

## **West Area Committee – 8 January 2008**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **West Area Committee** held on **8 January 2008** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J M Pullen  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr S P Smith

Cllr Mrs P Aves  
Cllr Mrs J Dillnutt  
Cllr K A Gibbs  
Cllr J E Grey  
Cllr A J Humphries  
Cllr T Livings

Cllr C J Lumley  
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley  
Cllr D Merrick  
Cllr Mrs J A Mockford  
Cllr Mrs M J Webster  
Cllr P F A Webster

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr K H Hudson.

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Cllr A Matthews	- Rawreth Parish Council
Cllr Ms P Weaver	- Rayleigh Town Council
P Wright	- County Highways
R Rowson	- RRAVS
S Edwards	- National Grid
P Hollingsworth	- National Grid
J Skinner	- National Grid

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Fowler	- Head of Information and Customer Services
S Scrutton	- Head of Planning and Transportation
M Howlett	- Senior Environmental Health Officer
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

## **1 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C I Black and R A Oatham.

### **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. It was noted, for the sake of clarity, with respect to page 8 of the Minutes relating to bus services that the District Council received a grant from the County Council for community transport. The District Council retained some of the grant for its taxi voucher scheme; the rest was given to Wyvern Community Transport.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Mrs P Aves, J E Grey, A J Humphries, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley, J M Pullen and Miss P Weaver each declared a personal interest in item 5 of the agenda, the Area Committee update report, by virtue of membership of Rayleigh Town Council.

Cllrs T Livings, Mrs J R Lumley and J M Pullen each declared a personal interest in item 4(2) of the agenda relating to the voluntary sector by virtue of being trustees of RRRAVS and Cllrs T Livings and Mrs J R Lumley each declared a personal interest in the same item by virtue of membership of the board of Wyvern Community Transport.

Cllr A Matthews declared a personal interest in item 5 of the agenda, the Area Committee update report, by virtue of being a Governor of St Nicholas School, Rawreth.

At this point the Committee adjourned the formal meeting to move into the Community Forum to hear contributions from members of the public.

## **2 COMMUNITY FORUM**

One request for information had been received in advance of the meeting and a document summarising this, together with further questions received, is appended.

At this point the Committee reconvened into formal session.

## **3 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES**

### **(1) Update on Highways Matters within the Rawreth and Rayleigh Areas**

Representatives from National Grid advised the meeting that, in order to comply with a HSE requirement, approximately 55km of cast iron gas pipes would be upgraded in Rayleigh, beginning in late January 2008. All properties with old, cast iron pipes would have these upgraded with smaller, plastic pipes, which could be fitted inside the originals. It was estimated that this would result in 2 weeks' disruption in streets affected, whilst pipes were replaced and gas meters put back. It was, however, stressed that any remedial works to pavements or roads would be done at the same time so that there would be no requirement for later works. Residents would be informed in writing of specific arrangements and would be provided with details of a 24-hour telephone line for any enquiries.

In response to questions the following was noted:-

- Properties built within the last 20 years would already have the newer plastic pipes, so disruption to these would be minimal; it was, however, possible that such properties could be linked to metal gas mains in the street.
- It was anticipated that the majority of works at individual residences would be completed within a day.
- Gas repairs at the corner of Fairland Close/Hambro Hill had been delayed due to the necessity of ordering specialist equipment; works which were unconnected with this project.
- During the works there would be close liaison with the Highways Authority, who would keep detailed records of all works undertaken, in order to pinpoint responsibility in the event of any future problems arising.
- Works would be conducted during weekdays between 0800 – 1800 hours.
- The works would not incur any costs to residents. Once works were completed, qualified gas engineers would enter all properties to check that all gas equipment was correctly connected and functioning properly. In the event of any safety issues being identified by engineers, faulty equipment would be switched off and capped. This could, on occasion, include heating equipment, but residents would be advised on an individual basis.
- Works could result in some disruption to traffic, as there would be some parking restrictions while works were conducted in High Street locations; every effort would be made to keep such disruption to a minimum.

