

Environmental Services Committee - 7 November 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **7 November 2002** when there were present:

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

Cllr Mrs J Capon	Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr T E Goodwin	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr A J Humphries	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr G A Mockford	Cllr Mrs M J Webster

VISITING

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Clarkson	Head of Revenue & Housing Management
S Scrutton	Head of Planning Services
J Bourne	Leisure & Contracts Manager
Joanne Ellis	Environmental Protection Unit Manager
N McCullagh	Area Manager, County Highways (representing Essex County Council)
P Denholm	Solicitor
J Bostock	Principal Committee Administrator

531 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 October 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

532 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T E Goodwin declared a prejudicial interest in the items on Taxi Voucher Scheme (Review) and Taxi Tariff (Consideration of Objections) by virtue of being a taxi driver and left the meeting during their consideration.

Councillors Mr H L A Glynn and Mr M S Vince each declared a personal interest in the item on North Street, Rochford (Proposed Limited Waiting Restriction).

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533 MOTION ON NOTICE FROM COUNCILLORS MRS M S VINCE, MRS M A WEIR AND C R MORGAN

The Proper Officer reported that, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12, the following motion had been received from the above named Councillors.

“Considerable investment has been made to enhance Rochford Market Square, but already the surface condition of the new footway slabs are badly stained and giving rise to negative comments from residents.

Rapid and appropriate action to remove the stains and other substances should be undertaken before this situation deteriorates further.

When considering the funding implications, this Committee should also include other town or village centres within the District suffering from similar problems.”

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Mrs Vince wished to emphasise concern that Rochford Square was suffering from staining despite having been barely completed. From appearance, it seemed likely that elements of tar had transferred from the highway to the footway. It was pleasing to note that a decision had been made to approach Town and Parish Councils to see if they would be prepared to contribute towards the costs of being included in a chewing gum/stain removal scheme. The Motion was not intended to preclude the Council from addressing problems at Rayleigh Town Centre in the first instance.

During discussion it was recognised that, if the proposed free trial slab cleaning test was unsuccessful, there would still be a need to address the staining problems associated with town centres.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that consultation was underway with the Chewing Gum Removal Company, the company prepared to carry out a free trial removal of chewing gum and other stains, and that it would be possible to approach the company with a view to the trial being undertaken at Rochford Town Square.

Resolved

That Officers ask the company prepared to carry out a free trial removal of chewing gum and other stains (The Chewing Gum Removal Company) to undertake the trial at Rochford Town Square.
(CD(F&ES))

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534 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY - PROPOSED EXTINGUISHMENT OF PART OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH 5, ASHINGDON

The Committee considered the report of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the proposed extinguishment of part of Public Footpath 5, Ashingdon.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the owner of Ashingdon Hall bearing the cost of any necessary accommodation works and all the Council's expenses recoverable under the Local Government (Recovery of Costs for Public Path Orders) Regulations 1993 as amended, the proposal to extinguish the section of Footpath 5, Ashingdon, from points A to C shown on the plan annexed to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making and confirmation of a Public Footpath Extinguishment Order under the terms of Section 118 of the Highways Act 1980. (HLS)

535 DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - PROPOSED RESPONSE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) seeking Members' views on the most appropriate method of disposing of waste in the future.

On a motion moved by Councillor M G B Starke and seconded by Councillor J E Grey it was:-

Resolved

That, subject to the Motion agreed at Full Council on 29 October (Minute 523/02), Option 1 within the consultation document be supported as the basis for further development work on a Countywide strategy. (CD(F&ES))

536 NORTH STREET, ROCHFORD - PROPOSED LIMITED WAITING RESTRICTION

The Committee considered the report of the Area Manager, County Highways, on objections received to formal consultation on proposed limited waiting restrictions in North Street, Rochford.

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During debate it was recognised that, given that there would always be different views about the way forward on this type of issue, it would be appropriate to give weighting to the comments received via the consultation process.

Responding to Member questions, the Area Manager, County Highways, indicated that he would be reviewing the status of work aimed at remedying defective signage in North Street.

