

Review Committee – 9 September 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **9 September 2014** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M Hoy
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs T J Capon

Cllr C I Black	Cllr Mrs A V Hale
Cllr J C Burton	Cllr B T Hazlewood
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr R R Dray	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr Mrs M H Spencer
Cllr J D Griffin	

VISITING MEMBER

Cllrs K J Gordon, J Hayter and M J Steptoe.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J L Lawmon.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	-	Head of Planning and Transportation
P Gowers	-	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
M Power	-	Committee Administrator

177 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

178 VERGE CUTTING/ECC CONTRIBUTION

The Committee heard from the Portfolio Holder for the Environment and the Chairman of the Local Highways Panel.

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment would continue to write to Essex County Council (ECC) to complain about the very low level of funding received from the County Council (Members have received copies of the communications sent to ECC to date). The £33,000 per annum from ECC covers the cost of the equivalent of only 1.5 verge cuts; Rochford District Council (RDC) carries out 12 cuts annually (previously 18 cuts per year). This results in a cost to Rochford District Council of £130,000.

In response to questions the following was noted:-

- There is no written record to indicate when or why the level of funding from ECC for verge cutting was set at £33,000. ECC has not supplied the District Council with a list of the areas that need to be cut.
- Rochford District Council appears to receive a lower level of funding from ECC than most other Councils within Essex. There is no opportunity for joint working with other Districts in this respect.
- Members should express their concerns regarding Highways matters to the ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, Cllr Bass, by contacting RDC County Members or Portfolio Holders.
- Some Parish Councils in the District cut the verges within their Parish, although care must be taken that health and safety requirements are met.
- Although RDC has no legal responsibility for cutting the verges, to reduce the number of cuts would damage the Council's reputation and could result in issues of public safety. RDC has undertaken grass verge cutting since 1974; as a result public perception is that it is an RDC function.

179 TO REVIEW APRIL – JUNE FIGURES FOR CAR PARKING INCOME

The Committee considered the report from the Head of Planning and Transportation on car park income and ticket sales in the first 3-4 months of the financial year 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The following responses were given to questions raised by Members:-

- The figures in the report related to income and sales prior to the price rise on 4 August 2014. Members requested that an update be provided to include the following:-
 - (1) figures for the period from 4 August when the new tariff was introduced
 - (2) whether or not there has been an increase in income.
 - (3) income generated by fines for motorists overstaying the permitted time
 - (4) Details of income generated from contravention notices.
- The figures provided include an estimated resistance factor, that is, the likely reduction in the number of motorists parking due to the increased parking tariff.

- The loss of car park income figure from the introduction of Saturday afternoon charges was also only an estimate.
- It had been decided not to include advertising on the backs of car parking tickets because it is not likely to generate a significant increase in income: there would be a need to use tickets with sticky backs and this would be more costly than the tickets used in the machines currently.
- The Council works closely with the supplier, Metric, to carry out regular upgrades to the machines to ensure they are secure. When there have been issues of security, rotas for emptying machines are changed, especially in respect of those machines that take more income. The location of the machines is reviewed also. Machines are emptied prior to the weekend to ensure that money kept in the machines is minimal.
- There are security benefits due to the increase in payments being made by mobile phone as there is consequently less money held in the machines. A system of 'wave and pay' is a further payment option that is increasingly being used.
- Leaflets detailing parking information and how a top-up payment can be made have been provided to businesses in the District so that customers can top-up their parking payment without returning to their car. This leaflet is on the Council's website; a link will be sent to Committee Members.
- When the two periods (April-June 2013/14 and April-June 2014/15) are compared, there is a reduction in ticket sales and income in respect of the two lowest bands, whereas all-day tickets (where there was no tariff increase) have seen a significant increase in ticket sales and income. Members asked to be provided with further information that might indicate the reason for the significant increase in the purchase of all-day tickets. Information showing income from season tickets was also requested.

180 KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

The Committee received the Key Decision Document.

3/14 Annual Play Spaces Programme – a revised Portfolio Holder decision is due to be made on 16/9/14.

14/14 Charges for football pitches – decision made 29/8/14.

15/14 Voluntary sector – decision on the process for awarding voluntary sector grants for 2015/16 made 9/9/14.

16/14 Dry Recycling. New EU waste directive. Under this directive all collecting authorities must evaluate the process for collecting recycling to ensure it meets the EU criteria. The Council's MRF contract is due for renewal in May 2015. A report is due on this in October 2014. Details of the

requirements of the EU directive and a link to relevant websites will be circulated to the Committee.

17/14 Rayleigh Area Action Plan. A report is due later in the month.

181 WORK PLAN

Members reviewed the Committee's Work Plan.

7 October

- (1) Shop at my Local: an update from the review in 2012. (Information on how much income was made from the sale of Shop at My Local bags and what happened to the remaining stock was requested.)
- (2) Review of the ICT Contract.

4 November

- (1) Community Safety Partnership
- (2) Fusion. (It was requested that a Member visit of Fusion sites be offered to Review Committee Members.) Questions would be formulated by Members prior to the meeting; it was requested that information be provided to Members prior to the meeting.

It was noted that as part of Scrutiny training the training consultant, Tim Young, would be observing this meeting and would provide feedback to Members at a training session on 13 November.

6 January

Estates – the assets that the Council owns and how they are managed and used.

3 February

Homelessness – a review of the amount spent on temporary accommodation and to establish if there are improvements to be made to the ways of working with other agencies. Information in advance of the meeting was requested.

3 March

Car Parking - to review the income received following the first 6 months with increased pricing.

A review of pot holes would also be included in this year's programme.

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The meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

Chairman

Date

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