

Environmental Services Committee - 4 December 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **4 December 2002** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs L Hungate (Chairman)

Cllr J E Grey (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs T J Capon

Cllr R G S Choppen

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr T E Goodwin

Cllr C R Morgan

Cllr R A Oatham

Cllr C G Seagers

Cllr M G B Starke

Cllr Mrs M J Webser

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr G A Mockford

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts - Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

S Scutton - Head of Planning Services

A Bugeja - Head of Legal Services

J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

586 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the name 'Councillor A J Grey' within the third paragraph of minute 542 being changed to 'Councillor J E Grey'

587 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T E Goodwin declared a personal interest in the items on Taxi Tariff and Taxi Ranks.

588 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

(1) Taxi Tariff - Consideration of Objections

The Committee considered the report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Taxi Tariff - Consideration of Objections.

Responding to Member questions, the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) advised that:-

- It was recommended that the effective date of the Hackney Carriage Tariff now be 2 January 2003.

- A meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee to consider licensing fees and charges associated with the trade would be convened as soon as possible.

Resolved

That, subject to the effective date of the Hackney Carriage Tariff being 2 January 2003, the decisions reached at the Meeting held on 7 November 2002 (Minute 542/02) be re-affirmed. (HRHM)

(2) Review of Hockley, Hullbridge and Rochford Centre Improvement Schemes

The Committee considered the report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the review of Hockley, Hullbridge and Rochford Centre Improvement Schemes.

In welcoming the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members recognised that there was a high level of frustration associated with the lack of progress on the Town Centre Schemes. It was also recognised that the District had no direct jurisdiction over County Council Officers.

Resolved

That an Officer from the County Council be designated as Clerk of Works to oversee the District's Town Centre Enhancement Schemes (County Highways).

(3) Residential Zones and the Assessment and Ranking

The Committee considered the report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on residential zones and the assessment and ranking.

Resolved

- (1) That the assessment scoring sheet be used as the basis for prioritising all future requests for Residential Zones.
- (2) That the first zone to be initiated be Pooles Lane, Hullbridge as determined using the assessment scoring sheet.
- (3) That the procedure for progressing successful schemes, including the method of public consultation, be as detailed in Section 4 of the report. (County Highways)

(4) Assessment of Playing Pitches in Rochford District

The Committee considered the report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the assessment of playing pitches in Rochford District.

Resolved

That the Playing Pitch Assessment document be adopted as Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance and that arrangements be made to incorporate the following points into the replacement Local Plan:-

- Disaggregating the required standards for the provision of sports pitches from those for the provision of open space.
- Adopting specific standards for provision in individual sub-areas of the District (Rayleigh, Hockley, Hullbridge, Canewdon, Rochford and Great Wakering).
- Policy protection for existing pitches to prevent alternative use and to maintain provision.
- Consideration to be given to using developer contributions to assist with the improvement of existing sports pitches and ancillary facilities. (HPS)

589 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the schedule relating to Progress on Decisions.

Public Transport Initiatives - Invitation for Bid Submissions to the Rural and Urban Challenge Funds (Minute 121/02)

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Planning Services advised that a whole variety of options would no doubt be considered in the development of the draft Community and Transport Strategy.

Junction at High Street/Websters Way, Rayleigh (Minute 144/02)

A Member expressed concern that the County had yet to report back on options for junction improvement to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It had been hoped that a report would be available prior to Christmas.

The Head of Planning Services advised that he would raise this matter with County Highways and report back on the outcome.

Outstanding matters would be carried forward.

590 TAXI RANKS - CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management on objections received to proposed Hackney Carriage Ranks.

In discussing proposals for the west-side of High Street, Rayleigh, a Member observed that it would be appropriate for the times of operation to be 8.00pm to 6.00am rather than 6.00pm to 6.00am. The rank was sited close to the doctor's surgery, which remain open until 7.00pm. Elderly patients and those with limited mobility could well be leaving the surgery up to 7.30pm.

During debate it was noted that any potentially suitable new locations for ranks would need to be the subject of a separate formal consultation exercise. New locations could be explored at future meetings.

Responding to Member questions, the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) advised that, given Back Lane Car Park, Rochford was within Council ownership, it would be possible to submit a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the possibilities for locating the five proposed taxi bays to the east of that car park adjacent to the Day Centre/Citizens Advice Bureau/Doctor's Surgery.

The Committee agreed a motion on the time of operation associated with the rank proposed for the west-side of Rayleigh High Street, moved by Cllr M G B Starke and seconded by Cllr J E Grey, and it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the location and times of operation of the taxi ranks subject to objection be:-
- West side of High Street. 2 existing public parking bays outside 12-16 High Street, Rayleigh. Times of operation 8.00pm to 6.00am daily.
 - Outside British Legion Hall, London Hill, Rayleigh. North side of London Hill commencing in a West direction from a point 3.4 metres from the East kerb of Church Street for 15.8 metres, i.e. existing public parking area. Times of operation 6.00pm to 6.00am daily.
 - East side of the High Street commencing in a South West direction from the North leading edge of the lagoon island for 33.5 metres outside of existing lagoon, Rayleigh High Street. Times of operation are unrestricted.

- (2) That officers submit a detailed report to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the possibilities for locating the 5 taxi bays proposed for the Back Lane Car Park, Rochford to the east of the car park adjacent to the Day Centre/Citizens Advice Bureau/Doctors Surgery. (HRHM)

591 THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: SOUTH EAST

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive on whether the Council should endorse a composite County-wide response to the Government Consultation Paper "The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: South East", which had been drawn up with a view of securing a "One Essex Voice".

In favour of all the composite recommendations, a Member referred to the possibility that demand for flying may reduce following the increase in terrorist activity which had been an unfortunate feature of recent times. The public may also come to question the necessity of aeroplane journeys from the environmental perspective. Statistical evidence was capable of demonstrating the high levels of fuel pollution associated with aeroplane take-off and connected influences on global warming. Increased airline activity also had severe consequences from the perspective of public health and the retention of countryside/wild life. There were grounds for suggesting that the Government needed to revisit its calculations.

In favour of maintaining the conclusions reached by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee when it had considered the Government's consultation document in September, reference was made to the likelihood that, in spite of acts of terrorism, there would be increasing demand for additional flying capacity in the long-term, particularly in the context of the growth of leisure and world-wide trade. Notwithstanding that it is right to constantly review all aspects of air transport proposals, it would be unrealistic to ignore the fact that the Government had undertaken much detailed work in developing current proposals. It was observed that the phasing out of night flying could result in airports not being used to full capacity.

During debate reference was made to indications in the press that the Thames Gateway Board was supportive of the development of London Southend Airport. Reference was also made to the outcome of the recent Judicial Review of the Government's report on future airport capacity for the South East. The Appeal had been upheld which meant that all possible options for meeting the growth and demand for air services must be considered, including Gatwick.

The Committee considered each of the composite recommendations in turn and it was:-

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Resolved

That this Council supports recommendations 1; 3; 4; 6; 7; 9 and 10 of the composite recommendations set out at Appendix 1 of the report.
(CE)

The meeting closed at 8.37pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____