

West Area Committee – 17 September 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the **West Area Committee** held on **17 September 2008** when there were present:-

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

Cllr Mrs P Aves
Cllr C I Black
Cllr J E Grey
Cllr A J Humphries
Cllr T Livings

Cllr D Merrick
Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr P F A Webster

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr A Matthews	- Rawreth Parish Council
Cllr D Sperring	- Rayleigh Town Council
D Lawrence	- Essex County Council
M Hathaway	- NHS South East Essex
R Platt	- NHS South East Essex

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	- Head of Planning and Transportation
R Evans	- Head of Environmental Services
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

266 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J Dillnutt, K A Gibbs, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley, Mrs J A Mockford and Rayleigh Town Cllr Mrs C Roe.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

267 COMMUNITY FORUM

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

In response to supplementary comments made by residents relating to incidences of anti-social behaviour in the Grove Park, Grove Road/Trinity Road/Clarence Road areas and the difficulty in contacting the Police at the weekend to report such incidences, the Chairman advised that the Police

would be advised of these concerns and a representative of the Police would be in attendance at the next West Area Committee on 22 October 2008.

Responding to additional comments made by a resident relating to backland development, Councillors emphasised that, under the current planning regime, if developers chose to appeal any decision taken by the Council's Development Control Committee to refuse planning permission, the planning inspector could, and did on occasion, overturn such decisions and determine that planning permission should be granted.

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

268 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Future GP Provision within Rawreth and Rayleigh

Mr Platt advised that the Primary Care Trust had been re-branded; the official title was now NHS South East Essex. NHS South East Essex was responsible for commissioning all primary care services in the district. It was currently developing a strategy for services, with the intention to consult with residents on proposals early in the New Year, leading to an adoption of new policy in March 2009.

Changes in future service proposed included the following:-

- Investment in extended GP surgery hours, with more Saturday opening proposed, to respond to the concerns of patients and enable them to access GPs more quickly and conveniently. £1.4m was being invested across NHS South East Essex.
- Investment in additional NHS dentistry, with more NHS dentists in place next year.
- Investment in healthy lifestyles, building on the healthy schools initiative in order to help the next generation grow up healthier.
- Development and improvement of health facilities and buildings. Currently the hospitals are delivering a range of health services that could be provided by GP surgeries closer to local communities, eg, phlebotomy, physiotherapy, etc.
- A review of all healthcare buildings, with investment aimed at bringing buildings up to acceptable, modern standards or, if this is not possible, moving to alternative, more suitable premises. Some GP surgeries in converted houses or shop fronts, for example, had already been extended to their fullest limit.

Mr Platt informed the Committee that NHS South East Essex sought, where appropriate, to develop primary care centres where GPs would work

alongside other services, including health visitors, blood taking services, and some outpatient services currently delivered by hospitals, including, for example, diagnostic services, x-ray services, etc, within the community.

There would be full consultation with residents on any future, proposed changes. NHS South East Essex was actively looking for a suitable site for a primary care centre in Rayleigh, but was experiencing difficulty in locating a site large enough. Work was also being done to ensure, until such time as a site was identified, that there was extra capacity in Rayleigh. There were plans, for example, to extend the GP practice in Eastwood Road. NHS South East Essex would, however, welcome any suggestions relating to possible sites.

One Member observed that the search for a suitable site in Rayleigh had already taken some years, without any success to date. Particular reference was made of the PCT's failure to purchase the former Park School site for developing such a health facility.

The observation was made that the current location of GP surgeries in Rayleigh was very good; they were very accessible for patients. Any primary care centre would have to be equally as accessible. It was further emphasised that continuity of care for patients was important.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- A site of 1 – 2 acres was required for a primary care centre.
- The old recycling centre in Castle Road was not a large enough site.
- There was insufficient car parking to further extend the Eastwood Road health centre.
- The land opposite the cemetery would require a compulsory purchase order.
- Consideration would be given to finding a smaller site in Rayleigh suitable for providing outreach services, to complement existing GP surgeries.
- Many patients were unaware of the level of service they should expect to receive from their GP – there was an obligation to provide patients with acute care within 18 weeks and all patients should be able to access a GP within 48 hours. Much work was currently underway to actively sign up different GP practices to extend their current core opening hours.

