

## **Environmental Services Committee – 8 February 2006**

---

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **8 February 2006** when there were present:-

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

Cllr Mrs T J Capon  
Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr K J Gordon  
Cllr C J Lumley  
Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr P R Robinson  
Cllr C G Seagers  
Cllr Mrs M S Vince  
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr D Merrick

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R A Amner and Mrs R Brown.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Cllr D G Stansby

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Clarkson - Head of Revenue and Housing Management  
S Scrutton - Head of Planning Services  
M Martin - Committee Administrator

### **COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICER PRESENT**

P Grimwood - District Manager, County Highways

### **37 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **38 ISSUES ARISING FROM ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the report of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee relating to items of business which had been referred from its meeting on 18 January 2006 to this Committee.

### (1) Revision to the Rochford District Local Development Scheme

The Committee considered the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that the revised Local Development Scheme for the Rochford District be agreed for submission to GO-East, and that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services to approve minor amendments to the revised Scheme, to ensure consistency and correctness. A copy of the officer's original report had been appended.

During Member discussion, the following responses to questions/comments were noted:-

- 'Landscape character appraisals' were different to the aerial photographs which had been taken of the District.
- Aerial photography was heavily used in enforcement cases. The most recent photographs had been taken in 2000. The latest technology enabled an exact match to be made with the Ordnance Survey (OS) base and the OS map could be faded in from underneath.
- Surveys could only be carried out at certain times of the year when weather conditions were suitable and for this reason, the aerial survey which had been commissioned for 2005 had not been carried out. It was anticipated that this would be done as soon as possible in 2006.
- A gap of between two and three years would be a more realistic interval between aerial surveys, particularly as the public knowledge of their availability could aid as a deterrent against planning breaches.
- Members were assured that they would be invited to visit the Council offices to view the new survey once undertaken, but advised that in the meantime they were welcome to view the existing one. An article would be placed in the Members' Bulletin to ensure that all Members were aware of this.
- An aeroplane would continue to be sent up to take photographs of contentious sites; this was not an expensive process.

### Resolved

- (1) That the revised Local Development Scheme for the Rochford District be agreed for submission to GO-East, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services to carry out minor amendments to the revised Local Development Scheme, to ensure consistency and correctness, and to report any such amendments to Members. (HPS)

### **(2) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the Rochford District**

The Committee considered the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that the Statement of Community Involvement for the Rochford District be adopted with a view to submission to GO-East, and that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services to carry out minor amendments to the SCI to ensure consistency and correctness.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Statement of Community Involvement for the Rochford District be adopted with a view to submission to GO-East, to enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services to carry out minor amendments to the SCI to ensure consistency and correctness following consultation in line with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, and to report any such amendments to Members. (HPS)

### **39 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS**

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions and in response to Member questions the following was noted:-

#### **Additional Bring Banks (Minute 142/05)**

This would be considered by the Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee on 24 March 2006. (CD(F&ES))

#### **Decriminalised Parking Enforcement – New Traffic Regulation Orders and Investigation into Residents' Parking (Minute 442/05)**

That the introduction of a Residents' Parking Scheme would be reviewed every two years; the next review would be conducted in September 2007, in consultation with Ward Members. (HRHM)

#### **New Local Nature Reserve Designations (Minute 493/05)**

Officers would ensure that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was informed. (CD(F&ES))

Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

### 40 HIGHWAYS LOCAL SERVICE AGREEMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT: OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2005

The Committee considered and noted the report of the Area Manager, Highways and Transportation Services updating Members on highway authority activities and LSA progress for the period from October to December 2005.

The Chairman welcomed the Area Manager to the meeting. During Member discussion, the following comments/responses to questions were noted:-

- The A130 post-bypass measures which had been indicated in bold type within the report were all underway, with the exception of the A129 lay-by/bus stop facility near the Hodgson Way Roundabout, Shotgate which had been deferred while discussions were still taking place with the bus company. The cycleway and bridleway parallel to the A129, had been completed and was already being extensively used.
- Helena Road, Rayleigh had recently been resurfaced and following a survey, it had been agreed that the speed cushions would not be put back. 'Speed kills' signage would be used in place of these.
- Louise Road, Rayleigh would be treated in the same way.
- Flashing speed signs would be rolled out across the District in the forthcoming year.
- The street lighting survey on the B1013 had not extended east of the Cherry Orchard Way roundabout.
- Members were pleased to note the emphasis on waymarking, particularly in the light of the Council's aspirations in respect of tourism.
- Following reports of excessive speeding in Dalys Road, Rochford, a speed survey would be carried out.
- The keep clear lines outside the school in Little Wheatleys Chase were being adjusted.
- The issue of speeding in this area, which is used as a rat run would be drawn to the attention of the Police.
- The bus lay by in Spa Road, Hockley should take a maximum of four weeks to complete.
- Strict criteria existed for the 20 mph speed limit to be enforced on residential roads.

