

VILLAGE AND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION SCHEMES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) has delegated authority to commit expenditure in respect of the Hullbridge and Hockley regeneration schemes. An issue has arisen whereby clarification is sought from Members prior to his exercising the delegation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Environmental Services Committee held on 2 October 2002 a report was presented seeking Members' views in respect of allocating Essex County Council monies from the Rochford scheme where it was not required to the Hullbridge and Hockley schemes which were exceeding original estimates. A copy of the report and minute of that meeting are shown at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2 Following revisions by Essex County Council in respect of the amount of money which was available, a further report was presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 November, whereby budgets were allocated to Hullbridge to complete the scheme and Hockley to complete as much as possible of the scheme. A copy of the report and minute are shown at Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.3 The crux of the minute on 2 October was that £25,000 should be allocated to Hullbridge in order to complete phase 2 of the scheme. There was a proviso, however, in that any underspend on Hullbridge would be transferred to Hockley.
- 2.4 The report to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members of the revised amount which Essex County Council envisaged would be available from the Rochford scheme. The report also advised that the Hullbridge phase 1 scheme was estimated at £90,000. This meant that the total for both phase 1 and 2 would be in the region of £115,000. On the basis that Hullbridge would be completed all other funding was transferred to Hockley.

3 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The estimated cost of the phase 1 scheme is now £95,000. This means that only £20,000 is available for phase 2 which puts the scheme in jeopardy. If the budget is increased back up to the original provision of £25,000, then at present the money would have to be withdrawn from the Hockley scheme.

- 3.2 Whereas the original Hockley scheme was only going to be completed as far as possible, County officers have made a successful bid for £62,000 Government funding which would now allow the Hockley project to be completed in full. Taking £5,000 from the Hockley project now could have a disproportionate effect on the scheme.
- 3.3 It is for the above reasons that the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) is now seeking Member guidance in resolving this issue.

4 OPTIONS

- 4.1 The budget of £115,000 for Hullbridge could be adhered to, but this would most likely mean that the original policy of completing the scheme would not be achieved.
- 4.2 Monies could be transferred from Hockley. The full scheme may not be achieved despite the additional funding negotiated by Essex County Council. This would be extremely disappointing, given the significant additional contributions arising from 24Seven and Hockley Parish Council.
- 4.3 The shortfall is now quite small, being £5,000 over a £350,000 budget for the three town centres. This represents an overspend of only 1½%. The Council could consider agreeing additional funding in order to complete all of the schemes. Should any of the schemes come in under the new revised budgets, then the £5,000 may not be required.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of the three schemes are all included within the capital programme. Throughout any financial year, it is necessary to make small adjustments to the programme in respect of minor over or under spends on projects. The revised programme will be reported to Members in July, but it is anticipated that an adjustment of this magnitude could be accommodated.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Hockley, Hullbridge and Rochford have benefited from these improvement schemes.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS** to the Environmental Services Committee:

that the schemes at Hullbridge and Hockley are completed and that up to £5,000 be allocated from within the capital programme to achieve this.

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

None.

For further information please contact Roger Crofts on:-

Tel:- 01702 546366 Extn. 3006
E-Mail:- roger.crofts@rochford.gov.uk

Appendix 1

TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES – FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members views on a proposal from Essex County Council Highways to re-allocate traffic management funds currently earmarked for schemes in Rochford town centre to assist the implementation of the enhancement schemes in Hockley and Hullbridge.

2 ALTERNATIVE FUNDING PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The County Council has allocated a total of £100,000 towards the implementation of schemes in Rochford town designed to improve traffic management and flows.
- 2.2 Given the shortfall between expectation and delivery in respect of both the Hockley and Hullbridge enhancement schemes, the County has reconsidered the basis on which the traffic management budget can be allocated.
- 2.3 In respect of the enhancement schemes for Hockley and Hullbridge, it has been concluded that an improved environment for pedestrians visiting local shopping areas will result in fewer car journeys and that, therefore, some of the funding for traffic management schemes in Rochford Town Centre might be reallocated.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The development of schemes designed to improve traffic management in Rochford town centre is, at present, focused on options for altering the access to Back Lane car park.
- 3.2 The former Rochford Town Centre Working Group, when meeting to discuss options for environmental and infrastructure improvements to the town centre, concluded that traffic flows might be significantly improved if a new access (in-only) was created to the Back Lane car park at the end of Locks Hill, with the existing entrance becoming an exit only to Back Lane.
- 3.3 Work has been progressing to develop a scheme for Members consideration, and the intention was that this be funded from the County's traffic management budget. It is anticipated that a report will be forthcoming on this proposal to the next meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17th October.

