

East Area Committee – 11 November 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the **East Area Committee** held on **11 November 2009** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr C G Seagers
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe

Cllr J P Cottis
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr K J Gordon

Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs P Shaw	-	Ashingdon Parish Council
Cllr J McPherson	-	Great Wakering Parish Council
C I G Westley	-	Essex Police
J Gilham	-	Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
A James	-	Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
D Fairweather	-	Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Bourne	-	Head of Community Services
S Hollingworth	-	Team Leader (Planning Policy)
M Power	-	Committee Administrator

291 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs T J Capon and T E Goodwin, Cllr P A Capon (Stambridge Parish Council), Cllr D Whittingham (Paglesham Parish Council), Cllr J Bond (Rochford Parish Council), K Perring (Great Wakering Parish Council) and Mr B Summerfield (Barling Magna and Sutton Parish Councils).

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

292 COMMUNITY FORUM

Questions raised during the Community Forum and the responses given are summarised in the appendix to the Minutes.

In response to a question received from a resident regarding the proposed erection of handrails on the boundary of the toilets in High Street, Great

Wakering, the Council's Asset Manager would make contact with the resident with the answer required.

With reference to a question regarding potential flooding issues, the Chairman pointed out that this or very similar questions have now been asked on a number of occasions with full and obviously similar answers being provided. It was not the intention of this Committee to continue to address questions of this nature in the future.

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

293 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Crime and Disorder in the East of the District

Chief Inspector Glen Westley, Essex Police, provided an update on crime and disorder in the East Area of the District, including information about the public's right to use reasonable force when intervening where a crime is being committed or making an arrest.

Although what constitutes reasonable force is a matter for the authorities or a court to decide, recent court cases provide a level of clarity as to what the public can do in the event of witnessing crime or disorder. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) advises that members of the public can protect themselves or another person as long as they are acting 'honestly' and 'instinctively'. The degree of force that can be used would depend on the seriousness of the crime being committed. The CPS indicates that a 'rugby tackle' or single blow would be considered reasonable. Websites that would provide further information on this subject are: www.protectingyourself.co.uk and www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

The Police will always welcome information from the public relating to witnessed crime that could be used as evidence.

In response to questions, Chief Inspector Westley provided the following information:-

- It is acceptable for members of the public to detain someone who is causing trouble as long as the action taken is considered 'reasonable' and 'honest'. Any 'citizen's arrest' should be balanced against the risk to the person making the 'arrest'. According to CPS statistics, the number of householders prosecuted for using unreasonable force when confronting an intruder is minimal.
- The importance of keeping doors and windows locked, valuables out of sight and lights visible in houses at night was emphasised.
- The Police would check whether there had been any reported incidents of people being hit by car wing mirrors while walking along the very narrow

section of Sutton Road that runs between Purdey's Industrial Estate and Shopland Road.

- Although the crime statistics stated that there had been no drug-related crime in the area, a number of convictions and cautions relating to drug-related crime had in fact taken place during the period. It was felt that the wording 'Substance Misuse' on the statistics was also misleading and this would be changed on future reports. Further work would be undertaken to make sure that future statistics were accurate and meaningful.
- It would not be possible to change the ten items included by central Government in the 'basket of crimes' included in the statistics.
- It was appreciated that it may sometimes be difficult to recognise suspects from photos printed in newspapers that have been taken from CCTV footage of them. This can happen when a suspect moves and the image blurs or when youngsters are wearing 'hoodies'. However, often when further details of the offence are included in the newspaper alongside the photo people are able to recognise the picture, set as it is in context. CCTV is often effective as a deterrent and also has a track record for providing assistance in Police investigations. The CCTV systems owned and operated by the stores can vary in quality and definition and are not within the control of the Police.
- The figures in the crime and disorder statistics do not seem to reflect the actual incidents occurring in the Great Wakering area. This will be looked into and rectified in future statistics.
- The Police had recruited three additional Neighbourhood Specialist Officers (NSO's) for the east of the District and three for Rayleigh. The Police recognise that villages are just as important in terms of having a visible police presence as the centre of Rochford.
- A resident was thanked for his offer to erect CCTV on to the wall of his house in central Great Wakering.
- Police have the authority to take action if they receive reports of fly tipping on private land and will deal with any reported incidents.

(2) Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

The Committee received a presentation from John Gilham, Chief Executive of the Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- Southend Hospital has University status because of its links with Barts and the London NHS Trust in the rotation of young doctors between the two hospitals.

- Porta-cabins are still at the front of the hospital site and will be demolished when it is possible to reprovide within other space in the main hospital. The ability to generate this space is linked to planned future site redevelopment plans. The Trust's goal also over the next three years is to move 60% of current out-patient activity off the hospital site. This is subject to the Trust being able to use space within the future sites planned by NHS SEE.
- All new hospital staff with patient contact undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.
- Currently some of the oncology services are being moved closer to where the renal unit is situated. This will help with achieving a degree of closer co-location. The recent relocation of staff parking to the new parking facility block should also result in a general improvement to car parking for patients, some of which is located close to the new unit being built and the existing renal unit.
- Specific work was being undertaken to reduce waiting/response times for prescriptions from the hospital's pharmacy prior to patients being discharged. An Emergency Care pathway had been set up to evaluate what happens to patients at each stage of their care. The hospital has also recently established a Bereavement Suite on site.