(2) Update on Highways Matters Within Rawreth and Rayleigh

The Highways officer advised that works currently undertaken by County Highways included carriageway surfacing in Ferry Road and shortly in Victoria Avenue. Footway slurry works would be carried out in Old Chelmsford Road at the end of October and footway re-construction / kerb works would also take place in Grove Road, subject to funding being made available.

In response to issues and questions raised, the following was noted:-

- Section 106 financial contributions from each new dwelling constructed in the area were being collected and would be used by the County Council in due course for highways improvement to Rayleigh Avenue and Eastwood Rise. It was anticipated that a report on the improvements would shortly be approved by the County Council. It was further noted that the relevant District Ward Councillors would be provided with an update on progress with respect to the works.
- The lack of road signs in Wellington Road alerting motorists to the fact that it is not a through road would be reported to the County Traffic Management Team.
- Continuing problems associated with the road surface along Rawreth Lane in the vicinity of Trenders Avenue, causing larger vehicles to bounce along would be reported to the Highways District Manager to ascertain whether anything further might be done, in addition to monitoring.
- Section 106 Agreement monies originally secured for the provision of a pedestrian crossing at the top of Downhall Park Way, near Rawreth Lane had been returned to the developer.
- The issue of extending the double yellow lines in Trinity Road at the junction with Warwick Road would be reported back to the Traffic Management team for investigation and an update provided.

269 WEST AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the West Area update.

19/07 – Battlesbridge Conservation Area (Minute 287/07)

It was proving difficult to get representatives together from this Council and Chelmsford Borough Council and agree arrangements for a joint forum for the Conservation Area. This would, however, be actively pursued by Rochford District Council officers.

Officers would investigate the recent positioning of 2 Victorian street lights on the bridge.

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

Cllr P F A Webster would be provided, outside the meeting, with a completion date for these works.

West Area Committee – 17 September 2008

12/08 – Possibility of Installing New Benches in Sweyne Park (Minute 62/08)

An update would be provided as to whether funds could be identified to purchase and install benches at Sweyne Park.

16/08 – Provision of a Pedestrian Crossing at the Top of Downhall Park Way, near Rawreth Lane (Minute 131/08)

A feasibility study for a new pedestrian crossing in this location was being conducted. An update would be provided at the next meeting as to when the study was likely to be completed.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Chairman

Date

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

Question

Response

A Wilson, Rayleigh

Is RDC aware of the increase in anti-social behaviour in the Grove Park area and has RDC taken any steps to remedy the various problems, and with what results?

Examples of ASB: large threatening groups of youths gathering late evenings in the park and nearby streets, 'racing' of cars/scooters on public roads, excessive noise into the night, use of illegal off-road m/cycles, underage drinking of alcohol, criminal damage, litter. Possible drugs use.

Areas particularly affected: Grove Road, Katherine Close, Grove Court, Bramfield Road East.

RDC, in partnership with Essex Police and others, closely monitors incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and endeavours to respond promptly and effectively. Open areas and public parks understandably and correctly attract large numbers of young people, especially during the warmer summer months and during school holidays. Unfortunately, a minority of young people behave in such a way as to cause local residents significant distress.

A number of current policing operations specifically target identified areas of ASB, including Operation Sunfish and Operation Lark. In recent months a series of letters (over 150 to date) have been sent by the local District Commander (CI Andy Prophet) to the parents of young people, either found behaving inappropriately or in possession of alcohol.

In addition to policing and enforcement options all partners are heavily involved in the engagement of young people, RDC Community Services Department in partnership with Virgin Active and Extended Schools provided a vast range of activities, some of which were free – across all age ranges, throughout the whole of the summer holidays to help address possible boredom issues arising amongst young people with activities running 5 days a week from 10.00 am until 4.00 pm. A vast number of those activities took place in the Rayleigh area and neighbouring Hockley Woods and included Rayleigh Leisure Centre and Love Lane School where a swimming programme also ran. This Holiday Leisure programme was very successful and attracted a high level of attendance,

Question

Response

which we believe, alongside the police operations, has greatly assisted in reducing the levels of anti-social behaviour, both in Rayleigh and throughout the district. To continue this good work providing diversionary activities for young people, the Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) have made available £2,900 to RDC Community Services with the purpose of providing free out of hours activities specifically in the Rayleigh area, which they are currently looking into.