- 3.4 However, it is expected that the total cost of this scheme would be of the order of £15,000, including consultants costs, and there is then an opportunity for Members to consider whether the balance of the traffic management budget should be reallocated to further the enhancement schemes in Hockley and Hullbridge.
- 3.5 Clearly the reallocation of funds will limit opportunities for much needed traffic management measures in Rochford town centre. On the other hand, if a scheme for altering the access arrangements to Back Lane car park were to be implemented, it might very well be prudent to wait until this has bedded-in before exploring, at a later date, other options for traffic management improvements.
- 3.6 On this basis, it is considered that the balance of the traffic management budget (£85,000) might best be used to further the Hockley and Hullbridge enhancement schemes, though a decision would need to be taken on the division of the funds between each location.
- 3.7 The budget allocated for Hullbridge will be used for the completion of initial enhancement scheme. It is estimated that a further £25,000 will be required to implement the additional works, including street lighting.
- 3.8 The budget for the Hockley scheme is £180,000 (including £30,000 from the Parish). The trenching and ducting work for the cabling has cost £64,000 due to a change in the scope of the works and the need for additional hand digging around existing services. Work has now commenced on the paving works: it is estimated that the cost of the paving, new street lighting and the provision of the half lay-by will be £207,000. Therefore, taking account of the money spent on the cabling and ducting work, there is a shortfall of £91,000 for the completion of the Hockley scheme.
- 3.9 To enable the Hockley and Hullbridge schemes to progress, it is proposed that £85,000 of the Rochford town traffic management budget be reallocated. There are two options for Members to consider. First, allocate £25,000 to Hullbridge to construct the additional phase of that scheme, with the balance of £60,000 going to Hockley. This would still mean a shortfall in the Hockley budget and further work would be required to decide on priorities. Second, allocate the whole £85,000 to Hockley with the aim of completing the scheme.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The town centre enhancement schemes are designed to improve the environment of Rochford, Hockley and Hullbridge. The part completion of the intended scheme in Hockley reduces the effectiveness of the resulting environmental enhancement. The additional phase in Hullbridge would extend the benefits of the main scheme.

- 4.2 The traffic management budget was intended to implement schemes designed to improve the flow of traffic in and around Rochford Town Centre. Subject to Member approval, it is considered that the alteration to the access arrangements for Back Lane car park might be implemented and then a review carried out to assess the requirement for further traffic management measures in the future.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The reallocation of funds from Rochford traffic management schemes to progress the enhancement schemes in Hockley and Hullbridge would have no direct financial implications for the Council.

6 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

Whether to support the proposal from Essex County Council Highways that £85,000 of the Rochford town centre Traffic Management budget be reallocated and if so, to determine the proportion of the funds to be used in Hockley and Hullbridge. (HPS)

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning Services

Background Papers:

Letter from Essex County Council Highways dated 17 September 2002.

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on:-

Tel:- 01702 318100
E-Mail:- shaun.scrutton@rochford .gov.uk

469 TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES – FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services on a proposal from Essex County Council Highways to re-allocate traffic management funds currently earmarked for schemes in Rochford Town Centre to assist the completion of the enhancement schemes in Hockley and Hullbridge.

Responding to Member questions, the Area Manager, County Highways, advised that:-

- The County Council was aware that there was disappointment on the lack of progress and high costings associated with Town Centre schemes. The Schemes had been included within the County Council's Contract 2000, which had seen some teething problems both locally and Countywide. The contract was subject to full audit checks. An investigation of concerns associated with Contract 2000 was under way.
- The Public Utility, 24 Seven, was responsible for electrical connections and are outside the overall control of the County Council. County Officers would continue to work with the company on outstanding electrical matters, including the zebra crossing beacons at Hullbridge. County Officer's were also addressing some snagging work at Hullbridge and liaising with District Officers on planting.
- Notwithstanding further investigation of a land aspect, there was a clear indication that progress could be made on work to create a new access to the Rochford Back Lane Car Park.

During debate, Members referred to specific examples of concern on the timing/costings associated with the Town Centre Schemes. Reference was also made to contributions that had been made in good faith by the Business Community. It was observed that overspend concerns had been raised over a long period of time, including by the Council's former Town Centre Working Groups.

Following a motion relating to budget re-allocation and the provision of information on current investigations, moved by Councillor T G Cutmore and seconded by Councillor J E Grey, it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That £15,000 of the £100,000 made available for the enhancement of Rochford Town Centre be allocated to the creation of a new access (in-only) to the Rochford Back Lane car Park at the end of Locks Hill, with the existing entrance becoming an exit only into Back Lane.