In response to concerns expressed about changes in bus services, and in particular the no. 35 and no. 24 routes, officers advised that a representative from Essex County Council Passenger Transport would be attending the next meeting of this Committee on 14 February 2008 and would be asked to provide an update on these issues. District officers confirmed that they had been unaware of the change in the no. 24 bus route which had resulted in there being no bus service for residents living in part of Sweyne Park ward.

The County Highways officer confirmed that there were no major works to report on within Rawreth and Rayleigh, as the current financial year was drawing to a close. Lists of potential works for the new financial year had been sent to the District and Town and Parish Councils for consideration.

In response to concerns raised at the Central Area Committee recently about problems associated with unsuitable, heavy goods vehicles regularly using the Watery Lane/Beeches Road route, the County Highways officer advised that a survey had been conducted of HGV movements, in conjunction with Police monitoring of these roads. The Police had stopped a number of HGVs travelling along this route. Additional weight restriction signs had been erected on the road approaches, advising of alternative routes. In addition, County Highways would be working closely with Trading Standards to prosecute any heavy vehicles found travelling along this route.

**(2) Presentation on the Work of the Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Service (RRAVS) by Mr Ron Rowson, Chairman, RRAVS**

The following points were noted:-

- Rayleigh, Rochford & District Association for Voluntary Service was 20 years old.
- It was an umbrella organisation established to promote and support any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community, with currently over 80 organisations affiliated to it, including the Scouts, sports and health support organisations.
- There were two RRAVS offices, the volunteer centre based at Rayleigh Library, and another at 140a High Street, Rayleigh.
- The volunteer centre is manned by volunteers every weekday morning and a limited number of afternoons, providing a reference and support facility for the public and voluntary organisations within the District.
- RRAVS provided local voluntary and community groups with regular newsletters, training, funding advice and specialist services.
- RRAVS was associated with Voluntary Sector Training, which covers much of Essex. Courses cost £30 for which a refund bursary was available.
- RRAVS promotes networking between groups within the District, including both statutory and private sectors, supported by forums and open days.
- Last year the volunteer centre placed just under 60 volunteers within local organisations, including Rethink, Victim Support, MS Society, etc.

- RRAVS' funding officer was helping some 10 – 12 organisations to obtain grants through a wide range of funding agencies and a funding fair would be held as part of the next RRAVS open day on 15 February 2008, which would be attended by a number of grant funders, including the National Lottery.
- RRAVS was managing a young carers project, supported by the County Council, a computer familiarisation project for the over 60s, and has been very active in promoting the introduction of community transport.
- RRAVS was active in identifying gaps in service provision within the community by the voluntary sector, including, for example, advocacy and an adult carers group and would welcome any further ideas for new voluntary services.
- The future role of RRAVS should be to provide a strong volunteer core for the local community.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to RRAVS' finances, Mr Rowson advised that the core budget was £30,000 per annum, which covered all basic expenditure, including staffing, telephones, computers, etc. Funding for individual projects was ring fenced. Further information would be provided outside the meeting.

Responding to a supplementary question relating to funding, he confirmed that the Association received grants from the County Council, the Primary Care Trust and the District Council.

### **(3) Air Quality Review and Assessment (Third Round) – Second Update**

Members considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services updating Members on progress of the third review and assessment of air quality within Rochford District and providing a resolution for future air quality monitoring and assessment.

In response to Member questions, the following was noted:-

- The latest monitoring in the area to the east of Rawreth Industrial Estate has resulted in fewer breaches of the 24-hour mean; however, the annualisation factor used for 2007 significantly raised the predicted number of days that the PM<sub>10</sub> 24-hour mean would be passed. As a result, officers considered that there would be merit in commissioning a modelling report, similar to that conducted in Rayleigh High Street.
- If a modelling report concluded that the PM<sub>10</sub> objective had been exceeded, the Council would have to declare an Air Quality

Management Area (AQMA), which would necessitate the introduction of measures to resolve the problem.

