

Environmental Services Committee – 13 January 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **13 January 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr J E Grey (Chairman)
Cllr R G S Choppen (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr R A Amner

Cllr Mrs T J Capon

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr Mrs S A Harper

Cllr Mrs L Hungate

Cllr A J Humphries

Cllr J M Pullen

Cllr C G Seagers

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs Mrs R Brown and S P Smith.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R A Oatham.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	- Head of Planning Services
A Meddle	- Team Leader, Local Plans
R Peacey	- Safety, Food & Regulation Unit Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 STORAGE OF LPG AT PETROL FILLING STATIONS

The Committee welcomed Mr Joe Maerz, Principal Trading Standards Officer, to the meeting. He outlined to Members, during a presentation, the issues associated with storing LPG at petrol filling stations.

Mr Maerz advised that Essex Trading Standards is the local authority with responsibility for the licensing of petrol fluid installations in Essex. The Dangerous Substances, Explosive Atmosphere Regulations 2002 (DSEAR) provide a comprehensive framework for ensuring the safe storage of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and for ensuring that staff at petrol stations are

adequately trained in all safety issues associated with the storage of LPG, including how to deal with accident and emergency situations.

LPG is an alternative fuel encouraged for use in motor vehicles, as it is cleaner burning. It is sold alongside other vehicle fuels at petrol stations.

The two types of LPG generally available in this country are commercial butane and commercial propane. Commercial propane is the kind most commonly found at petrol stations. LPG is non-toxic. Propane vapour is about one and a half times as dense as air. Consequently, the vapour may flow along the ground and into drains, sinking to the lowest level of the surroundings and be ignited at a considerable distance from the source of leakage. In still air vapour will disperse slowly. LPG can form a flammable mixture when mixed with air; the flammable range at ambient temperature and pressure extends between approximately 2% of the vapour in air at its lower limit and approximately 10% of the vapour in air at its upper limit. Within this range there is a risk of ignition. However, outside this range any mixture is either too weak or too rich to ignite.

Commercial propane is usually odourised to enable detection by smell of the gas. Any escape of propane may also be noticeable in that when the liquid evaporates the cooling effect on the surrounding air causes condensation and even freezing of water vapour in the air, which can manifest itself as frost at the point of escape. Leaks can also sometimes be seen as a 'shimmering'.

When LPG is stored in a tank above ground crash bollards have to be placed around the tank, with adequate lighting above the tank, and there is also often fencing around the tank. Tanks sited underground are fitted with a number of safety features that above ground tanks would not have, and are substantially more expensive than above ground tanks. Once installed, underground LPG tanks can remain for up to 20 years, untouched.

Westfield Motors in Rawreth is the only petrol station within the Rochford District that has LPG, via an above ground tank. BP is the only petrol station in this country with underground LPG tanks, with only 6 in Essex.

LPG Tanks with a 1.1 to 4 tonnes capacity should be sited 7.5 metres from any buildings, boundary, property line or fixed source of ignition.

Responding to a Member enquiry, Mr Maerz advised that, with respect to commercial propane, there were 1,000 litres per tonne. He further confirmed that the bulk of LPG tanks was such that no insulating coating was required.

In response to a query relating to LPG associated accidents, Mr Maerz advised that throughout the continent different nozzles were used at petrol stations which did not always correctly fit adaptors sold in different countries; this did occasionally lead to instances of people receiving burns when fuelling their vehicles in a different country to their own. A standardised LPG nozzle for all countries could resolve this issue.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to whether underground LPG tanks were safer, Mr Maerz confirmed that this was entirely dependant on the control of the tank, storage conditions and on the initial installation of the tank. The last two serious accidents associated with LPG tanks at petrol stations had, however, involved above ground tanks.

16 LOCAL PLAN REPRESENTATIONS AND SECOND DEPOSIT

(Note: Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn and C G Seagers declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being users of Essex Marina and Cllr Mrs M J Webster also declared a personal interest by virtue of membership of various wildlife organisations.)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services providing details of proposed modifications to the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (First Deposit Draft), including the proposals maps, as recommended by Members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Responding to a Member concern relating to Policy UT5, officers advised that the Green Belt status of the Cherry Orchard Brickworks site had not changed.

It was the general consensus of the Committee that the final sentence of Policy CS3 was too forceful. On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Cllr Mrs L Hungate it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed modifications to the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (First Deposit Draft) be approved and that a Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (Second Deposit Draft) be prepared and placed on deposit, subject to the wording of Policy CS3 being amended to read:-

”Development that seeks to reduce the length, number and duration of motorised journeys (particularly at peak hours) and that encourages the use of alternative modes of transport to help protect the quality of the built and urban environment may be permitted”.

- (2) That details of all representations and the Council’s response to the same be sent to all who made such representations and displayed in the Council offices and on the Council’s website.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services to approve minor amendments to the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (Second Deposit Draft) as may be required to ensure the accuracy of the published plan. (HPS)

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The meeting closed at 8.44 pm.

Chairman

Date