

Minutes of the meeting of the **Transportation & Environmental Services Committee** held on **16 November 2000** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs J E Ford

Vice Chairman (in the Chair)

Cllr R Adams

Cllr V H Leach

Cllr R S Allen

Cllr R A Pearson

Cllr K A Gibbs

Cllr Mrs L I V Phillips

Cllr Mrs J M Giles

Cllr S P Smith

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr M G B Starke

Cllr J E Grey

Cllr P D Stebbing

Cllr D R Helson

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr A Hosking

Cllr D A Weir

Cllr C C Langlands

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr D M Ford

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr G Fox

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr Mrs J Helson

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
S J Clarkson	Head of Revenue & Housing Management
M J Goodman	Solicitor
S Scrutton	Head of Planning Services
D Timson	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
G P Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
Mrs M A Martin	Committee Administrator

359 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr V H Leach declared a pecuniary interest in Minute 99 of the Planning Policy Sub-Committee meeting of 2 November 2000, by virtue of his position as Chairman of Governors of Rochford Primary School and agreed to leave the meeting should this item be discussed.

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item on Essex Estuaries Marine Site by virtue of being the Member representative on the Crouch Harbour Authority.

360 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 September 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Minute 279 - Minutes of Sub-Committees

Minute 100 - Environmental Health Sub-Committee - 5 September 2000. The Head of Planning Services confirmed that the StAR Partnership had agreed to take on the administration of the Rochford Farmers' Market.

Minute 142 - Transportation Sub-Committee - 6 September 2000. In response to a Member question relating to the re-opening date of the Bellingham Lane/Mill Hall Car Park, the Head of Revenue and Housing Management confirmed that the scheduled date for the re-opening of the car park was mid-December 2000.

361 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Land at Golden Cross Parade

The Chairman informed Members that this item would be discussed after the exclusion of the press and public.

362 REPORT OF URGENT ACTION: URBAN CAPACITY STUDY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which informed Members of urgent action taken under the procedure agreed by Council on 25 July 2000 (Minute 254/00).

The Planning Policy Sub-Committee had considered on 11 October 2000 a report which provided details of the various tenders received from consultants to undertake the Urban Capacity Study.

Given the timetable for the publication of the Deposit Draft of the Replacement Local Plan, Members had agreed that the selected consultants should begin work on the study as quickly as possible.

Members noted that the necessary Member agreement to take urgent action had been obtained and the consultants had been appointed.

363 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee received the Minutes of the following Sub-Committees and considered the recommendations contained therein:-

(1) Planning Policy Sub-Committee - 11 October 2000

Minute 94 - Urban Capacity Study - Consideration of Bids

Resolved

That Broadway Malyan be appointed to undertake an Urban Capacity Study for the district (HPS)

(2) Transportation Sub-Committee - 1 November 2000

Minute 150 - Secured Car Park Award Scheme

Resolved

That attendance at future meetings of the Association of Chief Police Officers on the Secured Car Park Award Scheme and any similar meetings requiring the attendance of the Chairman of the Transportation Sub-Committee be an approved duty for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances. (HRHM)

Minute 151 - Bar-N-Bus Vehicle at Websters Way Car Park, Rayleigh

Resolved

- (1) That permission be granted for the Bar-N-Bus vehicle to continue to park in Websters Way Car Park on Thursday evenings for a further period of 6 months. (HRHM)
- (2) That a verbal update be provided to the Transportation & Environmental Services Committee on the illegal operation of the Burger Van in Websters Way Car Park (HLS)

The Solicitor confirmed that the Burger Van was trading from the Websters Way Car Park in contravention of the Council's Car Parking Order and that a prosecution had been initiated.

Minute 152 - Dial-a-Ride Members Meeting

Resolved

- (1) That £31,600 be included in the 2001/2 Draft Revenue Budget for the contribution to the Scheme.

- (2) That support be given to the Partnership to retain the Registration Fee at £5.00 and Journey Fare at £1.20.
- (3) That the following amendment to the penultimate paragraph of point 7.3 of the Minutes of the meeting of the SEEDAR Partners held on 2 October 2000 be formally recorded at its next meeting:

"Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn advised that, as part of the annual budget review, Rochford may in future consider it's policy on giving grants to voluntary organisations that were not prepared to put their vehicles in the pool".
(HRHM)

Minute 153 - Efficiency of Lighting in Council Car Parks

Resolved

To recommend to the Community Safety Sub-Committee that the funding of £150 for the Secured Car Park Scheme report only be progressed if the Head of Revenue and Housing Management is satisfied as to the independence of the origins of the report. (HRHM)

(3) Planning Policy Sub-Committee - 2 November 2000

Minute 97 - Planning Applications and Archaeological Investigations

Resolved

That no alteration be suggested to the current Rochford District Local Plan Policies UC12-15 at this stage as part of the overall Local Plan review process, but that the County Archaeologist's views be requested on the amendments requested by Members, with this information being reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Minute 98 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Resolved