- Monitoring was not being undertaken in the wider vicinity of Hockley Road, High Road, London Road, Rayleigh as desktop studies had not indicated that problems existed in these areas.
- Progressively stricter European vehicle emission standards for new-build cars should lead to improvements in air quality in congested locations.
- It was possible to address emissions from older vehicles, such as buses; Local Authorities could hold informal discussions with bus operators and request that newer buses be used on busy routes. This could also be one of a number of formal measures introduced as a result of the declaration of an AQMA.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That further reports be submitted following the receipt of responses from Defra and submission of reports from ASDA, to include updates on the progress of the modelling of PM10 at and around Rawreth Industrial Estate and with quotes for monitoring equipment, as appropriate. (HES)

## **4 WEST AREA UPDATE**

The Committee received the West Area update.

### **23/07 - Unauthorised Travellers' Site on A1245 (Minute 287/07)**

Clearance of the unauthorised travellers' site on the A130 in the borough of Chelmsford had been possible as a result of planning permission being granted for an authorised travellers' site elsewhere.

### **25/07 – Improvements to the Wet Side Changing Rooms and Showers at Clements Hall Leisure Centre (Minute 340/07)**

No update had yet been received from Virgin Active with respect to a capital bid for Clements Hall. A partnership meeting was, however, scheduled for 25 January.

### **29/07 – Status of Priory Chase (Minute 340/07)**

The developer would be asked again to arrange for the street lights to be switched on as quickly as practicable. It usually took at least a year for roads to be adopted, as monitoring was necessary; however, given that the road

served a leisure centre, a school and a major supermarket, it was not envisaged that the adoption would be a protracted affair.

### **32/07 – Speeding and Parking Problems in Little Wheatley Chase (Minute 340/07)**

There were currently no formal parking restrictions in force within Little Wheatley Chase. A further public consultation would soon be undertaken on a series of parking restrictions proposed for this location. An informal consultation had already taken place and, as a result of residents' comments, a revised scheme might be considered.

### **38/07 – Extension to Double Yellow Lines in Picton Gardens/Picton Close, Rayleigh (Minute 340/07)**

Highways officers had recommended an extension to double yellow lines in this location; once this had been ratified it was likely that the lining could be introduced in March 2008.

### **39/07 – Site Visit to the Junctions of The Chase and Grove Road with Eastwood Road, Rayleigh (Minute 340/07)**

Highways officers would investigate the junction with Trinity Road and would provide an update to Cllr Humphries.

### **45/07 – Speeding and Traffic-Related Problems in Rawreth Lane (Minute 339/07)**

The possibility of a traffic regulation order for Rawreth Lane for a 40mph speed limit at the western end was being investigated by County Highways. Rawreth Parish Council had also requested the introduction of a 50mph speed limit for the middle section of Rawreth Lane. A speed and volume survey would accordingly be undertaken along Rawreth Lane.

### **47/07 – Youngsters Drinking Asda-Branded Alcohol Outside St Nicholas School, Rawreth (Minute 409/07)**

The Police should be urged to consider calling for a licensing review of Asda, Rawreth Lane.

### **41/07 – Graffiti and Damage to Children's Play Areas (Minute 339/07)**

Concern was expressed that under current Council policy graffiti was removed from street furniture on a monthly basis, whereas non-offensive graffiti could take up to 3 years to be removed from children's play equipment. Members concurred that there would be merit in a review of Council policy.

On a Motion moved by Cllr S P Smith and seconded by Cllr Mrs J A Mockford it was:-

**Resolved**

That the Executive Board be asked to review Council policy with respect to the removal of non-offensive graffiti from children's play equipment and to report back to the West Area Committee. (HES)

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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



### Appendix

#### Question

#### Response

D Sperring, Rayleigh

On 18 January 2007 a meeting was held between representatives of Rayleigh Town Council and Rochford District Council, relating to the future and management of the Dutch Cottage. During the meeting Rayleigh Town Council sought to become custodian trustees and be part of the management committee and a report was subsequently submitted to the next Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee of Rochford District Council. At their meeting on 15 March 2007 (item 2.6 on page 13.1) the Committee voted to maintain the management of the cottage under the control of Rochford District Council in conjunction with the Trust and trustees. However, the Committee did agree that a representative of Rayleigh Town Council be invited to join the management committee.

