



**Rochford District
Council**

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1999

January - December

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**Rochford District
Council**

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL MINUTES

1999

July (Part 1)

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Audit Committee

At a Meeting held on 6th July 1999. Present: Councillors N. Harris (Chairman), P.A. Beckers, C.I. Black, G. Fox, T. Livings, C.R. Morgan, P. Stebbing, R.E. Vingoe and P.F.A. Webster

Apologies: Councillor Mrs. J. Hall

Substitute: Councillor R. Adams

264. MINUTES

Resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of 1st June 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

265. MATTERS ARISING

There was one matter arising as outlined below:-

Representation on Outside Bodies - Insurance

The Senior Assistant Solicitor reminded the Committee that, at its last meeting, Officers were requested to contact the Local Government Association (LGA) concerning the need for Members to have indemnity insurance when they serve on outside bodies in a decision making capacity. The LGA has since confirmed that as the law stands, Local Authorities have no power to indemnify members on outside bodies who take decisions against any subsequent legal claims. It suggested that Councils advise members of their position when appointing them and encourage the outside bodies to take out indemnity insurance. Guidance is available from the insurers Zurich Municipal

The Committee was informed that another option is for the Council to reconsider whether it needs to be represented on outside bodies that have no insurance. A review of Council membership on outside bodies will be undertaken at the beginning of next year and will take this issue into account.

In reply to a Member question, the Senior Assistant Solicitor advised that the necessary indemnity insurance should be sought from the outside body concerned, since it would not be provided by the Council.

266. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor C.R. Morgan declared a pecuniary interest in the report concerning the internal audit of payments to canvassers during elections (Minute 272).

267. BEACON STATUS INITIATIVE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which outlined further details in respect of the Beacon Status scheme. Members were reminded that, at the Meeting of the Committee held on 6th April 1999, details of the prospectus in relation to the Beacon Council scheme initiative were considered, and it was resolved that it would be appropriate to await receipt of the application forms and selection criteria before determining a course of action to adopt.

An application brochure outlining the rules of the scheme and details of the selection criteria had since been received, with a return date for applications of 31st July 1999. The Committee was informed that, in the first year, councils are invited to submit applications for beacon status in up to 3 out of 7 service and cross-cutting service areas, with the expectation that beacon status will be awarded for only one service area per council in order to maintain a representative and geographical spread of beacon councils

Members noted that there would be resource implications both in respect of completing the application form and, if awarded the status, fulfilling some of the criteria relating to spreading beacon status best practice, although such work would be likely to receive some additional grant funding.

In addition there would be certain criteria that the Authority would need to fulfil. It was considered that, at present, it is doubtful whether the Council would meet all these, particularly in the areas for which applications could be submitted. Several of the criteria seemed difficult to attribute to Rochford. The Committee concluded, therefore, that the benefits and timing of this first round of the Beacon Council Initiative were outweighed by the likely disadvantages to the Authority, both in terms of resources and its eligibility at present to meet all of the specified criteria. It was agreed that the Initiative should be noted at this stage, with a watching brief so that the Authority can safeguard its position in future years as the Initiative develops.

Resolved

That the Council does not pursue a bid submission at this stage. (CE)

268. PERTINENT BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed to admit the following items of pertinent business to up-date Members on recent developments.

i). Audit Issues - Partnership with Castle Point Borough Council

The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) informed the Committee of a number of recent Audit Services Initiatives in partnership with Castle Point Borough Council, which had proved very productive. These included training of this Council's new Auditor by Castle Point, with the intention that another new member of staff will also receive similar training this Autumn; the sharing of the risk assessment being undertaken as part of the Audit Plan, and joint working in respect of special investigations, where necessary, and to cover staff shortfalls. In the long term, it was hoped that the process review exercise could also be undertaken jointly. The resource implications of such initiatives were likely to be neutral.

ii) Computer Audit

The Corporate Director drew the Committee's attention to the need to carry out a detailed audit of the Council's computer systems, and possible ways in which such an audit could be effected. It was suggested that an appropriate strategy would, in partnership with other District Councils, be to determine the combined demand for a computer audit and then to prepare a tender to obtain the service from the private sector. It would therefore be necessary to prepare a specification and identify costings, and to obtain the approval of the potential partners before proceeding. The Committee agreed that preliminary investigations should be carried out by the Corporate Director and staff from the Audit Services Section, following which a further report would be submitted to the Committee identifying likely costs in order that an estimate could be included within the draft budget.

Resolved

That preliminary investigation of the proposals set out above for carrying out a computer audit, in conjunction with other District Councils, be undertaken. (CD(F&ES))

269. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act

NH

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which was the third in a series that had been agreed at the previous meeting. It examined the management of benefits administration and included a 'Checklist for Action' taken from the Audit Commission Handbook. Against each of the Handbook's recommendations was shown an indicator of the extent of the Authority's existing compliance. A number of areas were considered in more detail by the Committee as shown below:

i) Standards

Numbered points 1 and 2 (accuracy and quality control; recovering overpayments)

In reply to a Member question, the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) indicated that details concerning accuracy and quality control would be included within the quarterly performance indicators report. In respect of the recovery of overpayments, it was agreed that all debts should be pursued, and a further report on the practicalities of such a policy would be presented to a future Meeting of the Committee.

ii) Documentation - Clarity

Numbered points 3 and 5. It was indicated that the application proforma is to be reviewed next year; a meeting held some years ago with the benefit user group which included the Citizens Advice Bureau had determined the format of the present document. For blind applicants, the information could be made available in braille.

iii) Response to Telephone Enquiries

Numbered point 9. It was recognised that providing a freephone enquiry number on correspondence would have corporate implications and there was no evidence to suggest that such a facility was required.

Numbered point 10. The need to state when telephone calls would be answered was necessary only for authorities that placed a restriction on telephone contact and would not apply to Rochford.

Numbered point 11. The Corporate Director informed the Committee that every effort is made to contact tenants prior to the implementation of major legislative policy changes, so it was considered unnecessary to open telephone lines in the evenings or at weekends for this purpose.

Numbered Point 13 (the need to confirm telephone conversations in writing). It was explained that at Rochford, applicants would speak direct to the assessors, often in person, rather than with administrative staff, so the need to confirm the content of telephone conversations in writing was, perhaps, less. Some Members suggested that telephone conversations could be recorded, and Officers undertook to evaluate the implications and costs of this suggestion on a Corporate basis.

(iv) Service to Personal Callers

Numbered point 14. It was confirmed that locations and opening times are already being included in letters sent to applicants.

(v) Effective Communication

Numbered point 16 (the need for service level agreements with housing associations). It was noted that, at present, a Service Level Agreement (S.L.A.) exists only with the Moat Housing Association; although other Associations had been contacted, none had expressed a wish to conclude an Agreement. Members considered that, to achieve consistency, SLAs should ideally be completed with all Housing Associations and requested that Officers make further contact, giving positive encouragement to achieve this aim.

N/A

(vi) Quality Control and Performance Monitoring

Numbered point 18 (the need to carry out regular, daily quality control checks on assessment and other work) The Corporate Director informed the Committee that the external auditors had expressed some concern about the extent of existing checking arrangements, but it was recognised that any additional checking would have resource implications. Whilst generally satisfied with current practice and the relatively low error level, Members agreed that continued monitoring was necessary given the external auditors' concern

(vii) Backlogs

Numbered point 24 (the need to act upon notification of cessation of entitlements or payments ending within one working day). The Committee agreed that present arrangements, to deal with such instances within a cheque week, were adequate.

Resolved

That action be taken concerning the Audit Commission's Benefits Administration as outlined in the Head of Services' report and to reflect the views expressed by the Committee as outlined above. (HRHM)

271. **COUNTERING HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD - STAFF DECLARATIONS**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) concerning arrangements for a staff declaration as part of the Authority's action to counter housing benefit fraud and which provided clarification of concerns raised at the Committee's last Meeting. These were as follows:

- the inclusion of the phrase "suspected fraud" in the signed declaration provided by each member of staff which would, it was considered, be unfair and against the rules of natural justice.
- whether the Council should require a declaration regarding any disciplinary action being taken against an Officer in respect of possible fraud, even though the investigation decided there was no proven case.

The Committee was informed of advice received from the Audit Commission in respect of these issues, and it was agreed that the following wording be used in the staff declaration:

"has been subject to disciplinary action which had been substantiated or had left an employment prior to its conclusion, in respect of any aspect of Housing Benefit Fraud".

During discussion, the Committee noted the trend for references to ask more specific questions concerning employees' disciplinary records and clearly the Council would, if specifically asked, need to divulge details of all disciplinary action, even if inconclusive, when providing references. Equally, when considering appointments, the Council would need to request full details of potential employees' disciplinary records, but would not regard instances of unproven disciplinary action as prejudicial to an individual's application.

Resolved

That new staff be required to sign the declaration as set out in the Corporate Director's report (CD(F&ES))

272. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Chief Executive which included the following -

- Summaries of two internal audit reports, concerning Elections - Payment to Canvassers (05) and the Youth Training Scheme (06).
- The up-to-date copy of the monitoring document for the audit report recommendations.
- The monitoring report for the Audit Commission publications.

During discussion, the Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Audit Commission's recommendations in respect of "Measure of Success - Setting and monitoring local performance targets" would be addressed in forthcoming reports on the Government's Best Value initiative; those relating to "All Aboard - a review of Local transport and travel in urban areas outside London" would need to be considered within the Local Transport Plan, about which a Members' seminar was to take place later in the month.

Resolved

- (1) That the recommendations contained within the two audit reports be agreed
- (2) That the Audit Commission publication summary and the additional recommendations arising from the new publications be noted. (CE)

The Meeting closed at 8 45pm



Chairman

Date:

29 Sept. '99

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ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Transportation & Environmental Services Committee

At a Meeting held on 7th July 1999 Present: Councillors V.H. Leach (Chairman), R. Adams, R.S. Allen, D.E. Barnes, C.I. Black, D.M. Ford, Mrs J.E. Ford, K.A. Gibbs, Mrs J.M. Giles, Mrs H.L.A. Glynn, J.E. Grey, A. Hosking, V.D. Hutchings, C.C. Langlands and Mrs M.J. Webster.

Apologies: Councillors G.C. Angus, J. Dickson, D.R. Helson, R.A. Pearson, Mrs M.S. Vince and D.A. Weir.

Substitutes: Councillors G. Fox, P.D. Stebbing, P.F.A. Webster and Mrs M.A. Weir.

273. ESSEX AND SOUTHEND WASTE PLAN - UPDATE

Note:

(1) The Chairman admitted this item of business as urgent in view of its close relationship to the Committee's deliberations on the Waste Strategy for Rochford.

(2) Councillor G. Fox declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of his role as a County Councillor.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives providing an update on the discussions of the Essex Waste Consortium Officers with Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council in respect of revisions to the Essex Waste Plan and providing details of the current timetable and arrangements for the Local Plan Inquiry.

Prior to the commencement of debate, the Head of Corporate Policy & Initiatives indicated that the Local Plan Inquiry timetable was likely to be of six weeks in total with a one week break. The Head of Legal Services advised on an approach made to Legal Counsel with a view to District representation at the Inquiry. As the same Counsel was acting for Chelmsford Borough Council, there would be a need to consult the Borough before proceeding.

During debate and in response to Member questions, Officers indicated/advised that:-

- It would be of value for the Council to endorse the wording of policies developed by the Consortium.
- The County Council had indicated that, whilst its schedule was available for public inspection, it was not part of the Local Planning process at this stage. The Inspector had already indicated that he was unhappy with this approach and would like provision to be made for public representation. Should certain recommendations be placed on deposit after the Inquiry, this would clearly lengthen the Inquiry process.
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council had a role to play from a geographical perspective.
- Landfill facility provision is largely a commercial operation (facilities being privately owned). The indications are that Thurrock Borough Council can currently contain its own waste capacity.
- Materials associated with the Council's recycling trial went to either the Basildon or Southend-on-Sea areas for sorting.
- The necessity for environmental impact assessment studies would depend on the nature of sites.
- The Council would at some stage have to identify small sites to deal with waste across the District. Depending on materials, some of these may be cross-boundary.

Such small sites would deal with the 'top end' of the waste hierarchy, which was in the following order:-

Reduction
Re-use
Recovery (including composting)
Disposal.

- Ecologika's proposals and those of the Consortium fitted together well.
- Proofs of evidence for the Inquiry would be required by the middle of September. A clear, unambiguous, position would need to be presented by the Consortium.
- The work priorities of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives and Head of Housing Health and Community Care could be adjusted to accord with the importance of this subject.
- Any request that the Southend-on-Sea Borough review the possibility of a site within its own boundaries would be inconsistent with Consortium objectives.
- If there were no policies dealing with incineration within a Local Plan, it would be near impossible to prevent the possibility of incineration.
- It was important to divorce financial issues from development of the Waste Local Plan.

During debate reference was made to the importance of ensuring that Legal Counsel could be fully committed to the District's case at Inquiry. There was some concern at the complicated nature of County paperwork in terms of the average person being able to develop an appropriate understanding. Reference was made to evidence that the County had already received several thousand objections to proposals. It was disappointing that the County was not placing certain documents on deposit. The public certainly needed to know the implications of those documents. In terms of its impact on the community, the Waste Plan could be recognised as the largest issue facing the District.

In view of the urgent nature of this and the need to ensure satisfactory detailed consideration was given to the report, it was:-

Resolved

(1) that the report of the Head of Corporate Policy & Initiatives be referred to the Environmental Health Sub-Committee and then onto this Committee's Urgency Sub-Committee as appropriate.

(2) that a Meeting of the Environmental Health Sub-Committee be scheduled for Friday 16th July 1999 for the purpose of considering the report. (HCPT)

274. WASTE STRATEGY - ECOLOGIKA DRAFT REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health & Community Care on the Ecologika draft final reports "From Disposal to Diversion" and "A High Diversion Plan for the District of Rochford".

Mr. K. Collins of Ecologika Ltd was in attendance at the meeting to present the reports. Mr. Collins wished to emphasise that, in his experience, any public bodies involved in campaigns to reject the location of incinerators within their area found that the issues were under debate for a period of many years. Given the recycling process already available within the District, he would not expect to see incineration introduced

In response to Member questions Officers advised of the need for early Council decisions to enable the commencement of work on the recycling contract. Whilst some

Authorities did not collect green waste, the green waste facility had been advertised as a particular feature of the Rochford Recycling System on its introduction.

During debate, Members recognised that the costs associated with recommendations in the Ecologika report could have substantial implications for the Council's capital expenditure programme. Any proposals would clearly need to be looked at on a global basis, taking account of other capital projects.

The following Motion was moved by Councillor G. Fox and seconded by Councillor P.D. Stebbing:-

"(1) That this Authority sets up a Working Group to examine in detail the implications of the suggestions and recommendations in the Ecologika report.

(2) That this Authority obtains as much impartial information as possible on the impact on the environment and public health of the proposals/suggestions contained in the above mentioned report.

(3) That this Authority obtains as much impartial information as possible regarding the impact on the environment and public health of modern incineration.

(4) That in order to facilitate (1) to (3), we work with other Councils as and when necessary".

During debate reference was made to the value of being aware of all options and gaining a detailed knowledge of incineration. Some Members referred to their own experience of the incineration/recycling debate and felt that there would always be opposing views rather than specific clear direction, particularly as incineration was a moving science. The Committee recognised the value of a smaller group of Members giving detailed consideration to the report, particularly bearing in mind the financial constraints. Reference was made to the possibility that some of the publications and reports providing background information on this area could be made available in the Members' Room.