That the Head of Service's report as considered by the Sub-Committee, together with Members' comments as outlined above, form the basis of this Council's comments on the DETR's consultation paper "Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Encouraging Positive Partnerships". (HPS)

Minute 99 - Rochford Hospital - Redevelopment Proposals

Resolved

That the South Essex Mental Health and Community Care Trust be informed that Rochford District Council supports, in principle, the redevelopment proposals for Rochford Hospital, subject to their consideration by the Local Planning Authority in due course, and further consideration being given to the provision of the proposed additional car parking. (HPS)

364 PRESENTATION BY RAILTRACK/FIRST GREAT EASTERN - RAYLEIGH STATION

The Chairman welcomed John Wilson from Railtrack and Steve Whitehead from First Great Eastern to the meeting.

In answer to Member questions/comments, Mr Wilson of Railtrack confirmed that:-

- it had been necessary to clear vegetation while work is being carried out on the downside embankment - a combined contract had been let and the re-planting would take place at the same time as the ramp is installed.
- the new ramp on the downside would be longer with a gentler gradient and the surrounding area would be landscaped. Vegetation would have to be removed and subsequently replaced; the likely timescale would be early January/February 2001 because re-tendering would be necessary.
- the replacement of vegetation should deal with the complaints that had been received by Members regarding excessive noise during the works.
- it was not normal practice to notify local residents of programmed works unless heavy or noisy machinery would be operating at unsocial hours, but that he would ensure a letter would be sent to residents in neighbouring roads to inform them of the latest situation.
- although no date had yet been agreed, the upside platform would be partly rebuilt as part of stage 1 of platform reconstruction in the region during the financial year 2001/2. The Council would be informed when a date was known.
- there were no plans relating to a bus interchange.
- he would confirm to the Council who owns the access road leading to the disabled ramp at Rochford station, as there was a potential problem with parked cars.
- as a result of the recent accident at Hatfield 83 miles of track need replacing in this Region. The train and freight operators have met and a regime of 8

hours of track possession each night had been established. Much more possession would be possible over the Christmas period. The timetable would return to a closer to normal schedule during early January 2001. Realistically it would not be possible to return to a normal timetable until May 2001.

In answer to Member questions/comments, Mr Whitehead of First Great Eastern confirmed that:-

- he had been pleased to note Members' comments about the improvements since the ramp had been completed at Rochford station, together with improved safety features of fencing and padlocks.
- the colour of the ramp is blue in line with Great Eastern's corporate colour of Oxford Blue.
- there were no plans for automatic ticket barriers at Hockley, Rochford or Rayleigh stations.
- part of the franchise commitment had been to put in new communication systems at stations with the aim of helping the hard of hearing; this had been jointly funded with Railtrack.
- a central control in London was now able to adjust the volume; generally this would be held at 50% during the night until 7 am and at 70% during the day time.

The Head of Housing, Health & Community Care was able to report that, although there had originally been a number of complaints from local residents regarding the noise nuisance from the tannoy system, the local residents group seemed to be much happier with the current situation. Refinements such as the re-orientating of speakers and zoning of announcements were still being investigated and may lead to further improvement. Members thanked the Head of Service for the work officers had undertaken on their behalf.

365 REPORT ON RAYLEIGH TOWN CENTRE REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the District Manager, Transportation & Operation Services, Essex County Council which related to the effects of the Traffic Regulation Order Variations for Rayleigh High Street. The variations had been agreed by Rochford District Council on 22 June 1999.

Rayleigh Town Centre Monitoring Panel had considered the review and identified the issues and possible measures to resolve the outstanding problems. Where it was considered a reasonable solution should be investigated the item was

detailed in the Appendix to the report. Details relating to the scope of the survey and the factual results were contained in a further Appendix to the report.

Members were informed that it had not been possible to address all the issues fully and requested that this Committee agree that the Rayleigh Town Centre Monitoring Panel continue to meet to complete the review of the scheme.

Members were disappointed to note that the Police had responded to the consultation regarding the Town Centre Review with three differing opinions and therefore felt it was difficult to accept as fact the comments made.

On a Motion moved by Cllr V H Leach and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the issues listed in Appendix A to the report be investigated further by the Rayleigh Town Centre Monitoring Panel and that a list of implementable measures with estimates be brought to the meeting of this Committee on 25 January 2001.
- (2) That the Rayleigh Town Centre Monitoring Panel continues to meet, if necessary beyond 31 December 2000, to complete the review of the scheme.
- (3) That investigation be carried out into the feasibility of the exit from the Station Car Park being made two way. (Area Highways)

366 A POLICY FOR RAIL TRANSPORTATION IN ESSEX

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which detailed the rail policy prepared by Essex County Council to accord with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan.