As the property is subject to trust it does not form part of the Council's housing stock and is not included in the transfer programme. Will you please advise me of the present status of the cottage, who is currently managing it and who will do so in the future, and finally, why has no representative from Rayleigh Town Council been invited to join the cottage management committee since the meeting of 15 March 2007?

The Dutch Cottage remains in the ownership of the District Council and is held subject to a charitable trust, with the District Council being the custodian trustee, having responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the property. There has been no alteration to this position and no changes are proposed, other than the Council agreeing to include a representative from the Town Council on the Management Committee of the Trust. A legal process has to be followed to bring this into effect and the Charity Commission has had to be consulted on the proposal to amend the constitution in this way. This is in the course of being finalised and it is expected that it will be completed shortly. There are no other changes to the Trust arrangements or the Council's responsibilities in respect of the property.

A Mayor, Rayleigh

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

The Council is to be applauded for its efforts to greatly increase recycling in the district; what can be done to further reduce the number of carrier bags being used and to discourage shops and supermarkets from giving them out as a matter of course?

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### Question

### Response

V Fitzgerald, Rayleigh

Do we have any outcome from the questionnaire re: dog owner responsibility? Can we have an assurance that no draconian measures will be adopted with regard to dog nuisance without full and proper consultation with all dog owners?

A report on dog regulations will be considered by the Council's Executive Board at its meeting on 9 January 2009, which members of the public are welcome to attend.

A Mayor, Rayleigh

The Executive Board of Basildon Council includes Members of an opposition party 'to make for a better democratic process'. Does the Council think that there is benefit in this system for Rochford District Council?

The composition of this Council's Executive Board has been formally agreed by Full Council.

J Warner, Rayleigh

Regarding graffiti and damage in play areas in Hartford Close. I do not consider the timescale for re-painting acceptable. Why should young children have to accept lower standards than those used for the general public for street furniture? Has anyone actually visited these 2 play areas? Would they want their children or grandchildren to use them? I suggest a site visit is made with Jackie Dillnutt and policy urgently reviewed.

This issue was discussed at the last Area Committee meeting. There is a set policy with respect to the re-painting of play equipment. Officers would check the sites again.

I would also urge action to tidy up and maintain Pearsons Farm Estate in general. The whole area looks unkempt. We have no litter or dog bins. It is in general need of a re-vamp and some TLC.

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

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### Question

### Response

J Warner, Rayleigh

What is the Council doing to secure the long-term future of the Grange Community Centre? I cannot speak too highly of this facility. It is a wonderful asset to the 'lower' end of Rayleigh and any moves to undermine it would be detrimental to the community. It's in a good position, has adequate parking and is well managed. Or is it seen as a future building site? I sincerely hope not.

This issue has been raised previously; there is no threat to the future of the Grange Community Centre.

L Hopkins, Rawreth

A driver of a no. 3 bus from Chelmsford to Southend has told passengers that the service will cease at the end of this month. Can you please clarify this?

An update will be provided at the next meeting, at which a representative from County Council Passenger Transport will be in attendance.

R Coombs, Rayleigh

Why is there no record of accidents last October in Rawreth Lane? How many other accidents have happened and not been recorded?

This issue will be raised with the Police and an update provided at the next meeting.

Trees have been broken and there's an increase in rubbish at the leisure centre.

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Rain is soaking pedestrians, including children walking along Rawreth Lane.

County Highways will check that the gulleys in Rawreth Lane are working properly. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

G Brindle, Rayleigh

Was air pollution monitored on Crown Hill (an area with constant queues of traffic)?

No monitoring was undertaken at Crown Hill but the modelling work did cover this area; it is intended to place diffusion tubes at the top of Crown Hill.