An amendment that the term 'Working Group' be replaced by 'Environmental Health Sub-Committee' and that Paragraphs (2) to (4) of the Motion be deleted was moved by Councillor P.F.A. Webster and seconded by Councillor J.E. Grey. The amendment was won on a show of hands and it was:-

Resolved

That the Environmental Health Sub-Committee be requested to examine in detail the implications of the suggestions and recommendations in the Ecologika report. (HHHCC)

Note: Pursuant to Standing Order 24(4), Councillor G. Fox wished it to be recorded that he had voted against this decision

275. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

276. EMPLOYMENT OF LEGAL COUNSEL

The Head of Legal Services reported on the options available to the Council with regard to the appointment of Legal Counsel to represent the District at the forthcoming Waste Plan Inquiry. He confirmed the advantageous financial arrangements which could be available should Counsel currently under instruction by Chelmsford Borough Council

also be instructed by the Rochford District. The question of professional conflict had already been raised with Counsel and would not be a factor.

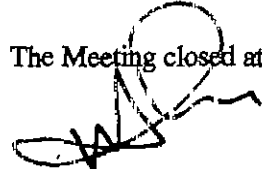
On a Motion moved by Councillor D. E. Barnes and seconded by Mrs. M.J. Webster, it was:-

Resolved

(1) That, subject to the agreement of Chelmsford Borough Council, this Council approach Mr A. Porter QC to represent Rochford District at the forthcoming Waste Plan Inquiry.

(2) That the Finance & General Purposes Committee be requested to identify appropriate monies in respect of such appointment via the mechanism of its Urgency Sub-Committee if appropriate. (HLS)

The Meeting closed at 11.22pm.



Chairman

Date

spminsspjul7

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Services Committee

At a Meeting held on 8th July 1999. Present Councillors R E Vingoe (Chairman), R. Adams, D E Barnes, C I Black, T G Cutmore, J M. Dickson, D M Ford, Mrs J E Ford, G Fox, K.A Gibbs, Mrs J M Giles, J E Grey, Mrs H L A Glynn, A Hosking, Mrs A.R. Hutchings, V D Hutchings, C.C Langlands, V H Leach, Mrs S.J. Lemon, T Livings, C R. Morgan, P D Stebbing, Mrs M S Vince, Mrs M.J Webster, P F A Webster, D A Weir and Mrs M A Weir

Apologies Councillors G S. Angus, Mrs J Hall, D.R. Helson, Mrs. J. Helson, G A. Mockford, R A Pearson and Mrs W M Stevenson

277 PETER WHITEHEAD

The Committee welcomed Mr. Peter Whitehead, Senior Planner who was attending his first meeting of the Planning Services Committee.

278 BLATCHES FARM

The Committee were advised that the Meeting with Essex County Council in relation to Blatches Farm would be taking place on Monday 16th August 1999 in the afternoon.

279 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th June 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

280 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors Mrs H L A Glynn and V.H. Leach each declared Non-Pecuniary Interests in Paragraph 6 of the Schedule of Development Applications and Recommendations (Minute 283) by virtue of knowledge of both the applicant and shopkeepers within the vicinity.

281 DISABLED ACCESS MATTERS

The Chairman advised Members that a disabled access matter audit was being undertaken by Mr Ben Jones, Building Control Manager as a matter of priority and it would be subject of a report to a future meeting..

282 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Members Services which advised Members of the need to appoint one other Member to join the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Services Committee for an Urgency Sub-Committee On a show of hands it was

Resolved

That Councillor D A Weir join Councillor R E Vingoe as Chairman and Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Services Committee to be this Committee's Urgency Sub-Committee (HAMS)

283 SCHEDULE OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Head of Planning Services submitted a Schedule of Development Applications for consideration and a list of Planning Applications and Building Regulation Applications decided under delegation since 17th June 1999

Para. D1 - 98/00618/COU - Land Adjacent 20 Milton Close, Rayleigh

Proposal Change use of highway land to residential garden with erection of brick wall 2 metres high

In noting the Officer's recommendation for approval, the Committee considered that the highway land subject of the application made a valuable contribution to the public amenity of the estate and accordingly it was

Resolved

That the application be refused for the following reason.

- (i) The proposal, if permitted, will be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area; in particular, Milton Close, which serves as a primary access route into the estate, by virtue of the change of use and character of the land and the enclosure of part by 2 metre high walls and gates together with the likely pressure to enclose the remainder and, as such, is contrary policy H26 of the Council's Local Plan

Furthermore, the Local Planning Authority considers that if permitted, the application would provide a precedent for other similar development elsewhere in the locality, which could further reduce the amenity to residents afforded collectively by each of the small areas within the estate.

Para. 2 - 99/00193/COU - Riverside Village Holiday Park, Creeksea Ferry Road, Canewdon

Proposal: Change use of site for 50 touring caravans to a site for 30 static caravans.

Mindful of the Officer's recommendation for approval, the Committee considered nevertheless that the use of the site for touring caravans and camping made a valuable contribution to tourism within the District but also considered the change in character and appearance that would arise from this proposal unacceptable.

The comments received from the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives were also noted

Resolved

That the application be refused for the following reasons

- (i) The change of use of the area of the holiday park, as proposed, would result in the loss of a significant amount of the total facilities available in the District for touring caravans and camping. To lose such facilities would be contrary to the policy of the Council to promote tourism, as set out in the Local Plan First Review Policy LT15 and to diversify the tourism product available in the District. It may also lead to pressure, in the future, to develop alternative sites with consequent harmful impact on the character and amenity of this predominantly Green Belt District in which any such proposals are located
- (ii) The estuarial area in which the site is located is characterised by minimal tree and hedge cover. As a result, in the view of the Authority, the proposed use of the site would have a greater, more permanent and prolonged detrimental impact on the visual character of this area than the present transient appearance of the touring and camping use. Despite the fact that the adjacent static caravan uses have landscaping enclosure and that a similar reduction in impact could be created in relation to this site, it remains the case that such landscaping measures are not in keeping with the natural character and appearance of the area and therefore would have a harmful alien impact

Para 3 - 99/00213/FUL - The Dome (Formerly the Dome Country Club), The Dome Caravan Park, Lower Road, Hockley

Proposal. Remove existing external staircase and store and erect two storey extension.

Resolved

That the application be refused planning permission for the reasons set out in the schedule

Para 4 - 99/00238/FUL - FitzWimarc School, Hockley Road, Rayleigh

Proposal. Demolish existing temporary classrooms and erect single storey art department building.

Officers reported the views of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management and the applicants response, in particular the willingness to retain the existing chain link type fencing on the northern boundary of the site.

The recommendation was agreed subject to deleting Condition 5 and inserting in its place a non-standard condition, the heading of which would be to retain the existing chain link fencing and or any replacement fencing to be of a similar type, details to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the fencing to be retained

Resolved

That the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the schedule as amended above.

Para. 5 - 98/00740/COU - 41 Greensward Lane, Hockley, Essex

Proposal: Change use of part of highway verge to incorporate into residential curtilage of existing dwelling (variation of Condition 3 of ROC 353/57)

Officers reported responses received from Hockley Parish Council as well as the contents of the applicant's agents letter to the Committee dated 8th July 1999, in particular the deletion from the application enclosure by the anticipated dwarf open post and rail fence

Amend refusal reason 1 to read

- (i) The proposal, if permitted, will be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the change of use and character of the land and the likely pressure for its enclosure and as such is contrary to Policy H26 of the Council's Local Plan.

Resolved

That the application be refused for the reason set out in the schedule, as amended above

Para 6 - 99/00075/OUT - Adjacent 200 Ashington Road, Rochford

Proposal Outline application to erect two semi-detached dwellings

Consideration of the application was deferred for a Members' site visit

Resolved

That a Members' site visit be arranged (HAMS)

The meeting closed at 9 00pm

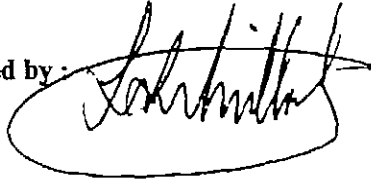
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**SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED BY
PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE 8 JULY 1999**

The enclosed reports have been approved by :

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All planning applications are considered against the background of current Town and Country Planning legislation, rules, orders and circulars, and any development, structure and locals plans issued or made thereunder. In addition, account is taken of any guidance notes, advice and relevant policies issued by statutory authorities.

Each planning application included in this Schedule and any attached list of application which have been determined under powers delegated to the Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) is filed with all papers including representations received and consultation replies as a single case file.

All building regulation applications are considered against the background of the relevant Building Regulations and approved documents, the Building Act 1984, together with all relevant British Standards

The above documents can be made available for inspection as Committee background papers at the office of Planning Services, Acacia House, East Street, Rochford

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PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE 8TH JULY 1999

DEFERRED ITEM

- D1 98/00618/COU Anita Wood PAGE 3
Change Use of Highway Land to Residential Garden with
Erection of Brick Wall 2m High
Land Adjacent 20 Milton Close Rayleigh

SCHEDULE ITEMS

- 2 99/00193/COU Kevin Steptoe PAGE 8
Change of Use of a Site for 50 Touring Caravans to a Site for 30
Static Caravans
Riverside Village Holiday Park Creeksea Ferry Road Canewdon
- 3 99/00213/FUL Peter Whitehead PAGE 13
Remove Existing External Staircase and Erect Two Storey
Extension
Dome Country Club Dome Caravan Park Lower Road
- 4 99/00238/FUL Anita Wood PAGE 17
Demolish Existing Temporary Classrooms and Erect Single
Storey Art Department Building.
Fitzwimarc Secondary School Hockley Road Rayleigh
- 5 98/00740/COU Mark Mann PAGE 21
Change Use of Part of Highway Verge to Incorporate into
Residential Curtilage of Existing Dwelling (Variation of
Condition 3 of ROC/353/57)
41 Greensward Lane Hockley Essex
- 6 99/00075/OUT Anita Wood PAGE 25
Outline Application to Erect 2 Semi-Detached Dwellings
Land Adjacent 200 Ashingdon Road Rochford

Committee Report

D1.



Rochford District Council

To the meeting of **PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE**
On **8 July 1999**
Report of **CORPORATE DIRECTOR (LAW, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)**
Title **CHANGE OF USE OF HIGHWAY LAND TO RESIDENTIAL GARDEN WITH ERECTION OF BRICK WALL 2M HIGH LAND ADJACENT 20 MILTON CLOSE, RAYLEIGH**
Author : **Anita Wood**

Application No **98/00618/COU**
Applicant **MRS CATHERINE ROBINSON**
Zoning . **EXISTING RESIDENTIAL**
Parish **RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL**

Deferred Report

- 1.1 This application was deferred at the last meeting for a Member site visit, as mentioned at the site visit discussions continue with the County Surveyor regarding pedestrian visibility splays to the vehicular access to be formed to the site and further revisions to the wall and access details maybe necessary to accommodate these requirements.
- 1.2 **Rayleigh Town Council** have responded to the reconsultation on revised plans (second round) reaffirming their original objections
- 1.3 To assist Members, the report and recommendation substantially as presented to the last Committee meeting are reprinted below, the conditions have been expanded to give further control

Planning Application Details

- 1 4 The application site is a property located on the junction of Milton Close and an access road The application proposes to change the use of a strip of land outside the property boundary from highway land to residential
- 1 5 Part of the parcel of land subject of this change of use to the East of the property is also to be enclosed by a 2m high brick wall and used for parking purposes This area is to be accessed via the garage access road and was introduced as a revision to the original scheme due to the responses gained from the consultations.

APV

- 1 6 The property also has a garage to the rear of the site also reached from the access road Milton Close is part of the main estate road serving this housing area, and as such the view and appearance along the frontage of the site is important, however, this part of the site is not proposed to be enclosed, and Conditions 3, 7 and 8 refer. The character of the flank frontage facing the access road is however, very different, it comprises a very 'hard appearance' of either garages right up to the access road or approx. 2m fencing.

Relevant Planning History

- 1.7 This site has no previous planning history.

Consultations and Representations

First Round

- 1.8 **Rayleigh Town Council** strongly opposes the application on the basis that it is against the Town Council's policy to relinquish highway land to residential garden and request enforcement action be pursued as it is understood parking of vehicles already occurs.
- 1.9 **Essex County Council (County Surveyor)** has no objection to the proposal subject to the addition of certain conditions
- 1 10 Four neighbour letters have been received which mainly state that whilst there may be no objection to the principle of converting the land to a residential garden, there is concern that the whole strip of land would be used solely for the parking of vehicles which would appear unsightly.

Second Round

- 1 11 Following the revisions to the original scheme to enclose the area to be used for the parking of vehicles, the Parish Council, Ward Members and local residents were reconsulted. No responses have been received

Material Planning Considerations

- 1 12 The main consideration is the relevance of the proposal to the current development plan, Rochford District Local Plan (First Review) 1995. In addition there is also case histories on other similar types of proposal
- 1 13 The site is designated as within an area of existing residential development and within the relevant chapter of the Local Plan there is policy H26 directly relating to the enclosure of grass verges.

▪ **Enclosure of Grass Verges**

Policy H26 of the Local Plan was introduced, as there were an increasing number of applications in recent years from householders wishing to bring into their use highway grass verges to form part of their private gardens. This policy has many criteria which have to be provided for and this application does so as follows.

RPV.

i. The contribution made by the site to the general amenity and character of the area.

The application site is part of a housing estate given outline planning permission in April 1970 with reserved details approved in March 1971. The land was part of the original housing layout yet there is no condition on either the outline or reserved matters approval to retain the land for amenity purposes. The cobbled area was a part of the original landscaping scheme though. There are no trees on this strip of land and the side road is used as an entrance to the garages of properties off Milton Close. It is difficult to argue that this piece of land at the side that is to be enclosed, fulfills a necessary function as amenity land.

ii. The contribution made by the site to the overall design, layout and symmetry of the estate or locality,

Number 20 Milton Close is part of a row of four terraced properties and as such number 16 has a similar arrangement. However, the landscaping scheme from the original layout of the housing estate shows no clear pattern or arrangement and it could be argued that the strip of land in question makes no key contribution, particularly that element at the side to be enclosed.

iii. Highway safety,

Since the County Surveyor holds no objections to the proposal as long as the conditions advised are fulfilled clearly it is considered there is no detriment to highway safety.

iv. The design of any enclosure, wall or fence,

The area to be enclosed is to be done so by a 2m high brick wall. The materials and design of the wall can be agreed with the Local Planning Authority so as to ensure a high standard of design and the longevity of the wall.

vi. The retention of important amenity trees

There are no trees on the area of land proposed to be enclosed.

vii. The relevant provisions of Appendix 1.

The provisions of Appendix 1 continue the themes and objectives of policy H26 with regard to the design and layout of an estate and its general character, highway safety means of enclosure and the retention of trees. All of which have been dealt with in the text above.

■ PAST CASES

There have been past cases elsewhere in the District which on their merits have been found to be acceptable or not depending on the particular circumstances involved. The most notable case of relevance here was on this estate not far away:

ROC/321/88, Change of use of highway land to residential garden and erect 2 metre close boarded fence, 11 Blackmore Walk, Rayleigh.

1.14 This site is within the same estate and was similarly a corner property. The application was refused on the grounds that the application would detract from the open character and appearance of the estate as well as giving rise to a precedent for other development elsewhere in the locality.