(3) Rochford Area Action Plan

The Council's Planning Policy Team Leader gave a presentation on the Rochford Area Action Plan (RAAP) issues and options discussion document.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- The recent public information day on the RAAP had been held on a Monday because of the availability of the Women's Institute hall, which was located in the centre of Rochford. A further information day was scheduled for the following Monday at the Women's Institute hall in Rochford. It was recognised that one-off events are not sufficient and that information days were only part of a wide range of consultation methods employed. An article to raise awareness and highlight the public consultation on the RAAP issues and options discussion document had been included in Rochford District Matters, which was delivered to each home in the District. Press releases had been issued and letters/emails had been sent to those on the Council's mailing list. Information was also available on the Council's website as a 'Hot Topic'.
- Advertising of these public information days had been via press releases, the internet and posters placed in local shop windows. It was requested that, in addition, notices be placed in the Great Wakering area for future events.

- The Council had received central Government funding to look at opportunities for enhancement of Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley town centres. Development opportunities for Rochford town centre had been outlined in the issues and options discussion document but there was no requirement for the Council to implement any of the options if this is what the public wished. The main purpose of this document was to engender local discussion and encourage people to submit their views which would be used to develop more detailed proposals at a later date. With a blueprint for the town centre in place that has been agreed by Rochford residents, the Council will be able to adopt a more structured approach when determining planning applications, ensuring development reflects local issues and needs.
- If there is no master plan in place development applications will be dealt with on a more piecemeal basis, rather than complying with an agreed vision for the town centre.
- The RAAP will sit under the umbrella of the Core Strategy document as part of the Local Development Framework.

294 EAST AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the East Area update.

H7/09 – Street lighting in Rochford

This item refers to street lighting in Hall Road, Rochford.

295 MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE EXECUTIVE/ISSUES TO REFER TO THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee endorsed the observation of the Chairman that, with regard to questions from the public, it would be appropriate for Area Committees to have a similar facility to that available to Full Council whereby a question can be rejected if it is substantially the same as a question that has been put at a meeting in the past six months.

Recommended to the Executive

That the Lead Officer in consultation with the Chairman can reject a question that has been submitted by a member of the public to an Area Committee meeting if it is substantially the same as a question that has been put to a Committee meeting in the past six months. (HICS)

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Chairman

Date

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Question

B Efde, Great Wakering

Further to the statement by County Cllr Roy Pearson that 'We can't tell people living on flood plains what's been done to them as they would become upset' and former Emergency Planning officer's statement that 'the Council is under no obligation to pre-ward all prospective buyers or owners that their insurance policy could be jeopardised by the existing flood risk. These are not Council obligations.' Does the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 allow this behaviour and, if so, why?

Mrs A Holmes, Canewdon

Please could you explain to me why there is no late bus to Canewdon from Sweyne Park School. Both of my children attend the school and it was chosen as a catchment school. The bus takes them to school and brings them home each day, however there is no late bus so they cannot attend any after school clubs unless a parent can pick them up. This is obviously very difficult, particularly as many parents work full time. It has also come to my attention that there is a late bus to Hullbridge from the school to allow their children to attend the after school clubs.

This appears to be a discrimination against Canewdon, This bus then goes back to its depot in Rochford and passes both Canewdon Road and Brays Lane both are turning into Canewdon. Could this bus not detour to Canewdon before it goes back to

Response

In relation to Mr Prior's previous statement, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places no obligation on the Council to pre-warn all prospective buyers or owners that their insurance policy could be jeopardised by the existing flood risk.

However, Rochford District Council does advise that the Environment Agency is responsible for flood risk in England and Wales and provides links to information through its website at:- http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/advise/flood_risk.aspx.

Rochford District Council would also encourage all households to sign up to the Environment Agency's floodline warnings direct service.

The County Council has a legal duty to provide transport for children who meet certain criteria. It does this in a number of ways, including purchasing tickets for use on existing bus services or setting up dedicated transport where this is not available. The County Council is only obliged to provide transport to and from school at the normal school times, not for any out of hours' activities.

In the case of children from Hullbridge, tickets are purchased for use on the regular bus service. The complication here is that the main service, route 20, is operated by First but the additional journeys that run at school times are on the 20X, which is operated by Stephensons. Tickets are valid on both routes and children from Hullbridge have the benefit of making use of later journeys on service 20.

Question

its depot or at least drop Canewdon children at the end of these roads so they can either walk from there (very dangerous) or be picked up? At least it would be nearer than having to go all the way to Rayleigh. Of course the ideal solution would be for funding to be put in place to arrange for a bus to be supplied as a late bus for the children of Canewdon, or failing that the Hullbridge bus being made available for the children.

Response

There is no regular bus service between Canewdon and Sweyne Park school, so dedicated transport is provided, but this will not operate to cater for after school activities. As stated, there is no obligation on the County Council to provide transport for out of hours' activities; this will need to be considered by the school. The County Council has been in contact with Stephenson's, who, it is understood, are in discussion with the school with regard to the provision of a later bus for Canewdon.

Susan Ticehurst, Canewdon

My daughter and son attend Sweyne Park School. There is provision for children in Hullbridge of a late bus running from the school to Hullbridge to accommodate children who attend after school clubs. Canewdon children are discriminated against as a similar service is not provided for them. After dropping the Hullbridge children the bus travels back to its Rochford depot passing the end of the Canewdon road and Brays Lane. Why can't the Canewdon children use this bus which would need to detour via Canewdon or drop them by Ashingdon schools? They are not allowed to even use the Hullbridge late bus unless they pay. Picking up from Ashingdon Schools or Hullbridge would have a far less environmental impact than the current situation whereby parents have to drive all the way to the school to collect.

Answer provided above