- (2) That the remaining £85,000, together with any underspend from Rochford, be re-allocated to the enhancement schemes in Hullbridge and Hockley, with up to £25,000 being used to construct phase 2 of the Hullbridge scheme and £60,000, plus any unused funds from Hullbridge, being utilised for the Hockley scheme.
- (3) That the Area Manager, County Highways, report back to this Council on the outcome of the current investigation into the various concerns associated with Contract 2000 as they relate to the Town Centre Enhancement Schemes within the District. (County Highways/HPS)

Appendix 2

REVIEW OF HOCKLEY, HULLBRIDGE AND ROCHFORD CENTRE IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES (Min 267 & 469)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. Report on progress on Hockley, Hullbridge and Rochford centre improvement schemes, expenditure to date and update of scheme progress, programme and estimates.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The three schemes have been developed via Working Groups and reported to previous Committees –
- Environment Overview and Scrutiny 26 June 2002 (Scheme's Review)
 - Environmental Services – 2 October 2002 – (Reallocation of ECC funding)

3 ACTION TAKEN ON MINUTES

3.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 26/6/02 Minute 267

- *Cost of Hullbridge scheme* – It is now anticipated that the final works of Phase 1 the Hullbridge scheme will be £90,000.
- *Hullbridge, hand painting of columns* - It is not possible for the supplier to get powder coated lamp columns at that height. The columns are galvanised so the durability of the column is not a problem. Some painting was not to the required standard so the lighting contractor has repainted at no cost to the scheme.
- *Hullbridge, no tree gratings placed* – This element is in the hands of the District Council, the location of the proposed trees and consent for them to be placed on the private forecourts has yet to be resolved.
- *Hullbridge, missing bollard* – Has been replaced.
- *Hullbridge, request for additional bollard outside of the Co-op* – A bollard has been installed.
- *Wall outside the Co-Op not part of the scheme* – This was not part of the scheme. The wall is not part of the public highway and is owned by the Co-op. Proposals are being discussed with local councillors.
- *County contribution to schemes* – Report submitted to Environmental Services Committee redistributing Local Transport Plan award for Rochford Town Centre.

3.2 Environmental Services Committee 2/10/02 - Minute 469

- *Contract 2000* – The County Council is in negotiations with both the North and South works contractors. These negotiations focus on costs, productivity and financial management.

4 SCHEME PROGRESS

HULLBRIDGE

- 4.1 The Working Group decided to concentrate on two lengths of Ferry Road and divided the scheme into two phases. It was minuted at a Working Party meeting that works would start on Phase 1 and officers would identify the possibility of using remaining monies for Phase 2. The intention was to get as much work done as possible with the money available.
- 4.2 Work started 10 March 2002 and was mostly completed by 16 June 2002. Available finance - £100,000 Rochford District, £1,345 pledges from local residents and businesses for specific items.
Costs to date £87,739
- 4.3 Work to be completed
- Gold bands to be painted on lamp columns
 - One lighting column to be painted
 - Hanging basket brackets to be installed
 - Cycle rack to be installed
 - Root protection and tree pits and trees – Location and land owner consents required from Rochford District Council
 - Litter bin installation – Location and land owner consents required from Rochford District Council
 - Seat installation – Location and land owner consents required from Rochford District Council
 - 24seven to complete street lighting connections to four lighting columns
- 4.4 Some of the above works will be funded by the pledges made, some forms part of work already in the costs to date and the remainder should bring the final works cost of Phase 1 to about £90,000. This will leave £10, 000 from the allocation for Phase 2.
- 4.5 Phase 2 - footway adjacent to 249 to 267 Ferry Road Hullbridge, the estimate for this work given in November 2001 is £24,000. Works are programmed to begin in the New Year. The remainder of the scheme cost will be met from the reallocated Rochford Town Centre traffic management funding.

HOCKLEY

- 4.6 The Working Group chose to prioritise the moving of overhead electricity supply to underground supply. The highway scheme was prioritised with the

intent and understanding that the work would stop when the funding provided was spent on works.