1.15 The application was then taken to appeal where it was allowed.

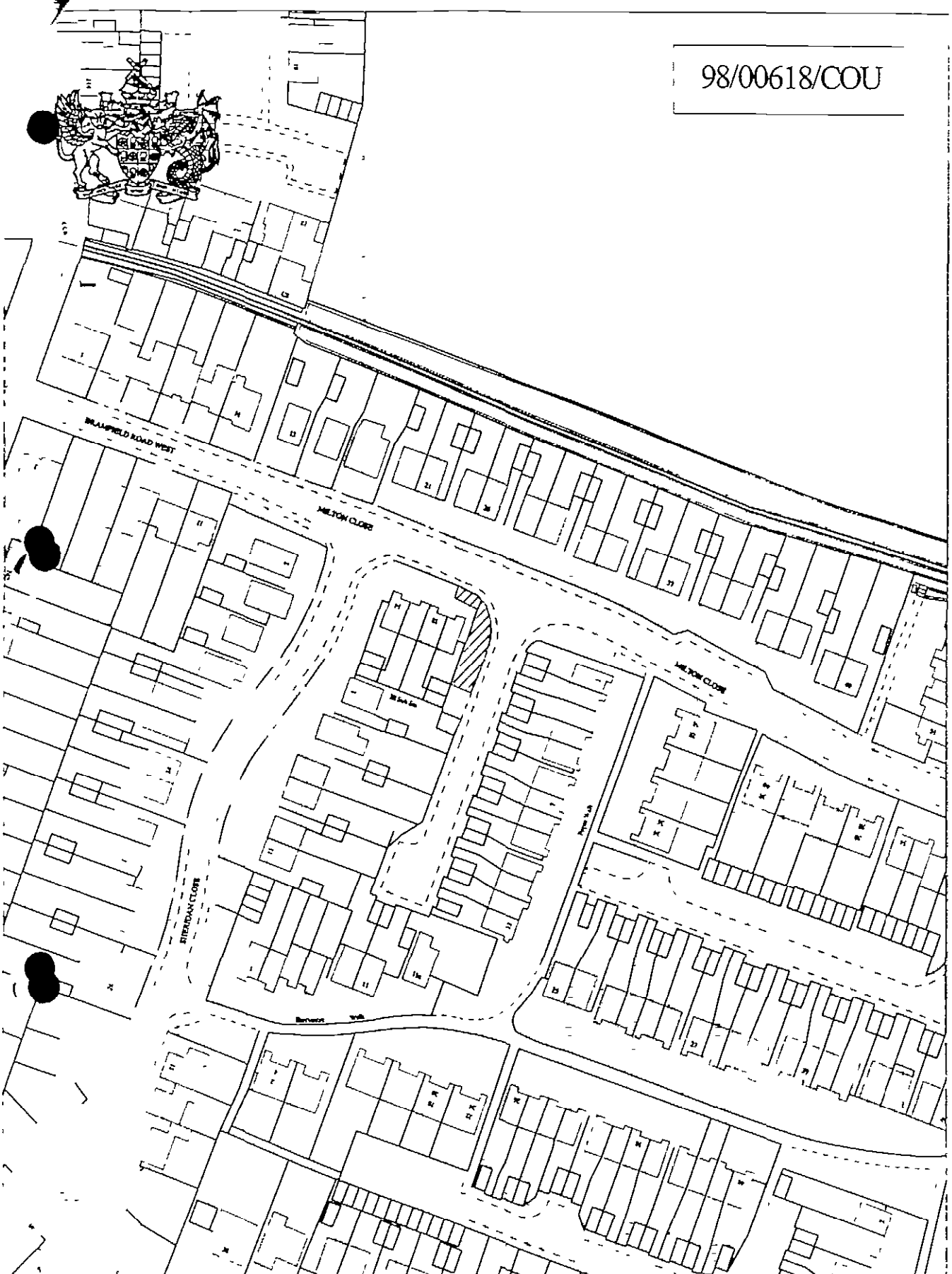
Conclusion

- 1 16 20 Milton Close is situated on a modern housing estate which in part is laid out on the principle of pedestrian walkways to the front and vehicular access at the rear. The application site adjoins an access road to the garages of the properties located along Popes Walk and Barrymore Walk. The fronts of the properties have an attractive character with grassed areas and maintained front gardens. It is important that the grassed area should be retained. However, the area that is proposed to be enclosed is currently cobbled, hard landscaping in relatively poor condition which is related to the more enclosed vehicular side of the houses, characterised by a hard appearance of either garages or fences.
- 1 17 The question of precedent has been taken into consideration although the estate only has limited areas of similar design but each case would be dealt with on its merits.

Recommendation that this Committee resolves:

- 1 18 That the Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) recommendation of approval subject to the following heads of conditions is agreed:
- 1 SC4 Time limits – full standard
 - 2 SC14 Materials to be used
 - 3 No vehicles, trailer, boat or caravans shall be parked on the area shown hatched on the
 - 4 approved plan.
 - 5 SC68 Vehicular access – details
 - 6 SC66 Pedestrian visibility splays
SC75 Parking & Turning Space (amended)
No development shall commence, before precise details (including surface finish) of the provision for the parking of vehicles within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The site shall not be used for parking before any scheme of details as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, has been implemented in its entirety and made available for use. Thereafter, such provision shall be retained and maintained in the approved form and used for no other purpose which would
 - 7 impede the parking of vehicles.
 - 8 SC19 PD Restricted Fences
SC16 PD Restricted – Hardsurfacing
 - 9 Prior to the use of the land for the purposes hereby permitted any fence, wall or other means of enclosure previously erected thereon shall be dismantled and removed from the site. Furthermore, the 2m high brick wall and gates as detailed on the revised plan date stamped 4 February 1999 shall be erected and completed prior to the use of the land for the purposes hereby permitted in accordance with details, materials and external finish to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall thereafter be retained in the approved form.

98/00618/COU



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Committee Report

2.



Rochford District Council

To the meeting of: **PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE**

On **8 JULY 1999**

Report of **CORPORATE DIRECTOR (LAW, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)**

Title **CHANGE OF USE OF A SITE FOR 50 TOURING CARAVANS TO A SITE FOR 30 STATIC CARAVANS**

**RIVERSIDE VILLAGE HOLIDAY PARK
CREEKSEA FERRY ROAD
CANEWDON**

Author **Kevin Steptoe**

Application No **99/00193/COU**

Applicant **MR K PARKES**

Zoning **METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT / CARAVAN PARK**

Parish **CANEWDON**

Planning Application Details

- 2.1 The application site is part of an existing non residential caravan park. At present the land to which this application relates is used for touring vans and tents. The application seeks to change this use from touring vans to static units. Instead of the 50 pitches that are currently provided for touring vans 30 pitches are anticipated for static units.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.2 Three applications have been made in the past for changes of the use of land to allow the provision of static vans. These have all been permitted. Applications have also been made for a change to the use of recreational land to allow the provision of touring units. This was originally refused, but a later application was permitted.
- 2.3 Two applications for permission to develop a managers residential unit on the site have both been refused, as have two applications to extend the permitted period of occupancy of the units on the site. One of these was appealed and dismissed. The permitted occupancy period remains as 1st March to the end of October each year.
- 2.4 In 1996 a planning application was submitted and approved allowing the development of a sewage treatment plant for the site.

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Consultations and Representations

- 2.5 The **County Surveyor** indicates that the proposal is de minimis in highway terms
- 2.6 **English Nature** indicate that the proposals are not connected with the management of the adjacent SSSI and would be likely to have a significant impact if the occupancy period is not restricted to that of the existing permissions, ie March to October. If occupancy is restricted in that way it would overcome any likely adverse impact on the integrity of the SSSI site.
- 2.7 **Canewdon Parish Council** object to the proposals. It is considered that the scheme will contravene policies LRT10 and CC1 of the Essex Replacement Structure Plan Deposit Draft. (These are referred to more fully below). It is also indicated that numerous applications have been refused in the past and that there has been no change of circumstances to change this approach
- 2.8 **Anglian Water** has no objections.
- 2.9 The **Environment Agency** has no objections.
- 2.10 The **Head of Housing, Health and Community Care** has no objections, subject to an informative being attached to any permission advising the applicant that any new units must be sited in accordance with conditions attached to the site licence. It is suggested that the applicant contact the authority to discuss this matter. It is also suggested that standard informative SI16 is attached to any permission

Material Planning Considerations

- 2.11 The issues to be addressed here are:

- 1 the visual impact the proposals will have bearing in mind the location within the metropolitan green belt and other designated landscape zones in the Local Plan,
- 2 any impact the proposals have on the integrity of wildlife sites, and,
- 3 any other impact the proposals may have in relation to strategic and local policies.

1 Visual Impact

- 2.12 Visually, the land is currently open, with little in the way of distinctive boundaries and is in use for the parking of touring vans and tents. The remainder of the park however is well landscaped with the static vans appearing within a landscaped setting. This presents something of a contrast then. The location is adjacent to the River Crouch and on the fringe of Wallasea Island. The landscape here is generally characterized by lack of tree cover and flat open views. This is form of landscape that it is indicated the authority is seeking to retain in policy RC7 of the Local Plan.
- 2.13 A compromise needs to be struck however. The caravan site use is established and the proposal accords with both policies LT15 and LT16 of the Local Plan. If it were to follow the general landscape character of the area, with few trees, the vans and static units would be highly visible in views of the area. The landscaping of the site in this case then is considered to be more acceptable in terms the policy aims of green belt designation and the special landscape area. Permitting this application, with appropriate landscaping conditions, would be likely to further increase the tree cover in the area, which, whilst not strictly in accordance with the landscape character of the area, would be more beneficial than leaving the current use ie the touring units in place.

2 Integrity of Wildlife sites

2.14 In relation to wildlife interest in the area, the application site is adjacent to an SSSI and is designated as being within the Roach Valley Nature Conservation Zone in the Local Plan. Again the current use of the site must be held in mind when considering the impact of the proposals. The applicants have indicated a willingness to accept a similar time limit restriction for any new units ie no occupation over the four months November to February inclusive. The land is currently well used for touring vehicles with the consequence that the surface is damaged and, as indicated above, there is little landscaping.

2.15 Over winter is the crucial time at which disturbance to the wildlife on the SSSI site should be avoided. Given the current use of and nature of the site, the willingness to forgo winter occupation of the units and the comments of English Nature it is not considered that the proposals, suitably conditioned, will have a harmful wildlife impact.

3 Other strategic and local policies

2.16 In relation to other policy objectives, the Canewdon Parish Council highlight the emerging policies of the Structure Plan. In particular policies LRT10 and CC1 are identified. These are emerging policies and should not be given as much weight as can be attached to the current Structure Plan policies. However they are never the less similar to the existing policies.

2.17 The general thrust of the policy is not to permit new sites and allow those existing to expand only where significant improvements are achieved and not at all within the green belt. This must be tempered by the Local Plan designation which includes this site within an existing caravan park and gives general support to the development and retention of tourist facilities. In addition we must be aware, as set out above, that this land is already in use for accommodation purposes (touring units) so it would be difficult to argue that a new or extended use is being established here.

2.18 The Parish Council also highlights emerging policy CC1, similar to current strategic policy seeking to protect the undeveloped coast. Local Plan Policy RC9 – Coastal Protection Belt also applies. If this site were currently undeveloped and not identified in the Local Plan as a caravan site then the authority would be able to apply the policy objectives of policy CC1 without compromise. However it cannot be argued that the application site represents the undeveloped coastline that the strategic policy seeks to retain and, in addition, as set out above, granting permission here could well result in landscape improvements rather than a further detrimental impact. This is a further objective of the strategic policy.

Conclusion

2.19 Not all of the policy thrusts of the Local and Structure Plans are met by these proposals. This is not an uncommon situation. However it is felt that the impact of the change of use sought will generally be of a beneficial nature when measured against the range of policy issues in the plans.

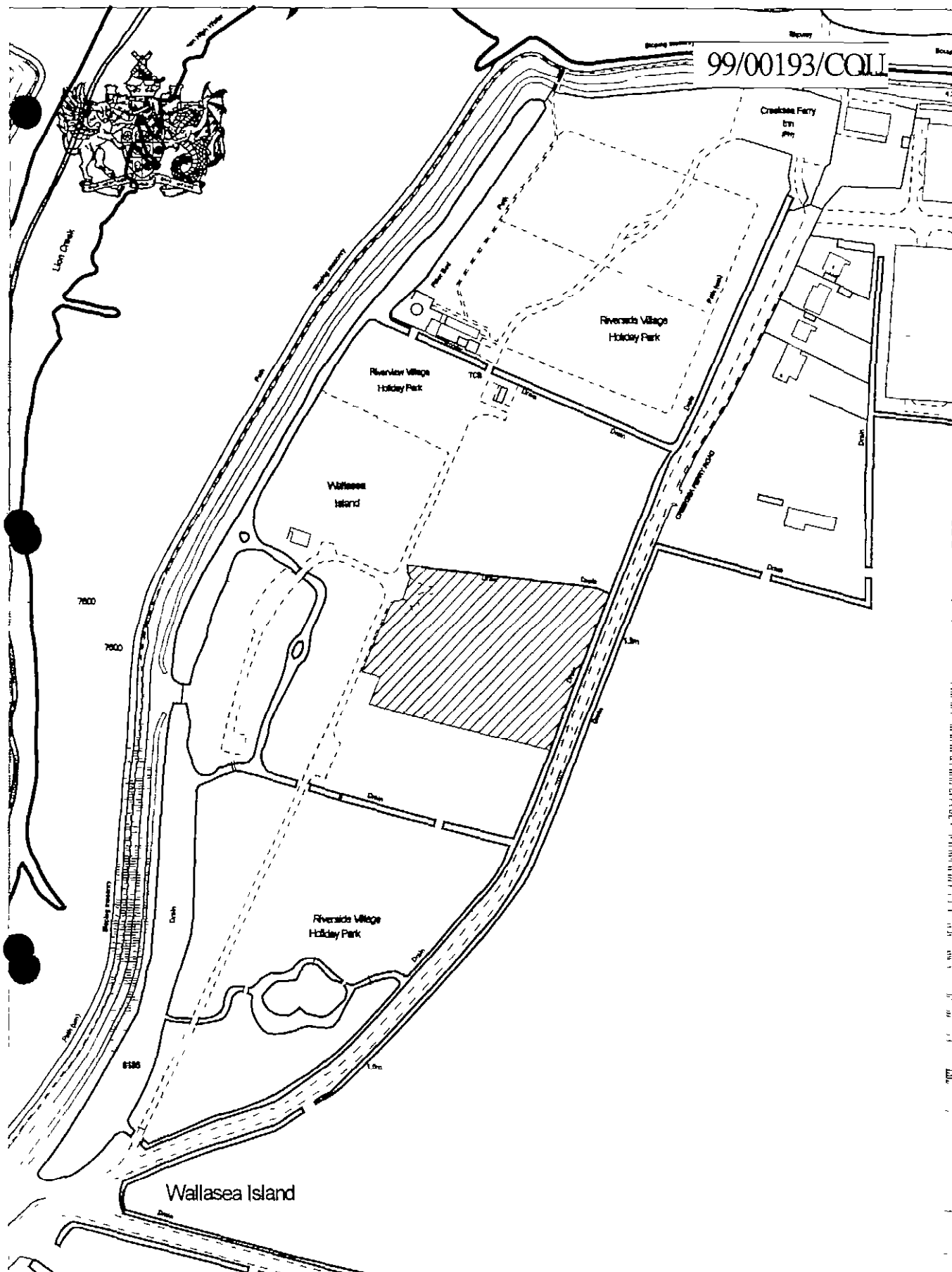
Recommendation that this Committee resolves

2.20 That the application be approved subject to the following condition heads:

- 1 SC4 Time limits full – standard
- 2 SC34 Floodlighting prohibited
- 3 SC59 Landscaping
- 4 None of the static caravan units, hereby permitted to be placed on the site, shall be occupied for any part of the period commencing on (and including) 1st November in any year and terminating on (and including) the last day of February in the subsequent year

- 5 No static caravan units shall be placed on the site before the use of the site as a location for the parking of touring caravans and for tents has ceased and all such touring caravans and tents have been removed. At no time, once the use hereby permitted has commenced, shall the use recommence for the siting of touring caravans or tents.
- 6 At no time, once the use hereby permitted has commenced, shall more than 30 static caravans be placed on the site at any one time

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Committee Report

3.