- A comprehensive exercise on options for speed management and the creation of homes zones had been carried out a number of years ago in the Rectory Avenue area, west of Ashingdon Road, but it had not been possible to devise a practical, cost effective scheme.
- More recently the Anne Boleyn estate had been considered as a possible home zone area, but no funding was currently available.
- A number of communications from residents had been received in respect of the speeding and parking problems in the area around Glasseys Lane.
- Speed problems may only be perceived and reducing the speed limit without Police enforcement did not necessarily solve the problems.
- The 40 mph speed restriction in Lower Road from the Ashingdon direction stretched as far as the policy would allow. Because of the lack of development, the national speed limit had to remain.

Members thanked the officer for his attendance and very detailed report.

### **41 HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE TARIFF**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management relating to an increase to the hackney carriage authorised fare tariff.

Members agreed that, taking into account increases in motoring costs, in particular the high cost of fuel, the increases proposed reflected the cost of operating the taxi service.

This increase would result in the purchasing power of the taxi vouchers being reduced by 3.3%.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That a fare increase averaging 6.5% over a 4 mile journey (or the nearest possible percentage point up to 6.75%) be approved.
- (2) That the increase be implemented as soon as reasonably possible for the period up to September 2007. (HRHM)

### **42 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 3 (PPS3) HOUSING – CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services explaining the Government's proposals for a new Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing to replace Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 3 and inviting Members to agree a response to the associated consultation.

In response to Member questions/comments, the following was noted:-

- Policy advice was now called a 'Statement'. However, this advice was a material planning consideration and may supersede elements of the Local Plan only just being adopted, for example the threshold delivery of affordable housing which was currently set at 25 would be set at 15. This resulted in a conflict between the Local Plan and national policy guidance with the latest policy advice taking precedence.
- The guidance provided for a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare, but advice was that local authorities would be free to develop policies which go beyond what was set as a minimum. However, this would need to be balanced against release of land.
- In December 2005 the Government published an update on the code on the delivery of sustainable homes, which sought to bring together a number of different standards, including the BREAM standards from the Building Research Establishment. This was a voluntary code that developers would be expected to follow. There was some requirement needed for developers to do more in terms of, for example, housing design, layout, and orientation. The way forward was for technology to play a greater part in the construction of new homes.
- Concern was expressed around the process of developing existing homes and gardens was already in existence. Where finite resources existed this was more problematic, but with different dynamics emerging, this could sometimes be considered acceptable.
- The Government's intention with PPS3 was to give more power to developers to dictate the speed at which housing development progressed. However, this could lead to development being driven by developers' demands rather than by need.
- If introduced the Planning Gain Supplement would require the small developer to be liable to pay towards the provision of infrastructure, but if the PGS were to be dropped the local authority would still need to consider measures to ensure small developers made an appropriate contribution.
- Given the Government's significant commitment to adopt maximum parking standards, local planning authorities were being advised to develop parking in consultation with local stakeholders and communities. This would allow a little more flexibility, but the efficient use of land would still need to be demonstrated.
- The LDF Core Strategy would need to carefully consider the issues of density, affordable housing, previously developed land and certainly there was growing pressures on authorities to resist further increases in density within existing urban areas.

- The reference to compulsory purchase powers reflected the legislation that already existed in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Concern was expressed at this concept and particularly the problems surrounding identifying a realistic market figure. Difficulties and challenges would exist, although this approach had been used on a number of occasions by other authorities.
- If compulsory purchase was used in a district like Rochford, this would most likely involve a partnership approach with appropriate development agencies including English Partnerships and the East of England Development Agency.
- The 2004 Act envisaged a 'blurring' between the boundaries of adjacent administrative areas with the provision for joint working on various planning issues. More emphasis should be made regarding Members' concerns about an approach which was not based on administrative boundaries, but market-led.

Members concurred with the officer's comments on the consultation document, but requested that the response include their additional views.

### **Resolved**

That the officer's report, together with the Committee's additional comments, forms the basis of the Council's response to the consultation on Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing. (HPS)

### **43 PROPOSED PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 25: DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services outlining the proposed revisions to Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 to be incorporated in a new Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk.

Members were pleased to note that:-

- The emphasis was on the owner/developer of the land to have the primary responsibility for safeguarding their land and other property against natural hazards including flooding.
- The processes and procedures outlined within the document provided a clear and robust framework for dealing with the very real risks associated with flooding, particularly in this part of the country. This risk aspect should be emphasised within this Council's response to the proposed revisions.

**Resolved**

That the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister be informed that, whilst wishing to still emphasise the very real risks associated with flooding within this District, the Council supports the principles for dealing with development and flood risk, as set out in draft PPS25. (HPS)

The meeting closed at 9.23 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....