Across the district levels of ASB were significantly lower this summer than last year. For example, in the Rayleigh area during July and August 118 incidents were recorded this year compared to 154 last year – a 23.3% reduction. That said, we are not complacent and will continue to work hard to reduce anti-social behaviour even further.

The Community Safety team has not received regular or persistent reports of anti-social behaviour in the areas mentioned and therefore are unaware of these potential problems, unfortunately without members of the public reporting this as an issue RDC and its partners is limited in any remedial action that can be taken over and above what is already happening. However, now that this specific matter has come to our attention it has been referred to the local Neighbourhood Specialist Officer (PC Wyn Sharp) to liaise with local residents and put an appropriate policing response in place. As is always the case the Police and RDC rely on information from the community to respond to issues of anti-social behaviour and therefore we welcome any reports of incidents in your community.

Question

Response

R Warr, Rayleigh

Why are the local authorities doing nothing to allay the fears and concerns of residents to the creeping intrusion of backland development whilst granting planning permission allowing it to proliferate? (with reference to a petition containing 225 signatures protesting to backland development and presented to Cllr Mrs Mavis Webster on Thursday, 24 July 2008 at the Civic Suite in Rayleigh)

Paragraph 2.54 of the Council's adopted Local Plan states that:

"Backland development is not, in principle an unacceptable form of development, and certainly can make a valuable contribution to housing provision and fulfill one of the requirements of PPG3 by making best use of available land for development".

In accepting the principle of backland development though, the Council recognises the importance of ensuring schemes do not compromise the amenities of existing residents and policy HP14 in the Local Plan explains the items against which an assessment of acceptability of schemes will be carried out.

Given the prevailing national policies that aim for at least 60% of new housing development to be provided on 'previously developed land', which includes garden land, there is little prospect that backland development will stop, but the requirements of policy HP14 means that all schemes must pass a series of tests and where there is an unacceptable impact on the amenity of residents, the appearance of the locality, etc. applications will be refused.

D Smith, Rayleigh

Can you inform me as to the ownership of the road leading from Eastwood Road into the Somerfield car park at Rayleigh. If it is Council owned, does the private clamping notice displayed have any

The land referred to is not public highway, but is private land. The landowners can legally appoint a wheel clamping company to enforce parking on their land, provided the area is appropriately signed.

The junction protection indicated by double yellow lines at the junction of

Question

Response

B Layzell, Rayleigh

In view of the recent BBC programme, regarding recycling ending up on a landfill site in India, what assurance do we in Rochford have that our refuse is sorted satisfactorily and what means of checking the company responsible for sorting is done by RDC?

Eastwood Road and Somerfields car park is public highway and is enforced by the Council. However, the continuation of the double yellow lines into the car park is on private land.

The District Council ensures that all recyclables go to Environment Agency licensed recycling facilities. High tech machinery is used to sort the materials; Council officers regularly visit these recycling facilities to see the operation.

Green waste is sent to Boreham, then taken to Cambridgeshire where it is turned into compost for use on local farms.

Dry recycling is sent to Tilbury and sorted:

Paper is sent to Spain and turned back into paper.

Glass cannot be re-used as glass and is thus converted into road aggregate.

Plastic is turned into other plastic items.

Detailed information will be placed on the Council website indicating what happens to each of the recyclables, post collection.

M Sewell, Rayleigh

It is difficult to see oncoming cars at the end / corner of Trinity Road / Grove Road just below the road leading to Jubilee Road (the bus route) – could yellow lines be installed in this location to restrict parking?

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Question

R Foster, Rayleigh

Will the Council issue £100 fines to residents that are not recycling?

Response

The Council strives to be transparent with respect to any enforcement options it may take. It aims to work with residents to help make recycling as easy as possible. Should there be an issue regarding the contents of a bin, an informal note would be delivered to the resident advising them that there is a problem with the way in which their refuse has been sorted; this would be followed up by a visit by a Council officer. If the problem persisted more formal warnings would be issued. Fixed penalty notices would only be used as a last resort.