Rochford District Council

To the meeting of **PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE**
On **8th JULY 1999**
Report of **CORPORATE DIRECTOR (LAW, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)**
Title : **REMOVE EXISTING EXTERNAL STAIRCASE AND STORE AND
ERECT TWO STOREY EXTENSION
(99/00213/FUL)
THE DOME (FORMALLY THE DOME COUNTRY CLUB), THE
DOME CARAVAN PARK, LOWER ROAD, HOCKLEY**
Author **PETER WHITEHEAD**

Application No **99/00213/FUL**
Applicant **MR. H. A. BAKER**
Zoning : **METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT, CARAVAN PARK**
Parish **HULLBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL**

Planning Application Details

- 3.1 The building to which this planning application relates is three-storied and situated at the entrance to the long established caravan site known as The Dome Caravan Park
- 3.2 The application proposes the erection of a two storey extension to the south elevation of the building. The extension measures some 5m x 6.5m x 7.1m in height and has a pitched roof
- 3.3 The site benefits from planning permission to convert the first and second floors from a self-contained flat into bed and breakfast accommodation. Access to the first floor is currently gained via an unenclosed external staircase, which does not comply with the Building Regulations. The proposed extension accommodates the necessary staircase, together with a reception area and further bedroom/en-suite bathroom to serve the bed and breakfast use. The proposal would add 52sq m of habitable floorspace to the building (excluding the area taken up by the staircase)
- 3.4 The application also includes the removal of the existing staircase and the demolition of a single storey store measuring 2.8m x 3.1m x 4m in height.
- 3.5 The applicant has submitted a short statement in support of his proposal, which reads as follows:

"We think the proposal is the optimum solution to providing an external staircase to the first floor as required by the Building Regulations. Enclosing the existing external staircase would be visually unsatisfactory and not user friendly"

636

REV

The proposal has these merits.-

1. *It replaces an existing single storey structure as well as the existing external staircase, which are both 'poor development' -- providing a significant 'planning gain.'*
2. *It represents a marginal addition to a large commercial building which will enhance it aesthetically and functionally.*
3. *It may not be as minimalist as a puritan green belt devotee would wish, but any smaller scheme would compromise both the quality of the entrance to the accommodation and render the first floor space unusable without achieving any discernible reduction in what has to be a two storey structure.*
4. *A narrower extension would look odd; cost no less, and by eliminating the bedroom will make the project even more commercially risky and reduce viability.*
5. *The Rochford District has few bed and breakfast establishments*
6. *It will compliment the pub, which is under utilised.*
7. *There is a discernible demand for budget overnight accommodation.*
8. *There is ample unused car parking.*

Conclusion. - the proposal will provide an attractive well lit, suitably spacious reception area and a wide, well lit modern staircase to meet current standards for a public building of this type. The staircase will be wider than the minimum required and have a mid-way landing for additional safety.

I commend what I know is a quality project which has been many months in gestation."

Relevant Planning History

- 3.6 The origins of the Dome Caravan Park and Country Club predate the planning system.
- 3.7 The first records of the Dome Country Club, dating back to the late 1950s, reveal that at that time the building was two-storied, flat roofed and topped by a modest dome feature. Single storey extensions were later added to the front and rear elevations (providing a lounge bar and shop/office) and first floor extensions were provided to both sides. In addition, a pitched roof, incorporating dormer windows, was added to the building. The building's second floor accommodation was created within this roofspace.
- 3.8 More recently, planning permission was granted to change the use of the ground floor from a private members club to a public house, ref CU/0316/94 and the first and second floors to bed and breakfast accommodation, ref F/0594/98. The former permission was granted on appeal.

Consultations and Representations

- 3.9 **Hullbridge Parish Council** object on the grounds that the proposal constitutes excessive development in the Green Belt and will disrupt the car parking arrangements.
- 3.10 The **County Surveyor** has no objection to the proposal, subject to a condition requiring adequate space within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles.
- 3.11 The **Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives** notes that the preamble to Policy LT16 of the Rochford District Local Plan states that extensions to existing holiday caravan parks will normally be refused. However, he clarifies that this policy relates to extensions to the areas of caravan parks, not to any buildings within them. Having said this, he goes on to state that Green Belt policy is against the construction of new buildings or extensions to existing buildings, except in very special circumstances and notes that no very special circumstances are apparent from the application itself. Furthermore, he considers that there is scope to improve the design of the proposal.
- 3.12 The **Head of Housing and Community Care** has no adverse comments, subject to the Standard Informative S116 (Control of Nuisances) being attached to any consent granted.

Material Planning Considerations

- 3.13 The proposed extension would provide an internal staircase, reception area and further bedroom to serve a bed and breakfast establishment
- 3.14 Policy LT15 of the Rochford District Local Plan states that the Local Planning Authority will promote tourism and encourage the development of facilities for visitors in the District. However, the text explains that the development of such facilities should be compatible with other policies in the Local Plan.
- 3.15 The principal consideration is, therefore, whether the proposal is compatible with Green Belt and other relevant policies and, if not, whether very special circumstances exist which warrant a relaxation of those policies
- 3.16 No policy in the Rochford District Local Plan supports the principle of extending such premises per se. Whilst it would be reasonable to allow a house which also operated as a bed and breakfast establishment to extend by the normal 35sq.m allowed for by Policy GB7 of the Local Plan, the flat above the public house was extended by 53sq.m, when the second floor was added. Although the current proposal should not strictly be considered against Policy GB7 because it proposes additional commercial floorspace, it is nevertheless useful to note that the floorspace currently proposed (52sq.m) added to that of the second floor (53sq.m) would be 105sq.m, precisely three times that allowed for under the policy. It should also be noted that the building benefits from other extensions to the front and rear, which provide a shop/office and extension to the bar area.
- 3.17 The application includes the removal of the existing external staircase, together with the demolition of a single storey store having a floorspace of 78sq.m. These elements do not represent the same bulk, mass or floorspace as the proposed extension and it is not considered, therefore, that the proposal represents an overall 'planning gain.'
- 3.18 Furthermore, it is further considered that the extension, by reason of its design, visual mass and substantial projection out from the side of the building, would appear out of character with the existing building and detract from both the appearance of the building and the surrounding environs, which is designated as a Special Landscape Area as well as Metropolitan Green Belt

Conclusion

- 3.19 It is not considered that the proposal complies with normal Green Belt policy
- 3.20 Whilst an application simply proposing a modest enclosed staircase, together with the removal of the existing staircase and store, may merit a recommendation of approval, it is considered that the current proposal is excessive in terms of its bulk and inclusion of additional habitable floorspace
- 3.21 It is not considered that the points raised in the applicant's statement amount to very special circumstances justifying a relaxation of normal policy. Refusal is therefore recommended

Recommendation that this Committee Resolves

- 3.22 The Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) recommends that this application be refused planning permission for the following reasons:
- 1 RFR9 Green Belt – Standard Reason
 - 2 The proposed extension, by reason of its visual bulk and projection from the side of the building, would constitute a discordant and unduly dominant feature, detrimental to the character of the existing building and to that of the surrounding area, which falls within a designated Special Landscape Area.



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Committee Report

4.



Rochford District Council

To the meeting of **PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE**

On , **8th JULY 1999**

Report of **CORPORATE DIRECTOR (LAW, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)**

Title **DEMOLISH EXISTING TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS AND ERECT
SINGLE STOREY ART DEPARTMENT BUILDING
FITZWIMARC SCHOOL, HOCKLEY ROAD, RAYLEIGH**

Author : **ANITA WOOD**

Application No. **99/00238/FUL**

Applicant **THE FITZWIMARC SCHOOL**

Zoning **SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Parish **RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL**

Planning Application Details

- 4.1 This application proposes to demolish the existing temporary classrooms located to the north of the main school adjacent to The Lavers residential accommodation and replace these with a single story art department building. The building has a footprint of approximately 481sqm and is of a hipped roof design. The internal layout of the building will consist of an entrance lobby, three classrooms, a staff resource room, a kiln room, an IT bay and several small store rooms (7 in total as well as a plant room that will hold the boiler).
- 4.2 As well as the temporary classrooms the existing cycle sheds are also to be demolished. The school advise that they have discussed the plans with the warden of The Lavers and have agreed to construct a close boarded or similar fence along the rear boundary where the existing cycle sheds are located and a planting strip is to be placed to the east of this.

Relevant Planning History

- 4.3 The School premise has a fairly extensive planning history, including applications within this decade. The most notable of these were on approval for the erection of a multi purpose sports hall to the rear of the school (F/628/95/ROC), an all weather sports pitch (F/0338/94/ROC) allowed on appeal and associated floodlighting (F/0339/94/ROC) which was refused. The original relocatable classrooms now being replaced were approved under CC/879/90/ROC.

REV

Consultations and Representations

- 4.4 **Rayleigh Town Council** raises no objections or observations on the application
- 4.5 **Essex County Council (County Surveyor)** raises no objection to the proposal
- 4.6 **Essex County Council (County Planner)** makes no strategic planning comment on the application
- 4.7 **The Environment Agency** has no objection to the proposal.
- 4.8 **The Head of Housing, Health and Community Care** has no adverse comments subject to the standard informative S116 (Control of Nuisances) being attached to any grant of consent.
- 4.9 **Anglian Water (Developer Services)** has no objection subject to details of foul and surface water drainage having first been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority
- 4.10 A letter has been received from the resident of No 31 The Lavers who raises concern for the possible loss of light to their bungalow

Material Planning Considerations

- 4.11 The main issues to be considered in this case are Local Plan policy and the impact of the proposed building in terms of siting, design and external appearance.

▪ **Local Plan Policy**

- 4.12 There are no direct policies referring to extensions to schools. However the proposals map indicates the entire premises as Existing Secondary School Chapter 10 of the Rochford District Local Plan First Review 1995 identifies that there may be pressure on existing schools arising from new housing development. As demand increases, classrooms may become overcrowded and unsatisfactory. As such it is preferable for permanent facilities that would better serve the school

▪ **Impact on Residential Amenity**

- 4.13 The building has been designed with a hipped roof, which reduces bulk, and the internal layout has been designed with consideration for the residents at The Lavers. Taking the building by each elevation,
1. There is limited fenestration in the north wall elevation that faces the Lavers residential unit, although there is also three velux roof windows and a small roof dormer projection with obscured glazing. Only one classroom faces out onto this elevation as does the staff resource room the kiln room, clay store and the boiler room/stores are also on this side of the building
 2. The cycle sheds that are to be removed are to be relocated under a canopy to the west elevation, an elevation which also has roof lights and minimal fenestration reducing overlooking to the two separate bungalows (which are also part of The Lavers). This elevation also faces out onto the schools playground
 3. The south elevation faces the school and is the main entrance to the building, two of the classroom look out from this elevation and as such the elevation has the most fenestration
 4. The fire exits are located on the east elevation, which faces out onto the schools playing field.

- 4 14 With regard to the external appearance, the building has a modern appearance, although this is not unsuitable for an educational use. The materials to be used are also sympathetic to the surrounding buildings (although it has been confirmed that the boarded paneling is not to be used due to expense).
- 4 15 Whilst there may be potentially other possible sites within the school grounds for such a building there are some benefits to this location. This site is close to the main building, and is closer to connect to the main school services. The land is also being re-used since there are already two temporary classrooms on the site.

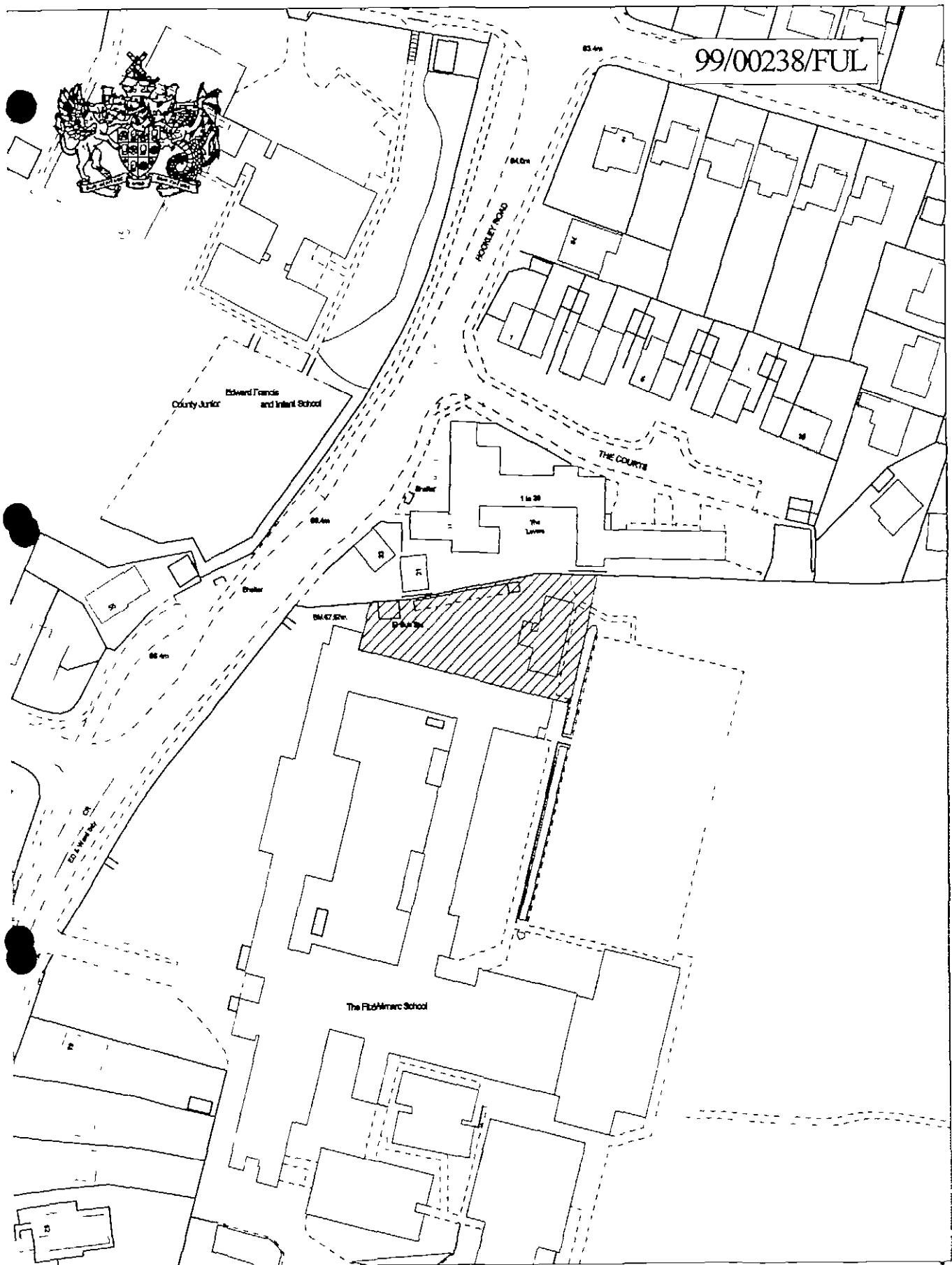
Conclusion

- 4 16 It is considered that the proposed art department building has been designed so as to reduce to an acceptable level any detrimental impact upon the amenities of the adjoining residential units. The internal layout and the external appearance of the building have been carefully considered and the siting of the building removes the need to take up further valuable space within the school grounds.