On a Motion moved by Councillor M G B Starke and seconded by Councillor C R Morgan it was:-

Resolved

That an Order be made to vary the existing limited waiting restriction on the east side of North Street, Rochford, but that the proposal for a new limited waiting restriction on the west side of North Street be dropped in response to the level of local opposition (Area Manager, Country Highways)

Note: Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn wished it to be recorded that she had voted against the above decision.

537 PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTION AMENDMENT - HOCKLEY

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which sought views on proposed changes to waiting restrictions in Hockley.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that:-

- The Order making process included a period for the submission of objections.
- The cost of introducing yellow lineage in a close was approximately £300 to £400.
- Service and emergency vehicles should not experience any difficulties in gaining access to the Rossllyn Close site. However, the Order making process would include consultation with the emergency services.
- The County was currently developing proposals for those residential zones where there were concerns about speeding (including Buckingham Road, Hockley). Consideration would be given to parking issues within this work.

Resolved

That the proposed changes to waiting restrictions in Bramerton Road and Rosslyn Close, Hockley, as set out in the report, be endorsed. (CD(F&ES))

538 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLLUTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL REGULATED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care on responding to a consultation paper from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs relating to pollution prevention and control regulated by Local Authorities.

On a Motion moved by Councillor A J Humphries and seconded by Councillor M G B Starke it was:-

Resolved

That the comments detailed in the Report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care be this Council's response to the consultation paper "LA-IPPC and LAPPC - Policy and Procedure for Permitting Installations". (HHHCC)

539 THE MOTOR SALVAGE OPERATORS REGULATIONS 2002

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care on the introduction of the Motor Salvage Operators Regulations 2002 and the setting of a registration fee to cover the Council's administration costs.

During debate and in response to Member questions, the Environmental Protection Unit Manager advised that:-

- Following consultation between Local Authorities in Essex, Officers were recommending that the registration fee for the current financial year be set at £70.
- Any operation receiving write-offs or recycled vehicles was considered motor salvage. In principle, 'one-man' operators would be subject to the new legislation. Such operators would be identified via Police enforcement activity.

On a Motion moved by Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Councillor C R Morgan it was:-

Resolved

That the fee for registration of Motor Salvage Operators be set at £70.00 for the current financial year. (HHHCC)

540 DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT - UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management which provided progress on decriminalised parking enforcement together with recommendations on initial staffing proposals which may go some way to improve the current policing of on-street parking in town centres.

During debate and in response to Member questions, Officers advised that-

- As the Council neared full responsibility for enforcement, Committee progress reports would be submitted on a six-monthly basis.
- It was proposed that proposals for the appointment of a post of Parking Supervisor would be submitted to the Policy & Finance Committee on 5 December.
- The Essex Consortium had recognised that there would be some merit in introducing special exemption for carers. However, arrangements would not be in place until the Council had responsibility for enforcement.
- Highways Officers were currently reviewing the possibilities for introducing road markings which would prevent traffic gathering at the point in Rochford where North and South Street meet. A number of considerations had to be taken into account, such as the town centre being a conservation area. There would not be a remedy for such problems within the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Regulations.

The Committee agreed a Motion, moved by Councillor Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Councillor R A Oatham, on expressing regret and concern at the response of the Police to yellow line enforcement issues.

Resolved

- (1) That the response of Essex Police be noted with regret and concern.

- (2) That the way forward as outlined in the report be agreed in principle, subject to the agreement of the Policy and Finance Committee to the resources and staffing required.
- (3) That the Head of Revenue and Housing Management report to the Policy and Finance Committee on 5 December on the appointment of a post of Parking Supervisor. (HRHM)

541 TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME - REVIEW

Note: Councillor Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of her role as a Deputy County Portfolio Holder.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management on the performance of the taxi voucher scheme during the first six months of operation.

During debate and in response to Member questions, Officers advised that-

- Suggestions for scheme improvement emanating from the review would be adopted as appropriate.
- It would be possible to undertake consultation with taxi drivers for their views on the scheme.
- There was a need to address responses within the survey on the possible use of vouchers by taxis licensed with neighbouring authorities.
- The County Council had been particularly interested in the customer focus aspect of the scheme.
- Appropriate press releases would be produced on the success of the scheme, including tribute to the taxi drivers and other contributors.

