

West Area Committee – 21 September 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the **West Area Committee** held on **21 September 2010** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S P Smith
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr C I Black	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	

ALSO PRESENT

Sergeant Robb Gifford	-	Essex Police
Andy Hilsdon	-	Essex Highways

OFFICERS PRESENT

Shaun Scrutton	-	Head of Planning and Transportation
Sarah Fowler	-	Head of Information and Customer Services
Michelle Power	-	Committee Administrator

227 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J Dillnutt, A J Humphries, T Livings and A C Priest.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

228 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Crime and Disorder in Rawreth and Rayleigh

In the absence of Chief Inspector Glen Westley, who was unable to attend the meeting due to policing commitments, Sergeant Robb Gifford, Essex Police, provided an update on crime and disorder in Rawreth and Rayleigh.

Although anti-social behaviour levels are above the target, levels appear to be on the decrease. An additional Neighbourhood Specialist Officer (NSO) would be employed from mid October in the Rayleigh area to work with the existing NSO in Rayleigh. Recent activity included arrests regarding two small drug cultivation offences.

Sergeant Gifford advised that it was anticipated that spending cuts to the Police budget would not have a large impact on front-line staff, the cuts were likely to have an impact on 'back-room staff'.

Statistics showed that crime in the District was below crime reduction targets, with the exception of violent crime, serious sexual crime and racially aggravated crime. Although incidents of violent crime were currently at 233 against a target of 210 crimes, these were mainly low-level crimes. Serious sexual crime, which included rape, was over target, at 17 incidents to date against a target of 7. However, this increase could in part be attributed to an increase in reporting rates, due to extensive media coverage. Seven incidents of racially aggravated crime had been reported in the year to date, compared with a target of 3.2 crimes, although there had been no serious incidents.

A man had been charged with wounding with intent in respect of the recent stabbing in Downhall Road, Rayleigh.

In response to questions, Sgt Gifford provided the following information:-

- Following a report of speeding, the site of the junction of Downhall Road and Hambro Hill could be put forward for consideration as part of the speed check operations.
- Figures showing current detection and conviction rates would be forwarded direct to the resident who requested them, Mr Ian Ward.
- Following a report of disturbance by groups of motor bike riders by the allotments in Kenilworth Gardens, this area would be added to the list of areas to be visited by Police on their patrols. As a rule, the Police focused on deterring motor cycle groups from residential areas.
- Following concern regarding possible drug taking by youths congregating after dark at the side of the former off-licence in London Road, Rayleigh, it was confirmed that an officer presence could be provided in this area.
- Thanks were passed on to the Police for their swift response time following a report the previous night of youths on motor bikes causing a disturbance in The Approach, Rayleigh.

(2) Update on Highways Localism and other Highways Matters

A schedule setting out the latest position on the programme of highway works in Rawreth and Rayleigh 2010/11 and priority schemes for implementation was not available at the meeting. A schedule would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

Item H37/07 Possibility of introducing a 20mph speed limit in Glasseys Lane and nearby roads

The proposed scheme could be considered under Localism but costs would be a determining factor. If the 85th percentile (the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are travelling) is over 25mph, physical measures such as road humps would be required for the area to be considered as a possible 20mph zone. Members of the Committee indicated that they would not be in favour of such traffic calming measures.

Item H24/09 Scheme to bring the unmade roads of Eastwood Rise, Rayleigh Avenue and Sandhill Road, Rayleigh up to adoptable standard

There are legal issues that remain in respect of one of the roads. However, the remainder of the scheme would progress as the objections do not affect the rest of the scheme.

Item H28/09 Slip Road at the Fairglen Interchange from the southbound A1245 to the eastbound A127

Works have been completed.

Item H05/10 Speed sign at Hambro Hill, Rayleigh

Mr Hilsdon advised that the Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, Cllr Hume, had indicated that the pedestrian crossing at Rawreth Lane would be implemented this financial year, despite concern surrounding anticipated budget cuts.

In response to questions, it was advised that:-

- There is the possibility of a crossing facility under Localism in the locality of Lubbards Farm. Funding opportunities were being explored for the scheme.
- A request by residents of Lower Lambricks for speed restriction signs for vehicles coming down Hambro Hill would be noted.
- There were ongoing discussions with residents as a result of the proposed waiting restrictions in Danbury Road/Langdon Road, Rayleigh. Objections to the proposals had been received from residents as part of the original consultation process and changes to the proposals had been made as a result. This had resulted in objections from residents who had been happy with the original proposals. A decision would need to be made as to the best way to proceed and this would be reported to the Committee.
- Regarding a request for a temporary speed check point to be located in Glasseys Lane, random speed check points could only be located in areas that had been previously agreed by the Police as recognised camera sites. The use of sites on an ad hoc basis was not permitted due

to safety considerations.