Recommendation that this Committee resolves:

- 4.17 The Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) recommends that application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1 SC4 Time limits – Full
- 2 SC14 Materials to be Used
- 3 SC90 Surface Water Drainage
- 4 SC91 Foul Water Drainage
- 5 SC51 Enclosure/Screening Details
- 6 SC58 Landscaping Design – Details (Reserved Matters)
- 7 SC22 PD Restricted Windows Above FFFL
- 8 SC23 PD Restricted OBS



99/00238/FUL

Edward Francis
County Junior
and Infant School

83.4m

ROBERT ROAD

84.0m

THE COURTIS

1 in 20

88.4m

86.4m

86.4m

The Fitzwilliam School

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Committee Report

5.



Rochford District Council

To the meeting of: **PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE**

On . **8 July 1999**

Report of **CORPORATE DIRECTOR (LAW, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)**

Title . **CHANGE USE OF PART OF HIGHWAY VERGE TO INCORPORATE INTO RESIDENTIAL CURTILAGE OF EXISTING DWELLING (VARIATION OF CONDITION 3 OF ROC/353/57)**

41 GREENSWARD LANE HOCKLEY ESSEX

Author . **Mark Mann**

Application No: **98/00740/COU**

Applicant **MR & MRS A C EDEN**
Zoning **RESIDENTIAL**

Parish. **HOCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Planning Application Details

- 5.1 This application relates to the change the use of part of the grass verge in front of a detached dwelling on the corner of Greensward Lane and Graham Close into an extension to the dwellings residential curtilage. The application relates to only part of the highway verge, that immediately beyond the front boundary wall/fence and this measures approximately 3.5 metres in width and is in part occupied by an existing hedge. The applicant anticipates that the boundary between the proposed curtilage extension and the remaining verge would be delineated by a dwarf open post and rail fence as a demarcation of the newly created front curtilage of the applicants property. In addition further planting is proposed within the curtilage extension to enhance the amenity value of the area.

Relevant Planning History

ROC/0325/87 Change of use of the highway verges either side of the Greensward Lane and Graham Close junction into residential curtilage for Nos 41, 43, & 45 Greensward Lane, Refused and dismissed on appeal on the grounds of adverse impact on the visual amenities of the area.

- 5.2 The following applications relate solely to number 41, Greensward Lane

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CU/0446/91/ROC Change of use from highway verge to residential garden Refused due to its impact on the visual amenities of the area.

F/0245/96/ROC Application to reposition the existing garage and form an access onto Greensward Lane. Refused on visual amenity grounds.

LDC/0644/96/ROC This was to establish the lawfulness of a vehicular access onto Graham Close The Authority determined that this required planning permission but on appeal the Inspector determined it was permitted development not requiring a further planning permission

F/0278/97/ROC Application to demolish existing garage, stop up existing access, build new garage, form access onto Greensward Lane, layout parking area and erect a porch This was approved, but subject to a condition requiring the existing vehicular access onto Graham Close to be closed.

F/0370/98/ROC Application to demolish existing garage, build new garage, form access onto Greensward Lane and Graham Close and erect a porch This was approved in the light of the appeal decision LDC/0644/96/ROC

98/00741/FUL Application to erect detached garage to side. This was approved

Consultations and Representations

- 5.3 County Surveyor- Originally recommended refusal of the application, but following amendments to the application, now raises no objections to the revised application
- 5.4 Three letters of objection have been received from local residents, the main concerns of the objectors are to do with highway safety and loss of amenity A petition has also been received from 9 households (11 residents), objecting essentially on the same grounds

Material Planning Considerations

- 5.5 The material considerations are set by Policy H26 of the Council's Local Plan. This states:

In considering applications for the enclosure of grass verges, amenity areas or other land whether part of the highway or otherwise the Local Planning Authority will have regard to

- i the contribution made by the site to the general amenity and character of the area;*
- ii the contribution made by the site to the overall design, layout and symmetry of the estate or locality,*
- iii highway safety,*
- iv the design of a any enclosure, wall or fence,*
- v the retention of important amenity trees, and*
- vi the relevant provisions of appendix 1 (of the Local Plan)*

- 5.6 The site is an attractive piece of amenity open space, one of a symmetrical pair, at the entrance to Graham Close from Greensward Lane and contributes significantly to the character and amenity of the area. However, since 1988 and the dismissal of the applicants appeal against this Council's original refusal to allow a curtilage extension, there have been a number of applications in connection with this site.

REV.

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The two most significant applications are those that relate to the provision of two new driveways across this area. Although not yet implemented, these will reduce to a certain degree the amenity value of this land. Notwithstanding this, the site still represents an attractive and valued piece of amenity open space, to which the letters and petition received in response to this application testify.

5 8

In the Planning Inspectors decision letter of the 18th January 1988, he considered that this land ie. the whole of both grass verges, had less to do with traffic requirements or highway safety, than to the contribution the open grassed area made to the visual character of the area. Subsequently, the Inspector, considering the appeal for the Lawful Development Certificate did not consider that the creation of a driveway across this area to be detrimental to highway safety and determined that the vehicular access was permitted development. The current application, as explained above relates to only part of the verge fronting 41, Greensward Lane, a narrower verge would remain in front of it, which the County Surveyor considers will achieve an adequate intervisibility splay to modern standards. Despite the objections to the application being very concerned about the highway safety issues, the County Surveyor does not raise any objections to the proposal as amended and bearing in mind the above, highway safety is not compromised. The main issue therefore is the impact on the visual amenity of the area.

5.9

Whilst the provision of the two access drives may well reduce the overall amenity value of the verge, it will effectively give greater importance to that amenity space that remains. This is especially true in this instance as there are few such areas in the locality with hard surfaced areas predominating at the entrance to many roads. A point raised by the Planning Inspector in 1988. Although, the applicant anticipates only erecting a dwarf, open post and rail fence around the proposed curtilage extension and to provide additional planting, the proposal on its merits is considered to be an unacceptable erosion of the amenity value contributed by the original symmetrical verges.

Conclusion

5 10

Although the application is less objectionable than the one that was refused in 1988, it is important to retain this open space. The change of use and enclosure of this area would detract from the open character of the land to the detriment of the visual amenities of the locality. As such it is considered contrary to Policy H26. The best way to protect this valuable amenity open space for the benefit of the public, is to keep it as highway land and not to incorporate into the private residential curtilage of the applicants own house.

Recommendation that this Committee resolves:

The Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) recommends that this application be refused for the following reason:

- 1 The proposal if permitted, will be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the change of use and character of the land and its enclosure and as such is contrary to Policy H26 of the Councils Local Plan.



98/00740/COU

The Greenward School

Capeston Field

St. John's Church

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Committee Report

6.



Rochford District Council

To the meeting of. **PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE**
On **8 JULY 1999**
Report of: **CORPORATE DIRECTOR (LAW, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)**
Title: **OUTLINE APPLICATION TO ERECT TWO SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGS
ADJACENT 200 ASHINGDON ROAD, ROCHFORD**
Author **Anita Wood**

Application No **99/00075/OUT**
Applicant **A.W SQUIRE LTD]**
Zoning **EXISTING RESIDENTIAL**
Parish **ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

Site Frontage Approx 17m Site Depth Approx. 30m

Planning Application Details

- 6.1 Since this is an outline application the principle of development is to be considered only and issues such as the siting of the properties, their design, external appearance, means of access and any relevant landscaping are all items which would be taken into account under an application for reserved matters
- 6.2 The application proposes two semi-detached dwellings on a site between a house 200 Ashingdon Road and four retail units known as Oxford Parade. This site is approximately 17m wide by 30m deep and backs onto an area of open land designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The site is fenced off at the rear though from this land.
- 6.3 Towards the northern rear corner but within the site is a six-sided concrete pill-box, the main opening of which has been filled-in with brick, although many of the gun slots remain open

Relevant Planning History

- 6.4 From Council records within the planning department it has been found that the four shop units were built in 1938, for which there is a certificate of completion, at a time which pre-dates planning legislation

- 6.5 Whilst the ownership and uses of these units may have changed in the past there have been a limited number of planning applications relating to the units, most of which were either for advertisement consent or extensions. The unit directly adjacent to the site (now known as Sapwoods DIY store) has had two previous applications for extensions. These were EEC 432/62 for a grocery shop to have alterations and additions together with a new shop front and F/303/91/ROC for a rear extension
- 6.6 It should be noted, however, that the application site was never conditioned to be used for additional car parking to the units as part of any grant of planning consent for development to the shop units nor in fact, was the parking that exists in front of the shops a requirement of any such planning application

Consultations and Representations

- 6.7 Essex County Council (**County Surveyor**) recommends that this application be refused on the grounds that the land is currently used as a car park. Vehicles would therefore be displaced to the existing parking area to the front of the shops. The reduction of parking facilities may well lead to customers vehicles parking in Ashingdon Road thereby creating conditions of danger and obstruction to other road users to the detriment of general highway safety
- 6.8 Essex County Council (**Specialist Archaeological Advice**) recommends that whilst the pill-box would not be considered for listing although these items are becoming increasingly rare in Essex. He would prefer it to be incorporated within a residential scheme, but if this is not achievable, it is essential that a watching brief condition for recording purposes be applied to any grant of consent.
- 6.9 **Rochford Parish Council** objects to the proposal on the grounds that the car park should be retained, as it is required to reduce traffic difficulties. It was considered that the pillbox should also be retained.
- 6.10 Essex County Council (**County Planner – Minerals**) makes no comment on the application
- 6.11 The **Environment Agency** raises no objection to the application.
- 6.12 The **Head of Housing, Health and Community Care** makes no adverse comments on the application.
- 6.13 **Anglian Water** (Developer Services) raises no objection to the proposal in principle but observe that no building should be within 3 metres of the sewer crossing the site
- 6.14 The application has engendered a significant response from members of the local community, including residents and shopkeepers. Ten letters of objection have been received all of which raise, in the main, issue with the loss of the car park and the associated traffic problems that would occur. There is also mention of loss of views; adverse effect on the viability of the shops and the proposed design of the dwellings blending with the existing street scene.

Material Planning Considerations

- 6.15 The main issues relevant to the determination of the application are planning policy and the highway implications

▪ **Local Plan Designation**

- 6.16 In the Rochford District Local Plan First Review 1995 as was the case with its forerunner, the application site is designated as an area of existing residential development. The development of the site for housing purposes would therefore be subject to Policies H1, H2, H19, H11 and the design guidelines contained in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan.
- 6.17 Policy H1 states that residential development will in principle be permitted within areas so allocated in the proposals map and H2 refers to densities appropriate to the locality. The proposal is consistent with both these policies. Ashingdon Road comprises mainly frontage development and in this vicinity 2 storey houses predominate with some chalets and bungalows.
- 6.18 The preamble to Policy H19 states that infill development is not only an important contributor to the housing stock but also reduces the need for the release of green field sites. However, the policy, whilst in support of the principle of developing small sites, identifies the need to assess each site and such applications on their individual merits whilst having due regard to Policy H11.
- 6.19 Policy H11 reiterates the need to adhere to the design guidance not only provided by the Essex Design Guide, but also within Appendix 1 of the Local Plan. Since the application is of an outline nature the use of the design guidelines is somewhat limited. The guidelines that can be taken into consideration include site frontages and garden areas. The site is 17m wide, which corresponds to the policy for minimum site frontages for semi-detached properties, whilst the depth of the site is also large enough to allow approximately 250sqm of land per dwelling, clearly enough for a minimum private zone garden area of 100sqm.

▪ **Traffic Impact**

- 6.20 There is clearly public objection to the loss of the site as a public car park. There is also concern that in losing this facility the result may have a detrimental effect on highway safety as vehicles may be displaced to the parking bays to the front of the shops and other parts of Ashingdon Road or elsewhere.
- 6.21 The applicant has stated that the site is a disused car park. There is some history as to the use of this land as a public car park.
- 6.22 The site owner granted Rochford District Council a licence on 3rd June 1983 to use the site as a car park for the general public and no other purpose at a rental basis. The licence enabled the land to be used for parking for approximately 18 to 20 cars. Upon the expiry of this grant a renewal was agreed for another five-year period, based on similar terms, again on a rental basis. Six parking spaces to the front of the shops were also provided by this Authority on part of its land.
- 6.23 On the 25 September 1997 the Transport and Environment Committee agreed the recommendation of its Sub-committee and resolved that the car park on this site be removed from the District of Rochford (Off-street Parking Places) Order. It was considered that the site does not form part of the Council's overall parking strategy for the District, that its use by the public had diminished in favour of the 6 spaces to the front of the shops which are used in preference to this car parking area which has loose surface treatment without bay markings, vehicle parking by operators of the adjoining shops tended to predominate.
- 6.24 The site was never purpose built as a car park nor, as stated, was there any planning requirement in relation to the shop units requiring the land to be used as a car park.

REV.

- 6.25 The five year licence came up for renewal on the 30 June 1998 but was not renewed, so effectively, the site ceased to be officially used for car parking purposes at this time. It was also removed from the District of Rochford (Off-street Parking Places) Order and whilst its use may have continued unwittingly, this is only due to the goodwill of the owner who has not taken steps to physically debar this use. Indeed this use of the land was never formalized through a planning permission.
- 6.26 The County Surveyors view is based on the premise that the development will stop the use of the site for car parking. Whereas officially this use already ceased a year ago, without any planning requirement for it to recommence. Nor are the Highway Authority understood to be intending to take any steps to reinstate this use. In these circumstances, it is considered that the County Surveyors recommendation of refusal is considered untenable

Conclusion

- 6.27 This is clearly not a straightforward case. The principle of two dwellings on this site is not unreasonable when looked at in conjunction with the relevant policies of the Local Plan. The view of the local residents is strong in objecting to the loss of the site as a car park and the effect on the adjacent highway. This view is very much shared by the County Surveyor. However, this loss and effect on the highway does not, in all the circumstances, particularly the development plan notation, present a sustainable case to resist this proposal.

