

East Area Committee – 31 October 2007

Minutes of the meeting of the **East Area Committee** held on **31 October 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr C G Seagers
Vice-Chairman: Cllr T E Goodwin

Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr J P Cottis
Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

VISITING

Cllrs M R Carter, M B G Starke, Mrs M J Webster and Mrs C A Weston

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr P A Capon - Stambridge Parish Council
Miss P Shaw - Ashingdon Parish Council
Mr B Summerfield - Sutton Parish Council
Cllr Mrs M S Vince - Rochford Parish Council
Cllr D Whittingham - Paglesham Parish Council
L Harvey - Essex County Council

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Bourne - Head of Community Services
R Evans - Head of Environmental Services
Y Woodward - Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management
M Power - Committee Administrator
S Worthington - Committee Administrator

366 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs K J Gordon, V Newby (Canewdon Parish Council) R Pearson (Essex County Council), M Steptoe (Barling Magna Parish Council) and B Wright (Great Wakering Parish Council).

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of Interest

Cllrs P A Capon and Mrs T J Capon each declared a personal interest in item 4(2) of the agenda relating to the update on Rochford Sewage Treatment

Works, Stambridge by virtue of their being residents of Stambridge. Cllr J P Cottis declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of living close to the Sewage Works.

367 COMMUNITY FORUM

Requests for information had been received in advance of the meeting and a document summarising these, together with officer responses, was circulated to all those present. A list of these is appended.

A further question, which had been received at the meeting from Mrs M Sherwin of Great Wakering (also appended), would receive a written response at the next meeting of the East Area Committee on 12 December 2007.

In response to comments made regarding Mr Efde's question about Great Wakering flood issues, it was reiterated that the Council had no statutory responsibility to deal with these matters; it was the responsibility of the Environment Agency and central Government.

368 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Highways Matters within the East Area

Surfacing in West Street, Rochford, from Rochford station to Hall Road, had taken place during the summer months. Shopland Road, from Sutton Road to the bends, had been surface dressed.

Work on a new footway in Clay Street, Barling was due to commence shortly, following consultation with residents.

Changes to the Barling Road/Barrow Hall Road/Stonebridge junction would be carried out soon.

Temporary repairs were to be carried out on the Ashingdon Road, from the junction with West Street to Dalys Road. Major resurfacing was scheduled to take place in Summer 2008, at which time it would be necessary to close the road. Members requested that the work be done at night if possible and that the school and nursery be notified of the timing of the works well in advance of commencement.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- The carriageway surface was still not satisfactory at the Brays Lane junction. However, the scheme had run over budget and funding would need to be sought from other sources to enable the surfacing to be carried out. It was noted that water leaks from the Essex & Suffolk Water pipes exacerbated the situation. The Committee

asked to be kept advised of progress on this matter.

- The plastic banding on the bollards outside the White Hart in Great Wakering High Street would be replaced.
- The possibility of removing the pedestrian refuge outside the Co-op in Great Wakering, which had been causing problems, would be raised with Essex Police. Road safety issues would have to be balanced against the possible loss of this crossing facility for pedestrians.
- The request for a temporary speed indicator sign in Shoebury Road could be considered under the Locally Determined Programme during the 2008/9 financial year. Great Wakering Parish Council should add the item to their list of requests for works.
- The vegetation overhanging parts of New Road in Great Wakering, which often obstructed pedestrians from walking on the pavement, would be inspected.
- Drainage problems at the junction of Little Wakering Hall Lane with High Street, Great Wakering would be inspected on a day when it is raining.
- Regarding the desire by Ashingdon Parish Council to plant the grass verges along Ashingdon Road in order to stop traffic parking on them, County Highways would arrange for the existing licence to be checked for permissions. A response would be given directly to the Ashingdon Parish Council clerk.
- With respect to the protruding metal on the tarmac path running between the Co-op and Conway Avenue in Great Wakering, it was suggested that the Parish Council approach Peterborough Land Registry to try to establish the identity of the private landowner. The District Council was also progressing the matter.
- Regarding a request that the gateways into Rochford be improved, the meeting was advised that this work would rely on specific funding being obtained. There might be the possibility of obtaining match funding from a future Essex County Council budget. The District Engineer noted the request.

The issue was raised of the volume of large lorries, possibly as many as 500 per day, using Brays Lane to travel to the Baltic Wharf. The road often had to be closed in order to allow the large craft boarded on the lorries to pass along the road. The District Engineer advised that lorries could not legally be restricted from using this route and, as the only alternative routes to the wharf were via Stambridge Road through

Canewdon, both of which had weight restrictions, this was the only existing route available.

Regarding an additional problem with maintenance of the road, the District Engineer advised that the resurfacing of the road was being considered and that a classified count of the number and size of vehicles using the road on a daily basis was being undertaken. These statistics would be passed to County Cllr N Hume, the Highways and Transportation portfolio holder, and then forwarded to Rochford District Council.

The Leader of the District Council advised the meeting that he was attempting to put pressure on both central government and Thames Gateway to invest in the infrastructure around the Baltic Wharf by either upgrading the existing road or building a new road, as the Wharf now presented a major source of income and economic generation.

The possibility of European funding was also discussed in respect of Wallasea Wetlands.

(2) Rochford Sewage Treatment Works, Stambridge

The Committee considered the report of the District Council's Head of Environmental Services, which provided information on the completion of the Anglian Water sludge dewatering upgrade programme at the Rochford Sewage Treatment Works, Stambridge.

The Chairman of Stambridge Parish Council read a letter from Cllr Mrs M J Webster advising that, although she was a member of the Rochford District Stambridge Treatment Works, she had not been advised of the recent site visit. The Head of Environmental Services advised that a letter of apology had been sent to Cllr Mrs Webster, in which she had been offered a personal site visit to the Treatment Works and a briefing by officers.