- It was noted that the lane widening at the Fairglen interchange was as a direct result of a question from a resident at a meeting of the West Area Committee.
- Mr Hilsdon advised that the 'priority 1' projects previously identified by the Committee under Localism for 2010/11 were dependant on the outcome of current budget discussions, when all Council expenditure would be reviewed. A meeting of the three Area Committee Chairmen, the District Council's Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation and the Head of Planning and Transportation was scheduled to take place at the end of September to discuss the issue of prioritising schemes.
- County Highways will focus on maintenance as the main priority for spending.
- Regarding advice from a Member of the Committee that a report of potholes in Brixham Close and Teignmouth Drive, Rayleigh, made under the 'Fix My Street' facility, had not resulted in action to repair the holes following an initial inspection, the Councillor would be contacted direct to arrange a further site visit. Mr Hilsdon advised that each pothole reported is assessed and those deemed serious fixed as a matter of urgency. Non-urgent repairs would be added to the list of works and repaired in due course.

229 COMMUNITY FORUM

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

In response to questions raised by members of the public

- There has been discussion at Council in relation to the implications of the announcements of the Secretary of State around the targets set by the District Council for new housing. Advice from Central Government is that local authorities should continue with their agreed strategic housing strategy based on Option 1 housing assessment, which specifies the housing need in the District. The strategy will be reviewed in October, at which time it would be likely that a further consultation with residents on proposed changes to core strategy would be undertaken.
- Notice would be served on those residents in The Chase, Rayleigh whose hedges in their front gardens had overgrown the footpath that they must cut their hedgerows back to boundary lines. County Highways relies on residents reporting such issues, when they would be dealt with swiftly.

230 WEST AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the West Area update.

Item 01/10 Concern regarding flooding in the area in and around Sweyne Park car park

Works to extend the land drains in this area have been tendered for and an order for work to start had been placed the previous week.

Item 38/09 Advertisement on the A1245 on land adjacent to the Fairglen interchange

It was reported that the lorry carrying the advertisement at the Fairglen interchange had been stationary during the last few weeks. The Council was seeking to put forward a legal argument that the primary use of the vehicle is to display an advertisement, in order to provide a possible opportunity for prosecution.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Chairman

Date

Appendix

Question

Response

B Oliver, Rayleigh

Who decided about the size of the plaques, which indicate the sponsors of the flower baskets in Webster's Way car park? They appear to be a waste of money.

The plaques were the subject of a planning application from Rayleigh Town Council. The Town Council had to work within guidelines and the size adopted was in accordance with District Council specification.

B Lovett, Rayleigh

Emergency access to Swallow Close from The Approach.

The bollards at the turning head of Swallow Close are now broken and there are weeds and litter.

It has not been possible to trace who is responsible for maintaining the emergency services bollards installed at Swallow Close from The Approach car park. However, the District Council will ascertain whether the bollards are on adopted highway land in order that the responsibility for maintenance of the bollards can be established. Cllr C J Lumley requested that he be kept updated.

Instructions had been given to the District Council's contractor to clear the weeds and litter along the section of the turning head of the Approach car park. This would happen imminently.

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Question

Response

B Dawson, Rayleigh

Has Cllr Mrs Mockford got any information about funds for a kicking wall on the King Fisher field?

Although there is no immediate funding to build a 'kicking wall' on Kingfisher playing fields, the matter would be investigated.

Can the Police take a look at Kenilworth Gardens as motor bikes are running through?

Kenilworth Gardens will be added to the Police patrol area.

At the end of Little Wheatley Chase on the London Road was a sign indicating where the Rayleigh Grange Community Centre was. About 2 years ago it was broken down and was lying on the floor. I contacted the Council. It was going to be attended to. It then vanished. The Council was again going to attend to it. Two years later, after many phone calls, it still has not been replaced. They have put up a new sign but it gives the old school but not the Grange. Is it not possible to put on the Grange and also let people know there is a public car park at the Grange at the bottom of Little Wheatley Chase?

There is no information currently around this, but the matter will be investigated.

C Stanley, Rayleigh

The street signs are damaged at Love Lane, Hilary Crescent, Victoria Road. Are these to be replaced?

It will be investigated to see if/when it is possible for these street nameplates to be replaced. A request that the proposed street name signs be situated on the path rather than the grass verge would be noted. An update will be provided.

Question

Response

A Buckle, Rayleigh

Why did Conservative Councillors vote to build on farmland in Rawreth, despite strong local protests and opposition to this, and now that there is no legal obligation to do so?

A report on revisions to the Rochford Core Strategy will be considered by a special meeting of full Council on 14 October 2010; following the Secretary of State's announcement of his intention to revoke regional spatial strategies.

C Buckle

Why is the Park between Nursery Close and Daws Heath Road not kept in a good clean state like most of the other parks? The children's play items are covered in pigeon droppings, empty beer cans, broken glass, condoms and general litter?

The District Council has a contract to maintain parks. The Council's contract monitoring officers will inspect the site and arrange for any necessary action to be taken. Mrs Buckle will be informed of action taken.

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