Recommendation that this Committee resolves:

- 6.28 The Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) recommends this application be approved subject to the following conditions:
- 1 SC1 Reserved matters
 - 2 SC3 Time limits – outline
 - 3 SC14 Material to be used
 - 4 SC50 Means of enclosure
 - 5 SC59 Landscape design – details
 - 6 SC66 Pedestrian visibility splays
 - 7 SC70 Vehicular access – details
 - 8 SC97 Archaeological – site access

DELEGATED PLANNING DECISIONS - 8 JULY 1999

I have decided the following applications in accordance with the policy of delegation

Application No .	97/00184/FUL	Decision .	Application Permitted
Location	45 High Street Rayleigh Essex		
Proposal .	New Shopfront		
Applicant	Clarks International		

Application No	98/00393/FUL	Decision :	Application Permitted
Location :	Ashingdon Bungalow Harrogate Drive Hockley		
Proposal .	Erect Single Storey Cattery and Office/Staff Room/Store Retain Mobile Home for a Temporary Period. (Resubmission Following Application F/0675/97/ROC)		
Applicant .	Terysa Woodgate		

Application No .	98/00693/FUL	Decision :	Application Permitted
Location	11 Nido Ulverston Road Ashingdon		
Proposal	Erect Detached 2-bed Bungalow with Integral Garage (Demolish Existing Bungalow)		
Applicant	Lodbury Homes		

Application No	98/00744/COU	Decision	Grant Planning Permission (COU)
Location	511 Ashingdon Road Rochford Essex		
Proposal .	Change Use of Rear of Shop Premises to Furniture Restoration and Upholstery Use		
Applicant .	Mr Stringer		

Application No	98/00783/FUL	Decision :	Application Permitted
Location	Land West Of Pollards Close Rochford		
Proposal .	Erect Two Storey Special Needs Block Comprising 10 Units with Ancillary Parking (Revised Application Following F/0703/97/ROC)		
Applicant	Springboard Housing Association Ltd		

Application No .	99/00010/FUL	Decision :	Application Permitted
Location	82 Golden Cross Road Rochford Essex		
Proposal :	Formation of Rooms in Roofspace with Dormers to Side Facing Roof Slopes		
Applicant	D Huskisson		

Application No .	99/00061/OUT	Decision :	Application Permitted
Location	Huntingdon Church Talbot Avenue Rayleigh		
Proposal :	Outline Application to Erect Two Bungalows (Demolish Existing Church)		
Applicant	The Countess Of Huntingdon's Connexion		

Application No : 99/00101/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : 195 Eastwood Road Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Ground Floor Extensions to Sides and Rear. Construct New Roof
Applicant : Mr & Mrs Spraggon

Application No : 99/00103/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : 271 Eastwood Road Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Single Storey Outbuilding (Abutting Rear Wall of Gardens) For Use as a Domestic Workshop (Revision to Previous Permission F/0220/98/ROC)
Applicant : B D Yellop

Application No : 99/00113/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : 35 Wellsfield Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Conversion of Part of Garage to Playroom as a Variation to Condition No 10 of ROC/383/86 with Installation of Bow Window Infill Existing Porch Area.
Applicant : Mr & Mrs Bushell

Application No : 99/00115/CON Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd Weir Pond Road Rochford
Proposal : Demolish Section of Wall (In association with Access Improvements)
Applicant : Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd

Application No : 99/00124/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : 84 Folly Lane Hockley Essex
Proposal : Convert Existing Garage into Living Accommodation Ground and First Floor Rear Extensions. Erect Detached Garage
Applicant : Mr & Mrs Moreton

Application No : 99/00128/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : 357 Eastwood Road Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Ground Floor Extensions to Front and Rear Formation of Rooms in Roofspace with Dormers to Front, Rear and Both Side Elevations
Applicant : R Irons

Application No : 99/00129/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : 67 Little Wakering Road Great Wakering Southend-On-Sea
Proposal : Formation of a Vehicular Access
Applicant : Miss S Jermany

Application No : 99/00138/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location : 449 Eastwood Road Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Single Storey Side and Rear Extensions
Applicant : D Marsh

Application No . 99/00141/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location 95 New Road Great Wakering Southend-On-Sea
Proposal : Create Additional Room in Roof (With 2 Dormer Windows to Front
Elevation) and Create New Vehicle Crossover
Applicant Mr & Mrs A Ilbey

Application No . 99/00145/COU Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location 69 Southend Road Hockley Essex
Proposal . Change of Use of Part of Ground Floor (Suite F) From Class A2
(Financial & Professional Services) to Class B1 (Business)
Applicant : R G Penwill

Application No . 99/00150/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location . 121 Rochford Garden Way Rochford Essex
Proposal : Ground Floor Side Extension (Demolish Existing Carport)
Applicant : Mr R Drury

Application No : 99/00151/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location Chandos Service Station Greensward Lane Hockley
Proposal : Proposed Installation of Automatic Telling Machine to Facade of
Existing Shop.
Applicant . Esso Petroleum Company Ltd

Application No : 99/00153/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location 60 Chestnut Close Hockley Essex
Proposal . Ground Floor Side Extension
Applicant Mr & Mrs B Smith

Application No : 99/00154/FUL Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location Hillview Ulverston Road Rochford
Proposal : Erection of Single Storey Detached Garage
Applicant . M Ward

Application No 99/00155/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location 48 Southbourne Grove Hockley Essex
Proposal Create Rooms in Roof with Dormers to the Front and Rear
Applicant . D George

Application No 99/00159/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location The Lodge Loftmans Farm Creeksea Ferry Road Canewdon
Proposal . First Floor Rear Extension
Applicant . Mr S Whittaker

Application No . 99/00160/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location 15 Milton Close Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Single Storey Side Extension with Front & Rear Projections
Applicant : Mr P Carty

Application No : 99/00167/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location . 23 Tudor Way Hockley Essex
Proposal : Extend Roof (Including Raising Ridge Height) to Form Additional Bedrooms
Applicant : Mr Port

Application No : 99/00171/COU Decision **Refuse Planning Permission**
Location : 2 The Approach Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Change of Use From Class A1 (Shop) to Class A3 (Food & Drink) and New Shopfront
Applicant : Mr T Bridge

- 1 The proposal would, if permitted, result in an over-concentration of non-retail uses in an existing parade of shops in a residential area and would be likely to cause general disturbance and nuisance to adjoining residents by reason of noise and disturbance which would be particularly detrimental and noticeable during the late hours of the evening, when the ambient levels of background activity are lower.
- 2 The proposal would intensify the use of the limited on-street parking available. The potential for an increase in on-street parking may well lead to vehicles being parked on the zigzag markings for the pedestrian crossing and/or the bus lay-by, thereby creating conditions of danger and obstruction to other road users, to the detriment of general highway safety.

Application No : 99/00172/FUL Decision : **Refuse Planning Permission**
Location 16B Ashingdon Road Rochford Essex
Proposal . Formation of Room in Roofspace With Dormer to Rear and Roof Lights to Front
Applicant . Mr R Holme

- 1 The proposed dormer fails to respect the scale, form and character of the existing properties and would create a large bulky feature, that would be visually intrusive in the street scene, due to the northern side of the property being exposed to the street. The proposed dormer would also unbalance the symmetrical nature of the semi-detached property

Application No . 99/00173/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location . Horse Shoe Farm Lower Road Hockley
Proposal . Continue Use of Two Existing Agricultural Barns For Storage (Class B8)
Applicant : Kevin Nash Group PLC

Application No . 99/00178/FUL Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location The Great Wakering Health Centre High Street Great Wakering
Proposal . Erect Temporary Building for Use as Doctors Surgery
Applicant Dr J F Freel & Dr M A Saad

Application No . 99/00179/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location 41 Meesons Mead Rochford Essex
Proposal . Ground Floor Rear Extension (Conservatory)
Applicant . Mr & Mrs Saywood

Application No . 99/00182/FUL Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location 4 New Cottages East End Paglesham
Proposal . Erect Detached Garage (Demolish Existing Garage)
Applicant Mr K Singleton

Application No . 99/00185/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location 24C Eastwood Road Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Ground Floor Extension
Applicant Mrs J Moore

Application No . 99/00192/FUL Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location . 52 Kingswood Crescent Rayleigh Essex
Proposal Ground Floor Rear Extension. Add Two Pitched Roof Dormer Window
Extensions to Front (Revised Submission Following F/0375/98/ROC)
Applicant . Mr K Garrett

Application No . 99/00195/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location . 2 Wheatley Close Rochford Essex
Proposal . Formation of Rooms in Roofspace with Dormers to Front and Rear
Applicant . Mr & Mrs Whitefield

Application No . 99/00204/FUL Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location 37 Star Lane Industrial Estate Star Lane Great Wakering
Proposal . Change the Use of Existing Yard to Transport & Storage Use
Applicant G Churn

Application No 99/00205/FUL Decision **Application Permitted**
Location 125 New Road Great Wakering Southend-On-Sea
Proposal . Create a New Vehicular Crossover
Applicant Mr Harrington

REV.

Application No : 99/00208/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location 284 High Street Great Wakering Southend-On-Sea
Proposal : Single Storey (Ground Floor) Extension to Form Porch, Study, WC,
 Kitchen/Utility and Sun Lounge to Front, Side and Rear of Dwelling.
Applicant . C Stockwell

Application No : 99/00220/LBC Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location 78 High Street Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Widening of Existing Openings, Extra Two Metres and 500mm of
 Partition Walling to be Removed at Ground Floor Level.
Applicant . Lloyds Bank PLC

Application No : 99/00221/FUL Decision . **Application Permitted**
Location : 6 Durham Way Rayleigh Essex
Proposal : Single Storey Rear Extension
Applicant : Mrs J Sawkins

Application No . 99/00227/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location Dozen And One Pudsey Hall Lane Canewdon
Proposal : Replace Existing Roof with New Pitched Roof (Raising Ridge Height)
Applicant : Mr Smith

Application No . 99/00237/FUL Decision : **Application Permitted**
Location 15 Twyford Avenue Great Wakering Southend-On-Sea
Proposal : Create Rear Extension at First Floor with Pitched Roof Over.
Applicant . Mr S Pearce

RLV.

DELEGATED BUILDING REGULATIONS DECISIONS

APPROVALS

8TH July 1999

<u>Plan Number</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Description</u>
BR 99/238	70, High Road Hockley	Alterations & Extensions
BR 99/27A	Plumberow Cottage Lower Road Hockley	New Dwelling
BR 99/202A	30, Hillcrest Road Hockley	Two Storey Side Extension
BR 99/315	Land Junction Gladstone Road/ Great Eastern Road Hockley (Former Telephone Exchange)	3 Detached Houses & Garages
BR 99/320	28, Bullwood Road Hockley	Attached Garage
BR 99/276	Land Adj. 182, New Road Great Wakering	Detached House and Garage
BR 99/101A	20, Willow Drive Rayleigh	Single Storey Rear Extension & First Floor Side Extension
BR 99/235A	30, Glebe Drive Rayleigh	Pitch Roof to Side Extension
BN 99/216	5, Mount Crescent Hockley	Rooms in Roof
BN 99/226	41, Rochford Garden Way Rochford	Cavity Wall Insulation
BN 99/227	109, Rochford Garden Way Rochford	Cavity Wall Insulation
BN 99/228	12, Church Road Rayleigh	Installation of Through Floor Vertical Wheelchair Lift
BN 99/229	18, Mayfield Avenue Hullbridge	Installation of Through Floor Vertical Wheelchair Lift
BN 99/230	The Crofts Trenders Avenue Rawreth	Convert Garage into Living Accommodation & Form Pitch Roofs to Dormers & Roof Over Garage

BN 99/233	15, Heritage Way Rochford	Single Storey Extension to Rear
BN 99/239	25, Mornington Avenue Rochford	Extension of Lounge & Bathroom
BN 99/240	Farm House Lodge Rawreth Lane Rawreth	Toilet & Changing Room Facilities
BN 99/246	18, Mayfield Avenue Hullbridge	Installation of Through Floor Vertical Wheelchair Lift (Duplicated Application)
BR 99/247 (IN 53)	B.T. Site Star Lane Great Wakering	Internal Alterations
BN 99/249	16, Cheapside East Rayleigh	Garage Conversion
BN 99/251	7, The Limes Rayleigh	Garage Conversion
BN 99/252	77A, Nelson Road Rayleigh	Extension Over Existing Garage
BN 99/255	22, Coventry Close Hullbridge	Convert Existing Garage into Study
BN 99/256	6, Leasway Rayleigh	Demolish & Rebuild Existing Garage
BR 99/257 (IN 54)	Adj. Crane Court St Thomas Road South Fambridge	New Dwelling
BN 99/258	34, Hawkwell Chase Hawkwell	Loft & Single Storey Extensions
BN 99/261	15, Johnson Court Pollards Close Rochford	Alterations to Form Ground Floor W C & Shower Area
BN 99/262	7, Western Road Rayleigh	Rooms in Roof
BN 99/265	48, Crouch Avenue Hullbridge	Single Storey Rear Extension
BN 99/267	34, Western Road Rayleigh	Remove Wall Separating Kitchen/Utility Inserting Steel Lintel & Decorate Wood Cladding to Cover
BN 99/271	97, Plumberow Avenue Hockley	First Floor Extension Over Existing

BN 99/272	26, Poplars Avenue Hawkwell	Kitchen Extension & Garage
BN 99/278	18, Glebe Close Great Wakering	Cavity Wall Insulation
BN 99/279	15, Elm Grove Hullbridge	Rooms in Roof
BN 99/280	19, Hill Lane Hawkwell	Dormer Extension
BN 99/282	381, Ashingdon Road Rochford	Replacing Existing Felt Roof
BN 99/286	28A, Crouch Avenue Hullbridge	Single Storey Rear Extension
BN 99/287	Greenheys Bullwood Approach Hockley	Rear Kitchen/Laundry Single Storey Extension - Two Storey Side Extension
BN 99/289	35, Hullbridge Road Rayleigh	Loft Conversion
BN 99/290	78, Princess Gardens Ashingdon	Underpinning
BN 99/291	80, Princess Gardens Ashingdon	Underpinning
BN 99/300	54, Ferry Road Hullbridge	Ground Floor Rear Extension
BN 99/301	17, Highams Road Hockley	Rebuild Single Storey Rear Extension (Utility Room)
BN 99/303	31A, Central Avenue Rochford	Cavity Wall Insulation
BN 99/304	30, Oliver Crescent Great Wakering	Cavity Wall Insulation
BN 99/305	2, Bedloes Avenue Rawreth	Room in Roof
BN 99/306	37, Eastcheap Rayleigh	Loft Conversion
BN 99/312	49, Belchamps Way Hockley	Rooms in Roof
BN 99/313	7, Chestnut Close Hockley	Side & Rear Extension

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BN 99/316	15, The Ramparts Rayleigh	Convert Existing Garage to Playroom/Computer Room
BN 99/317	35, Ashcombe Rochford	Cavity Wall Insulation
BN 99/318	23, Warwick Gardens Rayleigh	Cavity Wall Insulation
BN 99/321	45, Burnham Road Hullbridge	Single Storey Rear Extension
BN 99/320	5, Nelson Close Rayleigh	Loft Conversion with Rear Facing Dormer
BN 99/331	11, Templegate Cottages Sutton Road Rochford	Internal Alterations (First Floor Bathroom and Ground Floor W C)
BN 99/338	34, Goldsworthy Drive Great Wakering	Convert Garage into Dining Room & Form Opening in Dividing Wall to Lounge

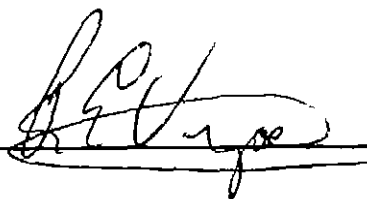
DELEGATED BUILDING REGULATIONS DECISIONS

REJECTIONS

8th July 1999

<u>Plan Number</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Description</u>
BR 99/231	282, Eastwood Road Rayleigh	Two Storey Rear Extension – Build Over Garage – Covered Way Front & Rear – All Pitched Roofs
BR 99/269	33, Macintyres Walk Rochford	First Floor Extension
BR 99/263	Womens Institute Hall Little Wakering Road Great Wakering	Extension
BR 99/254	97, Sutton Road Rochford	Convert Bungalow to House with Side & Rear Extensions
BR 99/253	The Lodge Little Stambridge Hall Little Stambridge Hall Lane Rochford	First Floor Extension
BR 99/242	Dozen & One Pudsey Hall Lane Canewdon	New Roof to Convert Garage to Bedroom
BR 99/241	32, Downhall Road Rayleigh	Rear Extension
BR 99/236	11, Alexandra Road Rayleigh	Two Detached Houses with Garages
BR 99/217	Benson Lund Aviation Way Southend Airport	Erection of Mezzanine Floor

Chairman:



date:

29/7/99

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Community Services Committee

At a Meeting held on 13th July 1999 Present Councillors Mrs W.M Stevenson (Chairman), R S Allen, P.A Beckers, C.I. Black, T.G. Cutmore, J M Dickson, D F. Flack, D M. Ford, K A Gibbs, J.E Grey, N. Harris, Mrs. A R Hutchings, C.C. Langlands, Mrs S.J Lemon, R.A Pearson, Mrs M S Vince, Mrs M. J. Webster and Mrs M A. Weir

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. J Hall, D.R. Helson, Mrs. J. Helson and Mrs. H L.A. Glynn.