- 4.7 Work started on trenching for ducting 24 March 2002 and has now been completed. The paving works began on 2 September 2002 and are programmed for completion by 15 November 2002.
Available finance - £150,000 Rochford District, £31,000 Parish Council contribution, £1,700 in pledges from businesses and a local resident for specific items. Total £182,700
- 4.8 Costs to complete duct work, £64,375 - these costs increased against the initial estimate due to the extra work required by the electricity supplier. The current estimate for completing the paving works and the half lay-by to the end of the wide section of paving is £103,630, bringing the total scheme cost to £168,005.
- 4.9 Work to be completed
- Paving to end of wide section adjacent to Somerfield
 - Trees to be planted – works ordered for 11 November 2002
 - Litter bin installation – Locations required from Rochford District Council
 - Seat installation – Location required from Rochford District Council
 - Gold bands to be painted on lighting columns
- 4.10 The remainder of the allocated funds (£14,695) and the balance of the ECC £100,000, reallocated Rochford Town Centre money (£36,773), results in £51,468 for carrying out some paving works on the southeast side of Spa Road.

ROCHFORD

- 4.11 This scheme was started on 17 April 2002 with the traffic management measures installed in October.
Available finance - £100,000 Rochford District Council
Costs to complete work and design £140,627.
- 4.12 Work to be completed
- Cover to be placed on chamber currently covered with plywood and supply to Christmas tree and Christmas lights to be sorted out by Parish and District Councils, County Council support has been offered.
 - Signing and lining relating to recent traffic road traffic order.
 - 24seven yet to complete lighting connections.
 - Remedial work to deal with surface water at road hump.
 - Heritage signpost ordered.
- 4.13 The increase in cost is due to –

- Larger area paved than initially anticipated (Estimate for 464m²; laid 642m²).
- Larger central island in the square to accommodate the horse trough.
- Increased drainage works following investigations.
- Survey required to find location of covered wells in the square for safety reasons.
- Need to install ductwork for BT to avoid digging up the new paving.
- Increase in the number of seats and litter bins provided.

- 4.14 The design for the alteration of the current access/egress to Back Lane car park has been completed and the contractor has estimated the cost of the works. The estimated costs for design and construction are £2,600. Creating the new entrance via Locks Hill, if and when consents are established, is expected to cost £6,000 due to the need for works to allow for the difference in levels between the car park and Locks Hill. Estimated total for alterations £8,600.

Estimated total scheme cost £149,227

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All three schemes are aimed at improving the visual environment of the areas, thereby improving the attractiveness of local shopping with a consequent reduction in car journeys.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The staff resources required to implement this scheme are met by the County Council and the Alfred McAlpine Asset Management Limited, the South Essex highway works contractor.
- 7.2 Due to the changes in costs since the report that was considered by Members of the Environmental Services Committee on 20 October 2002, the allocation of the Essex County Council Rochford Town Centre budget for this financial year needs to be redistributed.

Total available £100,000

Proportion to complete Rochford scheme and revised car park arrangements £49,227

Proportion for Hullbridge to complete phase 2 of the scheme £14,000

Proportion for Hockley to complete as much work as possible on the south east side of the road £36,773 and remainder from Hockley scheme (£14,000), giving a total of £50,773.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Parish Councils have been fully involved in the development of the schemes.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Members views on the programme, the contents of the report and the proposed programme, together with the necessary reallocation of County Council funding be noted. (County Highways)

Nick McCullagh

Area Manager South
Essex County Council

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact Julie Martyn on (01268 771458)

565 REVIEW OF HOCKLEY, HULLBRIDGE AND ROCHFORD CENTRE IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

The Chairman welcomed County Cllr Williams and representatives of the Parish Councils to the meeting. The Committee considered the report of the Area Manager, County Highways, on the progress made with the town centre improvement schemes and the expenditure to date.

During Member debate, the following was noted/agreed:-

- disappointment that the scheme costs had proved to be much higher than originally estimated.
- a commitment to ensure that these schemes are completed as originally agreed by the Town Centre Working Groups.
- a reallocation of County Council funding would be necessary.
- the need to ensure that all snagging work is carried out.

A Member requested an update relating to a proposed meeting with the County Council regarding Websters Way. The County Councillor agreed to look at the situation and advise the Member accordingly.

County Councillor Williams expressed admiration at the financial contributions which had been received for these schemes from Parish Councils, Residents' Associations, local traders and local residents, but requested that he be kept informed should further difficulties be encountered with any of these enhancement schemes. He agreed to advise Members once a meeting date had been agreed to hear a presentation from Alfred McAlpine Asset Management Limited, the South Essex Highway works contractor. He thanked Members for inviting him to attend the meeting.

On a Motion moved by Cllr P F A Webster and seconded by Cllr M S Vince and a subsequent Motion moved by Cllr Mrs Brown and seconded by Cllr P F A Webster it was:-

Resolved

That detailed proposals relating to any new phases in the town centre enhancement schemes be reported to this Committee.

Recommended to Environmental Services Committee

That an officer from the County Council be designated as Clerk of Works to oversee the District's town centre enhancement schemes.(County Highways)