It was reported that although an improvement had been noticed since the completion of the works, there were still smells coming from the site, usually on Friday evenings and during the weekend. It was confirmed that Anglian Water was getting its own consultants to inspect the site and complete further assessments. Rochford District Council would be funding independent consultants to liaise with Anglian Water and assess the situation. Although it was noted that it was unusual to experience such problems at evenings and weekends, it was suggested that the situation may be due to lack of staff supervision at these times. It was requested that Anglian Water be advised of the ongoing issues evident during the evenings and weekends in order that this might be assessed by their consultants.

In response to a request from Mr C Hayes of Sludgwatch that the entire site be included in the monitoring, the Head of Environmental Services advised that Anglian Water would be seeking funding to install a stack monitoring device and that any findings from the proposed assessments could form a part of the forthcoming year's programme of works. The recent works had included refurbishment and replacement of the pumps.

In response to questions, the Head of Environmental Services advised that although a completely odour-free operation could not be required, Rochford District Council had an obligation to ensure that residents did not suffer nuisance. He confirmed that future issues raised would be further investigated and referred to Anglian Water. An update on the monitoring/modelling would be provided to the East Area Committee.

(3) Introducing Measures to Deal with Irresponsible Dog Ownership

The District Council's Head of Environmental Services gave a presentation to the meeting on the possibility of introducing measures to deal with irresponsible dog ownership. It was noted that the presentation formed part of the first phase of the public consultation process in this area.

In response to a concern raised regarding the lack of responses to stray dogs outside office hours, the Head of Environmental Services advised that the statutory responsibility for stray dogs was currently shared between the local authority and the Police: the Council had sole responsibility during office hours and the Police at other times. From April 2008 the local authority would have sole responsibility at all times and the Council would have to make a judgement on the level of service it would offer outside of normal working hours. The District Council currently had a contractor available to deal with stray dogs but it was stated that dangerous dogs were the responsibility of the Police. It was suggested that the matter be raised at the next East Area Committee meeting on 12 December 2007, when there would be a police presence.

The Head of Environmental Services advised that the Council would be working with dog owners to educate and promote responsible dog ownership.

A Parish Council representative expressed the hope that, in the longer term, funding would be found within the budget to deal with the problem of dog fouling.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:-

- A report would be made to the District Council's Executive Board with an analysis of the completed questionnaires regarding the

issue of responsible dog ownership. Final proposals would be published as part of the process of introducing any new powers.

- The District Council would retain any income from the fixed penalty notices given to dog owners. Fines resulting in a court case would be paid to central government via the court system.

At this point the Committee re-convened into formal session.

369 EAST AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the East Area Update. It was observed that it would be beneficial to include a timeframe for progress to be achieved against items in the Update.

Speed of traffic down West Street and South Street, Rochford (08/07)

The District Engineer would be asked to provide the results of the speed checks along these roads and the proposed liaison meeting between Essex County Council and Essex Police.

Metal pieces on the tarmac path running between the Co-op and Conway Avenue, Great Wakering (19/07)

An update would be provided at the next meeting.

Recycling in the Rochford District (21/07)

The Committee was advised that tenders for waste management and recycling had been received by the Council and were being evaluated. The new contracts would commence in April 2008 and provision for the kerbside collection of cardboard and plastic would be considered as part of the new contract. The Area Committees would be consulted when the detail of the new contracts had been determined.

Litter around the new Somerfields development, Rochford (22/07)

The Head of Environmental Services advised that the owner of the site had been contacted and had arranged for a cleaning contractor to clean the site on a weekly basis. It was noted, however, that this action was insufficient and the site must be cleaned more frequently; failing this, action would be taken by the District Council.

East Area Committee – 31 October 2007

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Chairman

Date

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Question	Response
<p>Rochford Parish Council</p> <p>Street Lighting and overgrown vegetation along Sutton Road</p> <p>Members have noticed the poor street lighting in Sutton Road, particularly from Warwick Drive to Purdeys Way. In addition, the footways, which are very narrow, are constantly overrun with vegetation.</p>	<p>Vegetation is generally cleared on an 'as needed' basis; this of course depends on the seasons and rate of growth. Essex County Council's Inspector is constantly touring the area and will order works for the Contractor to carry out as soon as possible. On occasion, growth of the hedge restricts the footway: contact is then made with the owner with a request to cut back.</p>
<p>Can Essex County Council Highways Department advise whether they are able to upgrade the lighting and what cutting regime is in place to deal with the vegetation?</p>	<p>The lighting will need to be looked at before a decision on possible upgrade can be given. If feasible, funding will have to be agreed through the Locally Determined Programme</p>
<p>Brian Efde, Essex Flood Forum</p> <p>Would Councillors who fail to disclose known flood hazards to residents and purchasers be in breach of the British Standards they are subject to?</p> <p>Can they be held liable for damages if insurers refuse to pay flood claims because known flood hazards were undisclosed? (Evidence available)</p>	<p>No the Council is not the responsible authority for flood risk issues, this rests with the Environment Agency.</p> <p>No, the Council has no statutory responsibility. A claim could only arise in circumstances where there has been a breach of statutory duty or negligence on the part of the Authority but even in that event liability would not necessarily follow and it would depend on the circumstances of each individual case.</p>
<p>Mrs M Sherwin, Great Wakering</p> <p>As it is not Government policy to build on a flood plain, can you tell us why two houses are to be built in New Road, Great Wakering, which is on a flood plain? This is similar to Millwood Park, which is also on a flood plain.</p>	<p>An update will be provided at the next meeting.</p>