The Essex Rail Policy is an integral part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and sets out the role that railways might play in the overall vision for transport in Essex. The 16 policies included in the Rail Policy were appended to the report.

Resolved

That the County Council be informed that Rochford District Council supports the principles outlined in the policy for rail transport in Essex. (HPS)

367 OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC ORDERS IN DIRECT DISTRICTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which sought Members' views on the future arrangements for dealing with Traffic Orders in the District. As a result of the new structure, County Members had requested clarification of the existing arrangements for the consideration of objections to statutory notices and orders.

The current arrangement is for the District Council to consider any objection to a proposal, but the final decision and issue of the order rests with the County Council as the responsible authority.

Members were informed that the proposal under investigation was for the final decision to be made by this Committee. The issue of indemnity together with other points of detail would be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

Members welcomed the proposal and it was:-

Resolved

That Essex County Council be informed that Rochford District Council supports in principle the proposed changes for dealing with Traffic Orders, but would wish to see full details of the scheme and be satisfied about the legal aspects, before making a final commitment. (HPS)

368 PROPOSED DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH 19, BARLING

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which asked Members to consider the request by the owner of Little Wakering Hall, Barling for the diversion of part of footpath 19 which passed through his property.

This Council had received an application from E & M Design Partnerships, acting on behalf of Mr G Vidler, the owner of Little Wakering Hall, for the diversion of footpath 19 to a route which does not run through the grounds of Little Wakering Hall. Authority was further sought to divert the footpath as shown on the appended map.

The County's Area Manager, Transportation & Operation Services confirmed that it would be difficult to make sufficient resources available to enforce the request made by Members. In answer to a Member question, it was confirmed that the parishes of Barling and Great Wakering would be informed of the action to be taken.

On a Motion moved by Cllr R S Allen and seconded by Cllr P D Stebbing it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That subject to E & M Design Partnership bearing the cost of any necessary accommodation works and all the Council's expenses recoverable under the Local Government (recovery of costs for Public Path Order) Regulations 1993 as amended, the proposal to divert footpath 19 to the route ABDE as indicated on the map appended to the report, be approved in principle.
- (2) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making and confirmation of a Public Path Diversion Order under the terms of Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980.
- (3) That, while the diversion is being advertised and out to consultation, the original route be re-established and unobstructed until the confirmation of the diversion is authorised. (HLS)

369 REVIEW OF CAR PARK CHARGING POLICY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which asked Members to consider the charging policy for fee paying car parks as part of the budget making process for 2001/2.

A full review of the car park service had commenced in September 1999 and a revised scale of charges had been agreed at a meeting of Extraordinary Council on 28 June 2000 (Minute 212/00). The new charges had been introduced on 11 September 2000. On 21 September 2000 Members had agreed to a further full review of the Council's Car Park Charging Policy as part of the 2001/2 budget process.

Members were informed that the first week of operation of the new tariff had coincided with a national fuel shortage due to industrial action. This had resulted in reduced usage of the Council's Car Parks. At the time of writing the report, there had only been five weeks of normal usage and additionally during that time, the Bellingham Lane Car Park had suffered disruption due to demolition and improvement works. It was difficult, therefore, during this time to accurately forecast potential usage and income. However, based on the information to hand, the likely yield for a full year at the new tariff would be in the region of £434,000.

It was evident, however, that with the lack of a "one-hour ticket" option, more motorists were choosing to purchase the half-hour ticket rather than the two hour ticket as predicted in the financial model. The new charge structure did not, therefore, appear to be having the desired effect of encouraging motorists to stay longer in the town centres. No substantial increase had been noted in the number of penalty tickets issued.

Members noted that the views of the local Chambers of Trade and Commerce had originally been taken into account when determining the pricing bands, namely that:-

- the Hockley Chamber of Trade and Commerce had favoured the removal of the 30 minute short stay band
- the Rayleigh and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce supported the view that abolition of the half hour band would be detrimental to trade.
- In both instances, when requested to comment, the Chambers had put forward scales of charges which they considered ought to apply for the whole of the District.

At the Southend Road, Hockley car park, currently with a minimum stay of two hours, there was now evidence of ticket swapping. To date, 15 complaints had been received from members of the public with regard to the charging policy at this particular car park.

Members were informed that the Civic Suite Car Park, Rayleigh would shortly be under the control of the Car Parking Order and that visitors would need to obtain a permit to use the casual parking area to the front of the Civic Suite. These could be obtained from the Civic Suite receptionist and would be for a timed period.

Resolved

- (1) That no further action be taken to revise the Car Park tariff at present.
- (2) That the Hockley Car Park tariff be brought in line with the rest of the District. (HRHM)

370 MECHANICAL SWEEPER

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which informed Members of the performance of the Applied Mechanical Sweeper in Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford, and sought agreement to extend the use of the equipment to Ashingdon, Hullbridge and Great Wakering.