Substitutes: Councillors D E. Barnes and V H Leach

Visiting: Councillors R Adams, T. Livings, G.A Mockford and P.F.A Webster

284 WASTE WATER RECYCLING SCHEME - ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER

Members were advised by the Head of Housing Health and Community Care that the Environment Agency had acknowledged receipt of this Authority's objections in relation to the above scheme. It was further noted that the Environment Agency had offered this Authority the opportunity to request the application to be called in by the Secretary of State for determination. On a Motion put by Councillor P A. Beckers and seconded by Councillor Mrs. M.J. Webster, it was

Resolved

That this Authority requests the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport & The Regions to call in the application for determination (HHHCC)

285 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 8th June 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

286. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor C C Langlands declared a pecuniary interest in the item "Door Entry System - Essex Close and Worcester Drive, Rayleigh" (Minute 290(11)) by virtue of being a leaseholder of one of the flats mentioned in the report and left the Meeting whilst the matter was discussed. Councillor T Livings declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of knowledge of a resident

Councillor P A Beckers declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item "Proposed New Mental Health and Community NHS Trust" (Minute 293) by virtue of being this Authority's representative on the Community Health Council

Councillor C.C. Langlands declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item "Housing Investment Programme" (Minute 294) by virtue of being a leaseholder of a former Council property.

Councillors D.E. Barnes and K.A. Gibbs each declared non-pecuniary interests in the item "King George's Playing Field - Proposed Lease of Bowling Green" (Minute 298) by virtue of being members of the bowls club and left the meeting whilst the matter was discussed.

287 URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS

Members noted the Minutes of the Urgency Sub-Committee held on 30th June 1999 which had considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Client Services, which, in accordance with the Resolution of Council on 22nd June 1999, had provided Members with information in relation to transportation and booking arrangements for the Summer

664
WJ

Holiday Swimming Provision Scheme. The Head of Leisure and Client Services advised the Committee of recent communication from various schools in relation to the summer swimming scheme and the Committee noted the resolutions that both a booking system be not implemented and that an admission fee be waived on production of a valid bus ticket for those children living within the Parish of Hullbridge

288. **SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee considered the appended Sub-Committee Minutes and the Recommendations contained therein

(1) Pets in Sheltered Schemes Working Party - 9th June 1999

Members were advised by the Head of Revenue and Housing Management that the report back to the Working Party on the outcome of the individual interviews and also the analysis of comments on ballot papers would be made to a Meeting of the Working Party in the Autumn Cycle

Resolved

(1) That face to face interviews with the tenants of Francis Walk, Goodmans and Romney House take place with a view to the potential phasing-in of Pets in Sheltered Schemes at these particular wardened accommodation

(2) That the comments in the ballot papers as returned by respondents be analysed and reported back to a future Meeting of the Pets in Sheltered Schemes Working Party. (HRHM)

(11) Community Safety Sub-Committee - 23rd June 1999

Minute 118 - Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy: Public Awareness

Members were advised that there had been no need to convene an Urgency Sub-Committee to resolve this Minute, as preparatory work had been carried out inhouse with the press release being held in abeyance pending the outcome of this Meeting

Resolved

(1) That the proposals to raise public awareness as outlined in the report of the Head of Corporate Policy & Initiatives be agreed

(2) That an amount of £500 for provision of publicity material be agreed

(3) That Rochford Sports Council final on 17th July 1999 be used as the first venue for the promotion of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy

(4) That a series of suitable "Upbeat" press releases, suited to the occasion be issued prior to events to encourage attendance. (HCPI)

Minute 119 - Rayleigh Police Division - Annual Policing Plan

Resolved

That the report be received (HCPI)

Minute 120 - Domestic Violence Co-ordinators Interim Progress Report

In considering this item, a Member raised the point that the canvassing of Male Victims of Domestic Violence should have been included within the Minutes.

Resolved

That the actions outlined under the way forward, including the point above, be agreed.
(HCPI)

Minute 121 - Survey of Reported Incidents of Domestic Violence within the Rochford District Council Area for the Municipal Year ending March 1999.

Resolved

That the report be noted

(iii) Housing Management Sub-Committee - 30th June 1999

Minute 63 - Homelessness - Reasonable and Additional Preference

Resolved

(1) That the Housing Points Scheme be amended as it relates to "reasonable and additional" preference as set out in the Head of Revenue & Housing Management's report

(2) That a comprehensive review of the Housing Points Scheme be undertaken later this Financial Year followed by a consultation exercise with tenants' representatives (HRHM)

Minute 64 - Annual Report (Local Performance Plan)

During consideration of this item, a Motion put by Councillor J.M. Dickson and seconded by Councillor D.M. Ford for the return of the survey entitling the respondent to one free entry in a prize draw was lost on a show of hands and it was

Resolved

(1) That the Housing Annual Report be upgraded in style and content as outlined in the Head of Revenue & Housing Management's Report, and incorporating the Sub-Committee's views as detailed in the Minutes.

(2) That a customer survey form be included with the Annual Report in order to obtain feed back on the document and the housing service, the format to reflect the Sub-Committee's discussion (HRHM)

Minute 65 - Pertinent Business

During consideration of this Minute, it was agreed by the Committee that the Resolution should state a desired de minimis level of 2000 council houses

Resolved

(1) That Officers make representations to Central Government seeking changes in the regulations to allow Authorities with a de minimis level of 2000 Council houses, to refuse the Right to Buy applications in those locations where the demand for affordable, Council-owned accommodation is particularly great

(2) That a Teach-In for Members concerning the implications of the Housing Needs Survey be arranged. (HHHCC)

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Committee was satisfied that all necessary action had been taken Minutes 310(i)/98(HRH), 310(ii)/98(HFS), 475/98(HRHM), 81(ii)/99(HLCS), 84/99(HHHCC) and 87/99(HHHCC) were carried forward.

(i) ST. JOHN FISHER PLAYING FIELD

The Committee considered the joint report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care and the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives following the referral by Council on 20th April of a petition from local residents complaining of noise and vandalism around the basketball court and recycling banks at St John Fisher's Playing Field, requesting that they be resited. The matter had been deferred from the previous Meeting of this Committee to enable a site visit to take place. The background to the facilities, the problems currently faced by residents and the details of the petition were noted by Members. Having attended the site, the Committee considered the basketball facilities had been installed in the most appropriate place on the site. With regard to the recycling facilities, two options were mooted and discussed by Members.

A Motion put by Councillor D.M. Ford and seconded by Councillor P.A. Beckers for a phased approach to be taken, with a reduction of the height of fencing around the facility and the planting of shrubbery, to deter climbing on the banks and for the police to be requested to monitor the site with any disturbances being reported to the Community Safety Sub-Committee was lost on a show of hands. A subsequent Motion put by Councillor N. Harris and seconded by Councillor D.F. Flack was won on a show of hands and it was

Resolved

That Officers look at alternative siting arrangements for the recycling facilities at St John Fisher Playing Field, that the matter be subject to consultation with local residents, and that the matter be reported back to this Committee for consideration. (HHHCC)

(ii) DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM - ESSEX CLOSE AND WORCESTER DRIVE, RAYLEIGH

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management regarding a petition referred by Council on 20th April concerning the installation of a door entry system at the blocks of flats, situated in Essex Close and Worcester Drive. In noting the details of the petition and the proposals put forward by Officers including costs, Members expressed concern that residents of the Worcester Drive flats had not been party to the petition. Mindful of this, concern was further expressed that the cost to leaseholders of flats, further to the costs of the recent installation of double-glazing at the site. A Motion put by Councillor D.E. Barnes and seconded by Councillor J.E. Grey was won on a show of hands and it was

Resolved

That the door-entry system for Essex Close and Worcester Drive be agreed in principle and that consultation with all residents of the flats take place with a view to the same being included in the draft capital programme for 2000/2001. (HRHM)

(iii) DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM - MILLBOURN COURT, ROCHFORD

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management regarding a petition referred by Council on 20th April concerning the installation of a door-entry system at the blocks of flats which consist Millbourn Court. In noting the details of the petition including its history and the proposed costs, Members considered that the clear majority of residents wanting the proposal, which included the leaseholders of flats in the blocks. A Motion put by Councillor D.M. Ford and seconded by Councillor Mrs M.A. Weir and amended in part following further discussion was won on a show of hands and it was



Resolved

That a door-entry system for Millbourn Court be agreed in principle and that the matter be referred to the Budget Monitoring Working Group for funding to be identified. (HRHM)

(iv) IRON RAILINGS - 66-72 HATFIELD ROAD

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management regarding a petition, referred from Council on the 20th April 1999, concerning the provision of iron railings at the above site. Members noted the details of the petition and description of the site layout. It was further noted that the works had been scheduled to take place although on receipt of the petition, the work had been held in abeyance. Members agreed to the installation of railings to the above site and requested that the Finance and General Purposes Committee be asked to consider how requests for minor works such as this should be dealt with in future. The Committee also asked that Finance & General Purposes Committee consider the Head of Revenue and Housing Management's request to be granted delegated authority to approve minor works up to a total value of 1% of the Repairs and Maintenance Budget of the Housing Revenue Account.

Resolved

(1) That iron railings be erected at 66 - 72 Hatfield road to the front and side adjacent to Hatfield Road.

(2) That the Finance & General Purposes Committee be asked:-

(i) to consider the request of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management for delegated authority to approve requests for minor works up to a total value of 1% of the Repairs and Maintenance Budget of the Housing Revenue Account even though they be the subject of a petition and, if minded to grant such delegated authority, to ask the Member Budget Monitoring Working group to consider and agree any necessary limits that should apply to that delegation

(ii) to request the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group to consider what items of expenditure should in future be regarded as minor works to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account Repairs and Maintenance Budget (HRHM)

291

TRAVELLERS IN ESSEX

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy & Initiatives which advised Members of a report prepared for the Essex Chief Executives Association by the Travellers in Essex Working Party. It was noted that the report had been referred by Council on 22nd April 1999 to this Committee for consideration.

Members welcomed Sheila Clark, Essex County Council's Gypsy Liaison Officer who had been invited to attend the Meeting to give a brief presentation and answer Members questions in relation to the revised "Travellers in Essex Code". Members had before them a revised sheet of recommendations which took into account the various consultation responses which had been received from other Local Authorities (Appendix 1)

Members questions were answered specifically in relation to the following -

- the clean-up cost in relation to unauthorised encampments.
- the definition of the word "gypsy"
- the £200,000 per annum over five years given to fund authorised sites by Essex County Council

In summing-up, Ms Clark wished to state that the document was not legally binding, more that it was a rationale for more proactive Councils to use when dealing with gypsies. Members thanked Ms Clark for her presentation and she then left the Meeting

Resolved

(1) That the comments in the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives form the basis of the Council's response to the Essex Chief Executives' Association on the Travellers in Essex report

(2) That arrangements be made for a meeting with District and County Officers, including the Gypsy Liaison Officer, to discuss possible sites for the provision of a Short Term Stopping Place for Travellers in the District, with the provision of Local Plan Policy H28 being used as a basis for discussions.

(3) That details of the discussions be reported back to Members at an appropriate Committee later in the year (TP)(HCPI)

292

THE MANAGEMENT OF CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN ESSEX

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which advised Members of the consultation from Essex County Council in relation to the current situation concerning the provision of Care Homes by Essex County Council throughout Essex. Mindful of the history of the subject and Essex County Council's proposals which affected Albert Jones Court, the site specifically within the Rochford District, Members considered that in supporting the Officers recommendation, a Member/Officer meeting with Essex County Council should be arranged at the earliest opportunity to discuss the matter further. It was further requested that a presentation on the proposals be made by Essex County Council Officers to the next available Meeting of this Committee. On a Motion put by Councillor D M Ford and seconded by Councillor Mrs. M.S Vince, it was

Resolved

(1) That the Council expresses its total opposition to the proposed lease of Albert Jones Court and reiterates the relevant comments in its earliest response dated 24th November 1998.

(2) That a Member/Officer meeting be arranged with Essex County Council to discuss the matter further

(3) That Essex County Council be invited to attend the next Meeting of the Community Services Committee to give a presentation on Essex County Council's current proposals in relation to care home provision throughout Essex (HHHCC) (17944)

293

PROPOSED NEW MENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY NHS TRUST

NOTE: Councillor D F Flack declared an interest in this item by virtue of being a non-executive director of one of the Trusts mentioned in the report and left the Meeting whilst the matter was discussed.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which advised Members of a consultation on the establishment of a new Mental Health and Community NHS Trust for South Essex. It was noted that the stated purpose of the merger was to streamline the top management and corporate departments to provide greater value for money

Members considered that the suggested response, that no objection be raised; subject to their being no reduction in front-line services, subject to the proposed savings being achieved and subject to a full public debate on the future of Runwell and the Rochford Hospital site, was to be supported. It was further suggested that the response should include a paragraph in relation to the continued uncertainty as to the future of Mental Health Services within the area. On a show of hands, it was



Resolved

(1) That the response outlined above be sent as this Authority's response to the consultation.

(2) That arrangements be made for a representative of Southend Community Care NHS Trust to attend a future meeting to explain the proposals for the reprovision of services from Runwell Hospital and use of the Rochford hospital site when these are finalised. (HHHCC) (26609)

294 HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (HIP)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which summarised recent developments in relation to the process for this year's HIP round. In noting the update information outlined in the Head of Services report, specifically relating to the housing needs survey and the outcome of Officers meeting with GO East, Members were advised of a forthcoming Members Teach-In on housing matters. The document "Housing Strategy 1999/2000 and Beyond - Update 1999" was approved as a suitable update to last year's Housing Strategy.

The Head of Service advised Members that the Housing Needs Survey had identified the need for 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation particularly in Rayleigh and Hockley and this would be incorporated in the Council's response to the Housing Corporation in connection with its Regional Policy Statement 2000/2001.

Resolved

That the report be noted and the document "Housing Strategy 1999/2000 and Beyond - Update 1999" be sent as an update to this Authority's Housing Strategy to GO East. (HHHCC)

295. HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which detailed the proposed changes to the Government's Home Energy Efficiency Scheme and summarised the progress being made to implement the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Strategy, detailing the existing and potential future initiatives. The improvements to the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES), namely "New HEES" and "New HEES Plus" were welcomed by Members and the progress to date on the implementation of the Home Energy Conservation Act was noted. Members endorsed the comments outlined in the Head of Services report and on a show of hands it was

Resolved

(1) That in responding to the Government's consultation, the Council welcomed the proposed changes to the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES)

(2) That approval be given to participating in any future HEC Action bids.

(3) That energy awareness training be given to appropriate staff to a potential cost of up to £1000 excluding VAT and appropriate provision being made in the 2000/2001 estimates, subject to enquiries about externally funded courses being exhausted.

(4) That the postal survey version of the HECAMON computer package be used initially for monitoring progress.

(5) That consideration be given to allocating additional staff resources to the implementation of the Council's HECA strategy and appropriate provision in 2000/2001 estimates once estimated costs are known (HHHCC) (1243)

PLAYSPACE ROLLING PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Client Services which advised Members of the progress on the consultation with Hullbridge and Rochford Parish Councils and Rayleigh Town Council for playspaces identified for the 1999/2000 financial year's playspace rolling programme.

