

Environmental Services Committee – 14 November 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **14 November 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M G B Starke
Acting Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr R A Amner
Cllr J P Cottis
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr Mrs R Brown.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs L Hungate and P R Robinson.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs M A Starke

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse	- Corporate Director (External Services)
J Bourne	- Leisure and Contracts Manager
A Lovett	- Street Scene Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

ALSO ATTENDING FROM THAMES GATEWAY GROUNDWORK TRUST

P Christmas	- Project and Quality Manager
J Meeham	- Executive Director

382 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 7 September and 26 October 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

383 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T G Cutmore declared a personal interest in item 10 of the agenda, relating to the Thames Gateway Groundwork Trust, by virtue of being Shadow Chairman of the Thames Gateway Groundwork Trust.

384 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee reviewed the progress on decisions schedule.

Contaminated Land – Update (Minute 326/05)

Officers would give Members more precise details of when in 2007 an update report would be made to the Committee.

New Local Nature Reserve Designations (Minute 493/05)

Members expressed their pleasure that Grove Woods, Kingley Woods and Betts Woods would all be designated as local nature reserves. Officers hoped to be able to give an indication of when the designations would be finalised at the next Committee meeting.

385 THAMES GATEWAY GROUNDWORK TRUST

The Committee welcomed Mr P Christmas and Mr J Meeham from the Thames Gateway Groundwork Trust to the meeting. They had been invited to give a presentation to Members on the work of the Trust.

During the presentation the following points were noted:-

- The Groundwork Trust was a federation of approximately 50 trusts throughout the United Kingdom, working with partners to improve the quality of the local environment, the lives of local people and the success of local businesses in areas in need of investment and support.
- Each of the Trusts were independent charitable bodies.
- The new South Essex Groundwork Trust had a shadow board, chaired by Cllr T G Cutmore and its partners included Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock Councils.
- Each of the District and Borough Councils, plus the County Council, were to be represented on the South Essex Groundwork Trust.
- The articles and memorandum of the new Trust were currently being circulated to all member Local Authorities for signature.
- The Groundwork Trust's vision was of a society made up of sustainable communities which were vibrant, healthy and safe, which respected the local and global environment and where individuals and enterprise prospered.
- The Groundwork Trust sought to deliver local programmes by professional staff with expertise in six key areas:-
 - communities (building stronger neighbourhoods)
 - land (re-connecting people with their neighbourhood)
 - employment (training for work and stimulating enterprise)
 - education (learning, citizenship and sustainability)

- business (integrating the economy and the environment)
- youth (realising young people's potential).
- The Groundwork Trust worked closely with the Department for Communities and Local Government to deliver cleaner, safer and greener communities.
- The overall aim of local Groundwork Trust programmes was:-
 - to contribute to the Greengrid initiative in an area in which the Government sought the development of 43,000 new houses/flats.
 - to focus on areas of relative social deprivation
 - to support the Government's White Paper, "Choosing Health"
 - to improve the natural/built environment
 - to demonstrate Groundwork's ability to deliver projects within the South Essex Greengrid
 - to gather information on future potential project partners and ways of working
 - to conduct feasibility studies for potential projects to be taken forward by the South Essex Groundwork Trust.
- All Groundwork projects were delivered in partnership; Groundwork didn't own any land, thus all projects required landowners to work in partnership with Groundwork.
- The South Essex Trust was at a very early stage, and currently only employed Mr Meeham, but would quickly grow, with the support of Government, Local Authorities and voluntary sector partners.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the Greengrid in the S.E. in the context of the Government aspiration for 43,000 new homes, the Groundwork representatives advised that it was important that an environmental infrastructure was developed in order to mitigate against the impact on the environment of major new development.

Members expressed concern that any work undertaken on ameliorating the environmental impact of railway lines should be done in liaison with relevant rail companies, as there had been instances of rail operators co-ordinating the removal of greenery alongside railway tracks in order to improve visibility for train drivers. It was also important that the Groundwork Trust worked in such a way as to complement the valuable work already being done locally by conservation volunteers.

Responding to a Member concern relating to a lack of Groundwork projects within the Rochford District, the Groundwork representatives confirmed that the local Trust would be working closely with all 5 Local Authority partners on projects, but stressed that the Trust was still in its infancy.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to Trust funding, the representatives confirmed that the Trust had been set up with funding from the Department for

Communities and Local Communities, which was supplemented by contributions from the 5 partner Local Authorities, approximately £5,000 from each Authority. Essex County Council had also contributed around £45,000.

