented. (Area Manager - County Highways)

47 CLERK OF WORKS FOR TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES

The Committee considered the report of the Area Manager, Highways and Transportation Group, Essex County Council on how the County Council had dealt with the request for a Clerk of Works for the District Town Centre Enhancement Schemes.

During debate a Member expressed the hope that the proposal would help enhance the concept of partnership working between the authorities.

Resolved

That the County Council's arrangements for providing a Clerk of Works for the Town Centre Enhancement Schemes, as set out in the report, be accepted. (Area Manager - County Highways)

48 ESSEX SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which sought views on Essex County Council's draft Speed Management Strategy.

During debate the Committee endorsed the observations of Members that provision for addressing speeding outside school premises should

be welcomed and that the County should be urged to review illogical speed limits.

Resolved

That, subject to indication that the provision for addressing speeding outside school premises is welcomed and that the County should be urged to review illogical speed limits, the County Council be advised of this Council's support for the key principles outlined in the Draft Speed Management Strategy for Essex. (HPS)

49 CROUCH AND ROACH ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered the report of Head of Planning Services which sought approval to the making of a financial contribution towards the preparation of a Crouch and Roach Estuary Management Plan.

During debate reference was made to the significant amount of coastline around the District and its importance as a habitat for wildlife.

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Planning Services advised that:-

- The preparation of a detailed analysis of both coastal and hinterland activities and how these integrate would be key to the production of a Management Plan with policies. It was anticipated that there would be regular updates for Members on the progress of plan implementation.
- The potential problems that could be experienced by coastlines, such as Rochford, by virtue of dredging activity underway in the Thames was an important issue. Officers would consult with Thurrock Borough Council with a view to ascertaining the precise dredging proposals for the Shellhaven development and their broader impact on the estuaries.
- The Management Plan would have to accord with European rules on protecting coastal habitats.
- It was anticipated that the Plan would examine management issues relating to the protection of salt marsh including, for example the salt marsh in the Stambridge Mill area. Officers would ensure that the Steering Group was aware of the importance of providing for this aspect.

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Resolved

That a financial contribution of £10,000 be made towards the preparation of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Management Plan. (HPS)

The Meeting closed at 9.03pm

Chairman.....

Date.....