Members were reminded that Rochford District Council had previously undertaken the cleansing of its pavement areas by using manual cleansing equipment. This operation had proved time consuming and labour intensive.

As a result of a successful trial period earlier this year, Members had approved the Capital budget for the Street Cleansing Contractor to purchase a mechanical

sweeper. This had been brought into operation on 25 July 2000. Initially it had been used in Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley town centres.

Officers had inspected the additional three areas under consideration and concluded that it would be feasible to carry out a weekly sweep in each of these areas without any detrimental effect on current usage. The current street sweeping contract ends in March 2001.

Members were concerned at the amount of times that this machine had been seen parked and unattended, particularly in Rayleigh town centre, and that it had rarely been seen in Rochford. Members were of the opinion that its current usage needed to be monitored more closely before considering extending its use to other areas.

Members were informed that:-

- the operatives contracted hours were between 7 am and 3.30 pm
- it takes approximately 3 - 4 hours to clean the High Street, Rayleigh including lunch and breaks
- the operator is entitled to a half hour lunch break which he takes after one complete sweep and a refreshment break as and when required
- 900 inspections had been carried out over a period of three months.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Cllr V H Leach it was:-

Resolved

That a full report on the current usage of the Mechanical Sweeper be brought back to this Committee, including details of exact times of operation. (CD(F&ES))

371 ESSEX ESTUARIES MARINE SITE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which alerted Members to new statutory duties imposed on relevant authorities in respect of the above and to seek the necessary funding required to fulfil the Council's obligations.

The letter appended to the report set out the details of the actions which are required as a result of the coastal area from Jaywick to Shoeburyness being designated as the Essex Estuaries European Marine Site. If this District were to participate in this initiative, it should be on the basis that all of the other relevant authorities made an appropriate contribution. Members were informed that provision would need to be made in the draft revenue budget in the sum of £4,000 per annum for a period of three years.

Members were concerned at the additional statutory responsibilities that were increasingly being placed on local authorities without any appropriate recompense from the Government.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Cllr Mrs J M Giles, it was:-

Resolved

That no financial contribution be made towards the Essex Estuaries Initiative. (CD(F&ES))

372 PETITION ALLEGING NOISE NUISANCE FROM CLAY PIGEON SHOOT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which reminded Members that a petition had been received from a group of local residents which alleged noise nuisance from a clay pigeon shoot operated by Rochford Gun Club from a field in Ironwell Lane, Rochford. The matter had been referred to this Committee by the meeting of Council on 24 October 2000.

Members were informed that monitoring of noise levels had taken place at the meeting of the Club on 5 November 2000 and that further monitoring was being planned on one occasion thereafter. A report would be brought to this Committee on 25 January 2001.

Resolved

That a full report be brought to the next meeting of this Committee. (HHHCC)

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 9 and 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

373 STAMBRIDGE SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS WORKING GROUP

Note: The Chairman admitted this as an item of urgent business, due to the early need for re-consideration of Minute 98/00.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs J E Ford and seconded by Cllr G Fox it was:-

Resolved

That the Stambridge Sewage Treatment Works Working Group continue to meet for a further 6 months following the announcement by Anglian Water that it is their intention to cease the production of N-Viro product some time during the last week of December 2000 and the first week of January 2001. (HHHCC)

374 WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Note: The Chairman admitted this as an item of urgent business due to the early date of the next meeting of the Waste Management Advisory Board.

The Head of Health, Housing and Community Care reported that a further Member nomination could be made to attend the next meeting of the Waste Management Advisory Board, with the status of observer.

Resolved

- (1) That Cllr A Hosking be nominated in addition to Cllr R A Pearson to attend the next meeting of the Waste Management Advisory Board.
- (2) That attendance at these meetings is an approved duty for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances. (HHHCC)

375 LAND AT GOLDEN CROSS PARADE

At a meeting of the Transportation Sub-Committee on 7 June 2000, it had been recommended that the Head of Legal Services commence negotiations for the acquisition of and agreements for the terms of lease of the small parcel of land in front of 1, 2 and 3 Golden Cross Parade, Ashingdon from the owner, Rimex Ltd, to provide improved parking facilities for the shopping parade.

The Solicitor reported that the response from the District Valuer had now been received and that the valuation was not acceptable to the current owner.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Cllr M G B Starke it was:-

Resolved

That investigations continue to ascertain the cost to the District of bringing this piece of land up to the necessary standard for inclusion in the Off Street Parking Places Order. (HLS)

376 CAN RECYCLING BANKS

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which asked Members to consider extending the current can bank collection beyond the expiry date of the current contract in January 2001.

Resolved

That the current can bank collection contract be extended by one year. (HHHCC)

The meeting closed at 10.25 pm

Chairman

Date