

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 3 December 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **3 December 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr P K Savill (Chairman)
Cllr C A Hungate (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr K H Hudson

VISITING

Cllrs T G Cutmore, T Livings and D G Stansby

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
S Scrutton	- Head of Planning Services
D Timson	- Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
K Bristow	- District Manager, Transportation & Operational Services, Essex County Council
S Whitehead	- Solicitor
J Bostock	- Principal Committee Administrator

547 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 18, 20 and 25 November 2003 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

548 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the schedule relating to Progress on Decisions.

Proposed Footway Improvement, Websters Way, Rayleigh (Minute 567/02)

It was noted that officers would endeavour to bring forward the report on this matter early in the New Year. (County Highways/HPS)

549 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PUBLIC REGULATION, INSPECTION AND PROTECTION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on the conclusion of the work in relation to the Best Value Review of Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- The Environment Agency, riparian landowners and the Council had responsibilities for aspects of flood prevention. A key objective was to increase capacity back into the system. The Authority served notices where work was needed. Officers would liaise with Transco in relation to problems being experienced at a sluice gate in Watery Lane.
- The Council was awaiting the passing of legislation enabling the last known owner of abandoned vehicles to be charged removal fees.
- Litter clearance from roads was undertaken in consultation with the County Council. Roads were closed on health and safety grounds as appropriate.
- The Animal Welfare Charter Sub-Committee had considered the issues associated with the stray dog collection service.
- The Council had made various policy decisions in relation to gypsies and other travellers over a number of years.
- A key action associated with addressing planning enforcement backlog issues would be workload prioritisation. Planning enforcement cases were given publicity. Officers could report further on the specific nature of any delegations associated with Article 4 directions to remove permitted development rights.
- Detailed breakdowns of costings associated with staffing proposals could be provided as required.
- Notwithstanding the absence of a formal out of hours service, officers would no doubt respond as necessary to any major emergencies. Significant costs could be associated with reviewing current arrangements or working with other local authorities.
- Officers could bring forward a report on the possibilities for introducing a charge where there is a demand for the disposal of bulky items beyond those provided for within the free service.
- Possibilities associated with CCTV cameras could be considered within proposals to address fly tipping.
- Officers would take account of prevailing wind when considering the location of additional dog waste bins in areas identified as under provided.
- There are a range of powers available to the Council for addressing noise nuisance.

- Parking enforcement was not part of the Best Value Review. However, the Head of Revenue and Housing Management could be asked to confirm how it is envisaged that new duties associated with parking enforcement will be discharged.

During debate it was observed that removal of the current free bulky household goods collection service would be a retrograde step, particularly in the context of a potential increase in fly tipping. It was recognised that the Council's Community Safety Officers had some involvement in addressing graffiti problems via work with the Crime and Disorder Partnership. The Committee noted that, in some cases involving dangerous trees, the owner will bear the costs.

Members felt that it would be appropriate to provide for review of the arrangements for taxi licensing administration in twelve months' time. With regard to an out-of-hours service it was felt that, given current working arrangements seemed to work adequately, the costs associated with service introduction could not be justified. It was agreed that, from a risk perspective, the identification of multiply-occupied properties and implementation of a risk rating system should be a high priority.

Resolved

That the actions at Appendix 5 of the report be agreed by this Committee as set out below including, where appropriate, consideration in the revised budget for 2003/4 and for the draft revenue estimate for 2004/5:-

Appendix 5

Action Plan Reference

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|-----|--|
| 1.1 | Agreed as high priority. Estimate provision for staffing costs in 2003/4 £13,419. Other costs 2003/4 £12,000. Staffing costs 2004/5 £81,641. |
| 1.2 | Agreed. |
| 1.3 | Agreed. |
| 1.4 | Agreed – review in 12 months |
| 2.1 | Agreed as high priority. Staffing costs in 2004/5 £15,300. Other costs £2,000. |
| 3.1 | Agreed. |
| 3.2 | Agreed. |

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4.1	Not agreed.
4.2	Not agreed.
5.1	Not agreed, but officers should investigate expansion of the service to enable additional and alternative to be collected at a charge.
5.2	Agreed.
6.1	Delete, as it duplicates item 17.
7.1	Agreed as medium priority. Estimate provision for 2004/5 £1,000.
8.1	Agreed.
8.2	Agreed.
8.3	Agreed as medium priority. Estimate provision for 2004/5 £5,000.
8.4	Agreed.
8.5	Agreed.
9.1	Agreed.
9.2	Agreed.
10.1	Agreed as medium priority. Estimate provision for 2004/5 £2,000.
11.1	Agreed as medium priority. Estimate provision for 2004/5 £2,000.
12.1	Agreed.
13.1	Agreed.
14.1	Agreed.
15.1	Agreed.
15.2	Agreed.
15.3	Agreed.
16.1	Agreed.

16.2	Agreed.
16.3	Agreed, with officers to bring forward a report for consideration on the specific nature of any delegations associated with Article 4 directions to remove permitted development rights.
17.1	Agreed.
17.2	Agreed as medium priority. Estimate provision for 2004/5 £10,000.
18.1	Agreed.
18.2	Agreed.
18.3	Agreed.
18.4	Agreed.
18.5	Agreed.
18.6	Agreed.
19.1	Agreed.
19.2	Agreed as high priority. Estimate provision for 2004/5 £10,000.
19.3	Agreed.

550 RAYLEIGH TOWN CENTRE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services on the conclusions of the Rayleigh Traffic Study Sub-Committee on traffic movements in Rayleigh town centre.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- The Police had confirmed that the introduction of a box at the junction of High Street/Websters Way would be unenforceable. They had, however, suggested the introduction of “Keep Clear” markings.
- A guard rail at Crown Hill would be feasible as long as it stopped short of the corner of the adjoining building (which was a pinch point).

Resolved

- (1) That the existing traffic arrangements in Rayleigh Town Centre remain unchanged.

- (2) That a scheme for a new guard rail at Crown Hill and the provision of 'Keep Clear' markings at the junction of High Street/Websters Way be included in the locally determined programme for 2004/05. (County Highways/HPS)

The Meeting closed at 10.00pm

Chairman.....

Date:.....