

## **Review Committee – 7 October 2008**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **7 October 2008** when there were present:-

Vice-Chairman in the Chair: Cllr Mrs C A Weston

Cllr T Livings

Cllr M J Steptoe

Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr P F A Webster.

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J R Lumley, M Maddocks and P R Robinson.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
J Bourne	-	Head of Community Services
R Evans	-	Head of Environmental Services
S Neville	-	Strategic Housing Manager
R Tatton-Bennett	-	Principal Engineer
G Lucas	-	Emergency Planning Officer
P Gowers	-	Overview & Scrutiny Officer
M Power	-	Committee Administrator

### **281 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **282 THE FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received presentations from the Portfolio Holders for Leisure, Tourism, Heritage, the Arts, Culture and Business (Cllr K J Gordon) and Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions (Cllr Mrs T J Capon) on: 11/08 – The Public Open Spaces Refurbishment Programme and 19/08 – Approval of the New Housing Strategy.

#### **Item 11/08 The Public Open Spaces Refurbishment Programme 2008/9**

Cllr K J Gordon outlined the proposals for the Council's management of its open spaces under the Open Spaces Refurbishment Programme. Cllr Gordon advised that remedial works to the embankment steps at Rochford Reservoir and completion of the final phase of surfacing to the perimeter footpath had been identified as a high priority due to health and safety considerations.

In response to a question, Members were advised that, following the issue being raised at the West Area Committee, the police had been notified of anti-social behaviour by young people in Grove Road, Rayleigh and the playing fields and although there had seemingly been very few such incidents reported, had proposed to increase the police profile in the area over the next few weeks, especially at the weekends. It was further noted that the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership could be approached in terms of problem solving and targeting in respect of community issues.

### **Item 19/08 Approval of the New Housing Strategy**

Cllr Mrs T J Capon outlined the main provisions of the draft housing strategy, which would be in operation up to 2011. It was noted that Choice-Based Lettings, although closely linked, did not form part of the housing strategy. It was anticipated that the final draft of the housing strategy would be available by the end of October and feedback from Members was sought. The overall aim of the strategy was to improve the quality and choice of housing, to influence the supply of affordable, intermediate, key-worker and supported accommodation and to develop a private sector housing strategy. Emphasis would also be placed on homelessness prevention and the provision of additional alternatives for temporary accommodation. Cllr Mrs Capon advised that the Council's Housing Strategy considers the housing needs at a local level, having regard to the vision for the District, and linked closely with the Local Development Framework process. The strategy would mirror the sub-regional strategy in that it would consider three main themes: managing future growth, meeting the needs of vulnerable groups and investing in the housing stock.

### **283 PARISH LIAISON REVIEW**

The Committee considered the final report of the project team on the Parish Liaison Review.

Following discussion, the following was noted :-

- That Parish clerks were eligible to attend the Essex Association of Local Councils' training sessions and, in addition, it was felt that it might be beneficial for the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils to provide an opportunity for clerks to meet up.
- That the District Council Member training events to which Parish Councillors were invited, as well as their participation in the area committees, provided Parish Councillors with the opportunity of liaising with District Council Members and officers.

It was agreed that that the wording of Recommendation 2 be altered to reflect that it was only the Committee's suggestion that Parish clerks could meet as a sub group under the auspices of the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils and Members.

### Resolved

- (1) That the initial requests for Parish Liaison meetings from the Rochford and Rawreth Parish Clerks be declined.
- (2) That it be suggested to the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils and Members that Parish clerks could meet as a sub group under their auspices. (HICS)

### 284 SURFACE RAINWATER DRAINAGE SYSTEMS REVIEW

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Principal Engineer and the Emergency Planning Officer on Flooding in Rochford, which outlined the following:-

- The main flooding risks in Rochford
- Past experience of flooding in the District (which was minimal)
- Rochford District Council's responsibility in this regard
- The causes of recent flooding in the District.

It was anticipated that the Government would be responding to the Pitt Report by the end of November. Some of the recommendations in the report would have an impact on Local Authorities. It was noted that there were up to 1800 properties in Rochford at risk should there be an incident of coastal flooding.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- Adequate information relating to flooding issues was available for the public to access, including information on the Council's website, 'flooding' fairs and mailshots to 'at risk' homes advising how properties can be protected. However, it was often difficult to get residents engaged in the subject.
- The District Council had no power under the Land Drainage Act to serve notice on a landowner for maintenance of ditches; it could only serve notice for clearance of a ditch that had been deliberately blocked.
- The Environment Agency was largely responsible for maintenance of sea walls. On the Ministry of Defence (MOD) land at Foulness, sea defences were the MOD's responsibility.
- The District's 2.38km of ditches did not include Cherry Orchard Park as this was classified as a main river ditch and therefore not the responsibility of the Council.

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The meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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