Responding to a Member question about the composition and overall funding of Groundwork nationally, the representatives advised that Groundwork employed approximately 2,500 people across the U.K., and received £27million from central Government, £15million from the private sector, £25million from Local Authorities, £16million from the European Union, £4million from the National Lottery and £31million regeneration funding. Approximately 10% of total funding was deployed on administration costs, with the remaining 90% of funds directed at delivering Groundwork projects.

In response to an enquiry relating to the selection of schools for Groundwork projects, the Groundwork representatives informed Members that schools were identified through the County Council capital match funding scheme, which aimed to supplement funds selected schools had raised themselves to improve school grounds. The Trust focused primarily on schools in areas of social deprivation and sent out promotional material to schools. Those schools that subsequently went back to the Trust and demonstrated commitment and drive were usually selected.

386 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) providing Members with proposals for the timetabling of the refuse and recycling collection services during the Christmas and New Year period and other Bank Holidays throughout the year.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member enquiry about the green waste collection, that proper notification of any changes to green waste collection rounds over the Christmas period would be given to residents.

Resolved

That the implementation of proposal (A) be agreed on the basis that normal collections would be resumed one week earlier than in proposal (B).
(CD(ES))

387 LIGHTING IN ALLEYWAYS

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) apprising Members of the alleyways that are owned/managed by the Council and considered suitable for lighting improvement to increase the feeling of public safety.

In response to concerns raised by Members relating to the alleyways between Market Square, Rochford and the new supermarket development, in Bardfield Way, Rayleigh and between Wakering High Street and Whitehall Road, Great

Waking, officers confirmed that the lighting in these alleyways would be examined in detail with a view to establishing whether improvements would be required and whether these particular alleyways were in the ownership of the District Council.

Members expressed disappointment that the alleyway between Websters Way and Eastwood Road, Rayleigh had frequently fallen victim to graffiti. It was noted that officers would establish whether this was an area that had been identified as a hot spot area for the District's environmental campaign.

In response to a general Member enquiry relating to alleyways within the District, officers advised that a list of alleyways for which the Council was responsible would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Resolved

That the lighting improvement to the locations suggested in paragraph 3.3 of the report be agreed, subject to officers investigating lighting in the following areas:-

- alleyway between Rochford Square and the new supermarket development
- alleyway in Bardfield Way, Rayleigh
- alleyway between Waking High Street and Whitehall Road, Great Waking. (CD(ES))

388 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) advising Members that the County Council is considering whether to discontinue its management and administration of all its Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

In response to concerns raised by Members about the potential numbers of tree preservation orders involved, officers confirmed that the County Council currently administered approximately 131 individual TPOs, 50 group TPOs, 20 area TPOs and 17 woodland TPOs within the Rochford District.

Members expressed concern about the potential costs associated with any such move by the County Council to discontinue administering its TPOs and officers confirmed that information relating to the potential associated costs of any such action by the County Council would be provided in time for this Council's budget setting process.

Members also expressed concern that this action would lead to a loss of a County officer perspective on District planning applications with respect to TPOs.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the trees within Rayleigh High

Street, officers confirmed that they would write to Members confirming whether any of these were under County TPOs.

Resolved

That the District Council makes the strongest representation to the County Council that they maintain the management and administration responsibility for their TPOs, but that if they decide to cease this responsibility, urgent discussions take place to determine the resource implications and how the future situation can be effectively managed, with the County Council being requested to reimburse the District for any additional costs incurred.
(CD(ES))

389 ROCHFORD HUNDRED GOLF CLUB – PROPOSED FOOTPATH DIVERSIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services on an application from Rochford Hundred Golf Club to divert Public Footpaths 16 and 17 and to extinguish a section of Footpath 35.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to Rochford Hundred Golf Club bearing the cost of any necessary accommodation works and all the Council's costs and expenses recoverable under the Local Government (Recovery of Costs for Public Path Orders) Regulations 1993 as amended, the proposal to divert footpaths 16 and 17 and part extinguishment of footpath 35, as shown on the plan appended to the officer's report, be approved.
- (2) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making and confirmation of Public Path Diversion Orders to secure the above proposals under the terms of section 119 of the Highways Act 1980. (HLS)

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

390 TENDERING PROCESS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICES

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Corporate Director (External Services) seeking approval for the tendering process to be adopted in letting the Council's major environmental contracts.

Members noted that the timeline for the process was tight and that there would be a need to re-visit this in the event of any slippage in timescales.

Resolved

- (1) That a competitive dialogue process be implemented for the tendering of the Council's waste management and street cleansing services.
- (2) That the indicative timeline, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be agreed to ensure that the new contract commences in April 2008.
- (3) That the Council advertises in the Official Journal of the European Union to seek companies interested in providing waste management and street cleansing services in Rochford and, if suitable, to be part of an aligned procurement process with Southend on Sea Borough Council. (CD(ES))

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Chairman

Date