The Committee was pleased with the success of the scheme. Reference was made to the possibility that, in future, scheme users could be provided with a facility to provide views from home, rather than via the completion of an envelope during a journey. A key feature of the scheme was the facility for user discretion. It was observed that, given the scheme's success, the County could be approached to assist with increased financial contributions.

Following a Motion relating to the retention of the scheme within the District, moved by Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by

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Councillor Mrs M J Webster, and a further Motion relating to funding provision, moved by Councillor C R Morgan and seconded by Councillor J E Grey, it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the Report on the results of the survey be noted and that a further report be prepared after twelve months operation of the scheme.
- (2) That, in line with existing policy, the Voucher Scheme remain available to taxis licensed for operation by Rochford District Council only.
- (3) That the report and the results of the survey be shared with Essex County Council and that, in view of the Scheme's success, the County be asked to increase its own funding towards the Scheme on a basis which matches the increased funding from the District.
- (4) That the sum of £60,000 be included in the draft estimates for 2003/2004 for Voucher Scheme funding.
- (5) That, prior to the next review, Officers undertake consultation with Taxi Drivers for their views on the Scheme (HRHM)

542 TAXI TARIFF – CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which detailed the objections received to the changes in the Hackney Carriage Tariff published in the Southend Recorder on 11 October 2002.

During debate and in response to Member questions, Officers advised that-

- Notwithstanding the number of objections received, the statutory time-table meant that a final decision now needed to be taken.
- There had been no objection to the four tariff changes introduced over the previous five years. The legal fees associated with any appeal to a Magistrates Court could be in the region of £700. It was unlikely that costs would be awarded against the Council.

A Motion addressing the various matters set out in the report and including that the Hackney Carriage tariff set at the Meeting of the Environmental Services Committee held on 5 September be the new

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tariff, was moved by Councillor A J Grey and seconded by Councillor A J Humphries. An amendment that extra charges commence from 9.00pm instead of 10.30pm, moved by Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Councillor C R Morgan, was lost on a show of hands.

Resolved

- (1) That the Hackney Carriage tariff set at the Meeting of the Environmental Services Committee held on 5 September 2002 (Minute 401/02 refers) be the new tariff.
- (2) That the effective date of the Hackney Carriage tariff be 2 December 2002.
- (3) That the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee be reconstituted as a consultative forum, meetings to be held twice yearly – in July to consider tariff charges and in January/February to consider licensing fees and charges associated with the trade.
- (4) That the Chairman and one other representative from the Association of Circuit Company Owners in the Rochford District and the Rochford Hackney Carriage Drivers Association be invited to attend meetings with the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee as appropriate.
- (5) That the question of whether further consideration be given to future usage of the National Private Hire Association tariff model be discussed at the next meeting of the Taxi-Licensing Sub Committee. (HRHM)

Note: Councillors Mrs H L A Glynn and C R Morgan each wished it to be recorded that they had voted against the above decision.

543 'BAR N BUS' VEHICLE AT WEBSTERS WAY CAR PARK, RAYLEIGH

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management on the on-going use of Websters Way car park on Thursday evenings by the 'Bar n Bus' vehicle, and the possibility of extending the initiative to other parts of the District.

The Committee agreed that authority should be delegated to Officers to allow the 'Bar n Bus' vehicle into Council car parks around the District as considered appropriate. This would help maximise the presence of the service within the District which, ideally, should be at least four nights per week.

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Responding to Member questions, the Head of Revenue and Housing Management advised that, to the best of his understanding, the 'Bar n Bus' facility had not applied for financial donations from the Council. The facility was funded entirely by voluntary contributions.

Resolved

- (1) That Officers continue to consult with John Ward and the Police to monitor the effectiveness of this initiative and report back to this Committee in six months time with an update of progress of the new bus.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Revenue and Housing Management to allow the Bar 'n' Bus vehicle onto Council Car Parks around the District as considered appropriate. (HRHM)

The Meeting closed at 9.21pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____