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## **ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **1 REVIEW OF BUS SERVICES**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 20 March 2007 the Review Committee approved the final report and recommendations of the Project Lead on the Review of Bus Services for consideration by the Committee.
- 1.2 A copy of the final report, as approved by the Review Committee, is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.3 The Review Committee noted that commercially, from the evidence gathered, it would appear that the number of buses provided in the District is sufficient to serve the population, but there was not an adequate distribution of services to outlying parts of the District where there was small or irregular demand.
- 1.4 It was also noted that following a meeting attended by the Project Lead, subject to approval from Essex County Councillor Rodney Bass, there is a proposal by Essex County Council's Highways & Transportation Department to subsidise a community bus service between Central Avenue, Hullbridge and Rochford via the Dome one day a week on a 3-month trial basis.
- 1.5 It is proposed that the Committee considers the final report which includes the following recommendations:-
- (1) That Essex County Council's Highways & Transportation Department be asked to:-
    - Explore with the local residents ways in which the transport link between the Dome and Hullbridge could be improved.
    - Explore ways of improving evening services generally.
    - Explore the possibility of reinstating the No. 8 service from Hawkwell to Rayleigh during the week.
    - Explore with the local residents ways in which the local bus services could be expanded to cater for people wishing to visit places of recreation from the Rochford District.
  - (2) That Central Government be lobbied to increase its funding to support subsidisation of the bus services in the county.
  - (3) That Arriva be lobbied via Essex County Council to improve the condition of their buses and make them more user friendly.

**2 REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT SERVICE**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 20 March 2007 the Review Committee approved the final report and recommendations of the Project Team on the review of the operation of the planning enforcement service for consideration by the Committee.
- 2.2 A copy of the Project Lead's report, as approved by the Review Committee, is attached as Appendix B.
- 2.3 The Review Committee observed that planning enforcement is a discretionary service, and not a statutory requirement by Government.
- 2.4 The Committee noted that the duty rota in place involves members of staff within the Planning Enforcement Team. Time is split between being in the office as a duty planner 'on call', studying for the planning qualification via day release, as well as dealing with individual case work. If duty rotas were changed, this would have implications across the whole Division and may well have a resource impact.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the Committee considers the final report which includes the following recommendations:-
- (1) That the Head of Planning & Transportation conducts an annual review of outstanding enforcement cases with the Development Control Committee to confirm those cases to be closed.
  - (2) That the Head of Planning & Transportation reviews the provision of duty cover in order that those members of the Enforcement Team that have study leave do not spend a material part of their week as part of the Duty Rota and for him to give further consideration to his staffing levels as a result.
  - (3) That the Head of Planning & Transportation records the date of the last action on the "Live Case" list report.
  - (4) That the Head of Planning & Transportation submits the number of outstanding cases, together with details of Enforcement Notices issued and Appeals lodged, to the Development Control Committee as a regular addition to its agenda.
  - (5) That the Head of Planning & Transportation implements the following changes to the public documentation relating to planning enforcement to improve clarity.

Enforcement Policy:-

- “Pursuing any breach of planning control to its resolution so far as it is reasonable and expedient to do so”. This should be changed to “pursuing any breach of planning control to a satisfactory conclusion”.

Complete guide to the Enforcement Service:-

- On page 2 of the Guide reference should be made to how people should register complaints and in what form.
  - On page 10 it should include details of how to access the website or other ways of contacting Rochford District Council.
  - On page 17 should include details of where the offices are actually located and provision for writing in.
- (6) That the Head of Planning & Transportation investigates the possibility of submitting the public documentation relating to planning enforcement for the “crystal mark.”
  - (7) That the Head of Planning & Transportation continues the dialogue with other Authorities regarding best practice relating to enforcement and regularly reports back to Members.
  - (8) That, in those cases where an impasse has been reached and Court action has failed to resolve the breach of planning rules, the Head of Planning and Transportation reports the case to the Development Control Committee for direct action to be considered to remedy the breach.
  - (9) That the Head of Planning & Transportation publishes a quarterly report in our own publication *Rochford District Matters* as to planning enforcement, stating the number of new cases and cases closed in the quarter.
  - (10) That the Head of Planning & Transportation commissions an aerial survey of the district bi-annually, with a link created on the Council’s website to enable our residents to acquire aerial photographs of their homes and neighbourhood.

Sarah Fowler

Head of Administrative and Member Services

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**Background Papers:-**

None

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.