Members noted that although some response had been received from the Parishes, none had indicated any additional funding for the initiatives or any wish to become responsible for the management of the sites on completion of works. It was further noted that Hullbridge Parish Council had agreed some amendments to the proposal for their playspace, although there were no additional cost implications arising from these changes. Given these responses, the Committee considered that Officers should now move forward and commence with all three play schemes.

Resolved

That the result of the consultation with the Parishes be noted and that Offices be authorised to commence with three play schemes as identified in the report. (HLCS)

297

UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF REFURBISHMENT OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Client Services which updated Members on the progress towards a new strategy for improving the public conveniences at Back Lane, Rochford and Crown Hill, Rayleigh and proposed the timetable for implementation of the scheme.

In noting that the proposals were of an appropriate standard suitable for works to be carried out by builders rather than specialist contractors, and that the works included looking at the cleaning contract methodology and the provision of baby changing facilities as well as improving access to the ladies toilet at Crown Hill, some Members expressed concern at the proposed cost of the refurbishment. Lack of progress in the provision of finger signage for public conveniences in Rayleigh Town Centre were mooted by Members during discussion. On balance, Members considered that the refurbishment should commence and on a show of hands, it was

Resolved

(1) That the proposals for refurbishment included in the report for Crown Hill and Back Lane toilets be agreed at the estimated cost of £144,200 (HLCS)

298

KING GEORGES PLAYING FIELD, RAYLEIGH - PROPOSED LEASE OF THE BOWLING GREEN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which sought authority for the granting of a 30 year lease for the bowling green at King George's Playing Field for the Rayleigh Bowls Clubs. Mindful of the history to the lease, Members were informed that the Bowls Clubs would not sign a lease without the inclusion of the car parking area. Members were further advised that the NPFA had stated that the car park should be available to all users of King George's Playing Field and not just the Bowls Clubs. In order to avoid an impasse, it was suggested that the Clubs be allowed use of the car park for County level games to facilitate this, the Clubs would be asked to provide their County fixture list. Nevertheless, on a show of hands, it was

Resolved

That the matter be deferred for consideration by Full Council

299

SOUTHEND HOSPITAL TRUST

The Committee were advised by the Head of Housing Health and Community Care of an invitation for a number of Members to attend Southend Hospital to be updated on

matters relating to Rochford District. It was considered appropriate that the nominations should be made as in previous years and on a show of hands, it was

Resolved

That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Community Services Committee together with the Group Leaders or their nominees be Rochford District Council's representatives to meet at Southend Hospital to discuss matters relating to the Rochford District

300 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Resolved

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraphs 13 and 7 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

301 **UNFIT HOUSE - PROGRESS REPORT (MINUTE 227/99)**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which advised Members of progress to date with regard to an unfit property within the District. In noting the contents of a letter appended to the report, Members endorsed the Head of Services suggested way forward in that the matter be brought back before Members when further information was known.

Resolved

That further report be made once the owners agents have confirmed their proposals (30332) (HHHCC)

302 **CARAVAN SITE LICENSING - OMBUDSMAN ENQUIRY**

The Committee considered the confidential Report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care which advised Members of the Ombudsman's findings and the options available to the Council on a matter relating to Caravan Site licensing. In noting the background to the original complaint, Members considered that the matter should be referred in the first instance to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for financial appraisal and then for a decision on the most appropriate way forward. It was further noted that the information required for the financial appraisal was likely to take between 3 and 6 months to research and collate.

RECOMMENDED

That a future meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee consider the financial implications of a local settlement in respect of the Local Government Ombudsman's findings, and for a decision to then be made on the most appropriate way forward. (HHHCC)

The Meeting closed at 11.30pm.



Chairman

Date



Committee Report

3



Rochford District Council
To the meeting of.

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING GROUP

On: 24TH AUGUST 1999

Report of: HEAD OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND MEMBER SERVICES

Title MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING
WORKING GROUP HELD ON 1ST JULY 1999 (ADJOURNED),
8TH JULY 1999 (RECONVENED AND ADJOURNED) AND 14TH
JULY 1999 (RECONVENED)

Author. J Bostock

Report Approved By:

1st July 1999

Present: Councillors D E Barnes, V H Leach, C R Morgan, R E Vingoe and P F A Webster

Visiting: Councillor Mrs J Helson

7. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor D E Barnes was appointed Chairman of the Group.

8 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor C R Morgan declared an interest in the item on travelling subsistence and car allowances by virtue of his spouse's employment

9. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted the Group's terms of reference

10. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 17th March (adjourned) and 24th March 1999 (reconvened) were approved as a correct record.

11. CLEMENTS HALL ROOF

The Group considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Client Services on the release of funding for the renewal of the Clements Hall Swimming Pool roof.

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

- Officers would investigate whether work was likely to involve pool closure at any stage
- The precise financial position could only be established on receipt of tenders. Contractors invited to tender would be those on the Council's select list
- In the worst case scenario, the budget would only just cover costs

- In terms of financial mechanism, expenditure could be met out of the repairs and maintenance budget. Officers would need to come forward with any lump sum requirements when known

The Group endorsed the view of a Member that it would be of value if information on Council expenditure made on non-scheduled repairs over a ten year period could be submitted to a future Meeting.

RECOMMENDED

That the £50,000 provision for repair to Clements Hall roof be released and the works tendered in accordance with Contract Standing Orders. (HLCS)

12 BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY

Note: Councillor D E Barnes declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of his role as Chairman of Rayleigh Age Concern.

The Group considered the report of the Head of Leisure & Client Services on the need to carry out a comprehensive building condition survey of all Council owned buildings including those leased to others, but excluding the housing stock, elements of some major buildings and public conveniences (which were the subject of other reports)

Responding to Member questions, Officers confirmed that:-

- Whilst the Council's Building Control staff were already fully utilised, this did mean that the income in respect of Building Control was increasing.
- Work was in hand aimed at establishing a more regular review of the Council's buildings (utilising the Council staff resource)
- The need for financial stringency in previous years had meant cessation of rolling programmes.
- At this stage survey funding would be from balances.
- Further information would be provided with regard to the specific community facilities to be included in the survey. The Mill Hall had been excluded from proposals for this year, having been the subject of a separate consultant's report
- The Council held a fair amount of information on its housing/sheltered housing stock. A future report on these properties could be appropriate in due course.

During debate Members accepted that, whilst it would be useful to receive detail on the position with regard to elderly persons day centres, the financial position meant that these were likely to be of lower priority.

RECOMMENDED

(1) That the need to undertake a comprehensive building survey at a total guide price of £33,000 and covering each of the following building categories (subject to specific exclusions detailed in the report) be agreed:-

- (i) Leisure Centres
 - (ii) Community facilities
 - (iii) Public building/offices
 - (iv) Pavilions
 - (v) Buildings which are Council owned but leased to other organisations
- The cost to be met from balances.

(2) That the use of external consultants to carry out this survey be agreed

(3) That Officers report to a future Meeting of the Group detailing proposals for:-

- (i) the ongoing review of Council buildings

- (ii) the situation with regard to the condition of the Council's housing/sheltered housing stock. (HL&CS)

13 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Note: The Chief Executive, Mr P Warren, declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of membership of the International Tree Foundation

The Group considered the report of the Head of Financial Services detailing organisations to which the Authority currently subscribed, organisations where it was considered there would be benefit for the Authority to join and a proposal from the South East Essex Economic Project (Rochford Economic Profiling)

RECOMMENDED

(1) That Officers submit further detail on the benefits of Council membership in respect of the following organisations:-

- (i) East of England Investment Agency
- (ii) Eastern Region Shadow Assembly (East of England Local Government Conference)
- (iii) Essex Economic Partnership
- (iv) South East Essex Economic Partnership (Economic Development).

(2) That the Council no longer subscribe to the following organisations:-

- (i) Essex Arts Forum (unless Officers determine that there is a need)
- (ii) Society of Information Technology Management copies of Society documentation to be acquired as appropriate)

(3) That the Council subscribe to the remaining organisations detailed in the report during 1999/2000

(4) That Officers investigate the possibility of closer involvement with 'market towns' (the organisation which promotes small market towns)

(5) That Officers report back in more detail on proposals in respect of the South East Essex Economic Project (Rochford Economic Profiling). (HFS)

14 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

15 ACQUISITION OF PORTABLE PROJECTION EQUIPMENT

The Group considered the confidential report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services on the acquisition of portable projection equipment to improve presentations, especially when made to Committee Meetings (other than Planning, for which other proposals would be submitted)

Responding to Member questions, Officers confirmed that:-

- The equipment would be compatible with that Officers would be proposing for improvements to Planning Services Committee presentations

- It was hoped the recently appointed Head of Planning Services would have an opportunity to input to a report on improvements to Planning Committee presentations, which would be submitted to the September cycle

Members noted the current estimated costs which had been identified in respect of the equipment for Planning Meetings and.-

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the portable projection equipment specified in the report be purchased from Comdis Limited at a cost of £6,045, excluding VAT.
- (2) That Officers report back at the earliest opportunity on the acquisition of equipment to improve Planning Committee presentations (HAMS)

6

IT SERVICES - FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT - RENEWAL TIMETABLE

The Group considered the confidential report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services detailing proposals relating to the renewal timetable for the IT Services Facilities Management contract.

Responding to Member questions, Officers clarified:-

- The precise nature of the proposed involvement of the Council's Information Technology and Support Services Manager and the need for absolute transparency.
- The costings related to specification preparation.
- That proposals would provide an element of benchmarking.

Members noted that the estimated cost of proposals was £5,000 above budget provision. The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) indicated that this could be met via the available budget under the "other contracts" heading. There was also a possibility that some IT expenditure identified for the current financial year may not be required until the next.

In discussing options available to the Council with regard to the specification and tendering processes it was recognised that the contract was of particularly high financial value and that, due to the changing nature of IT, the principle of seeking appropriate external advice should be endorsed. In addressing the proposed timetable, a Member commented that, if possible, it may be appropriate to review the evaluation date as this fell at election time

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the timetable for the renewal of the IT FM contract, as set out in the report, be approved.
- (2) That the scope for the consultancy service, as set out in the report, be approved.
- (3) That the consultancy service is put out to tender at the estimated costs identified (HAMS)

7

RECYCLING WASTE STRATEGY - PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Group received a confidential oral report from the Chief Executive on the budgetary implications associated with the Ecologika Waste Strategy report. The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) had reviewed the financial information known to date so it could be provided in a manner more closely matching standard local authority format.

During debate Officers highlighted that:-

- It was not yet possible to identify the likely commencement time or length of the stages identified in the Ecologika report. It was also not clear if one contract could cover all the stages.
- capital costs and associated revenue expenditure would be very high and of some concern in that there would be reliance on revenue streams.
- given that the capital programme was already over committed, any decision that a project of this magnitude be a main objective would mean the removal of other Capital projects. There would also be a need to put some capital costs out to the contractor
- any potential impact on Council tax was immeasurable at this stage.

Members recognised that the key driver behind reviewing all possible options was the need to find alternatives to incinerator options mooted by the County Council within its Waste Plan. Whilst the financial perspective was clearly severe, there was a need to be mindful of the consequences to the District of not addressing this matter. The Group endorsed the comment of a Member that it would be inappropriate to view Rochford District in isolation and that it would be of value to know the results of the District recycling trial. Some concern was expressed at the difficulties faced by the District in having to consider options with regard to the letting of major contracts when the outcome of the appeal in respect of the County Waste Plan would not be known. Reference was also made to the likelihood that legal costs would be high if the District was to ensure effective representation of its position at the forthcoming appeal

In referring to the forthcoming Special Meeting of the Transportation & Environmental Services Committee at which the Ecologika report was to be considered, Members agreed that there would be value in ensuring that the Meeting was provided with the latest information on the discussions of the Essex Waste Consortium officers with Essex County Council and Southend on Sea Borough Council in respect of revisions to the Waste Plan. In terms of ensuring District residents are aware of the Council's position, a post Committee Meeting press release would be appropriate.

18. LAND AT BLATCHES FARM, EASTWOOD - FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Note: The Chairman admitted this item of business as urgent in view of the timescale.

The Group received a confidential oral report from the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on the latest position with regard to land at Blatches Farm, Eastwood. The report included freehold and lease options which may be available to the Council and the potential impact on other elements of the Council's Capital Programme and Revenue balances should a decision be made to pursue direct acquisition. From a financial perspective, there was clear value in considering the options for securing the land in consultation with all interested parties.

During debate reference was made to the possibility of identifying the tax position should Southend on Sea Borough, Rochford District and Rochford Parish Councils undertake combined acquisition of the land. Members sought clarification on the current position with regard to the sale of Council owned land at Etheldore and the timing of the associated Capital Receipt. In noting that Officers continued to press for minimal delay, it was recognised that completion was taking longer than some Members had anticipated and that it was important for Members to be able to understand the timing and other issues associated with any future disposals of a similar nature.

The Chief Executive advised that he was in communication with the County Council about an early Member level meeting on Blatches Farm and that he would soon be in contact with Group Leaders/Committee Chairmen to determine the District's representation.

The meeting adjourned at 11.10pm

8th July 1999 - (Reconvened)

9 ASSET REVIEW - BUILDINGS FOR LEISURE FACILITIES

The Group considered the report of the Head of Legal Services produced to progress the Council's decision that, in terms of Asset Review priority, should be given to examination of the Council's buildings for leisure facilities.

Responding to Member questions, Officers confirmed that:-

- Whilst a review of the assets detailed in the report would fit well with Best Value requirements, a review of the Council's remaining assets would still be appropriate
- it would be appropriate to include all the land and ancillary buildings associated with the Mill Hall complex within the review

RECOMMENDED

That the following leisure facility buildings be included in the Asset Review:-

Rayleigh
Castle Hall, Castle Road
Park Sports Centre, Rawreth Lane
Mill Hall complex

Hawkwell
Clements Hall Leisure Centre, Clements Hall Way

Rochford
Freight House, West Street

Great Wakering
Sport Centre, High Street. (HLS)

10 CORPORATE PLAN

The Group considered the report of the Chief Executive which provided an update of progress on the Corporate Plan and re-inforced its lineages with the three year budget strategy, ongoing work commitments and proposals already approved by the District Council.

Responding to Member questions, the Chief Executive highlighted the value of proposals in terms of best value and the production of a dynamic business planning process for the District.

The Group recognised that the document could assist the Council in its work with other Local Authorities and organisations, providing a structured approach to activity. Members concurred with the Chief Executive that it would be useful for a consultation document on proposals to be submitted to all Members prior to recess with a view to detailed consideration being given during the first cycle of meetings after recess.

RECOMMENDED

That progress to date on the Corporate Plan be noted and that all Members of the Council be consulted on its contents in advance of the forthcoming recess with a view to detailed consideration being given to its final form during the first cycle of meetings after recess (CE)

21 STATUTORY AND DISCRETIONARY SERVICES

The Group considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which provided an analysis of the Council's major services into mandatory, supporting mandatory, legal obligation and discretionary categories

The Group concurred with the Chairman that it would be useful for the report to be circulated to all Members of the Council with further review in due course. Responding to a Member question, the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) indicated that, to some extent, it would be possible to provide a break-down of the services as categorised against budget expenditure.

RECOMMENDED

(1) That a copy of the report be circulated to all Members of the Council, with further review in due course.

(2) That, where practicable, the service categories be detailed against the Council's budget expenditure in time for the next budget round. (CD(F&ES))

22. SINGLE CAPITAL ALLOCATION FOR HOUSING

The Group considered the report of the Head of Financial Services detailing changes the Government intended to make to Capital Finance in relation to housing and its likely effect on both the Housing Revenue Account and the Non-Housing Revenue Account. The report also dealt with changes in respect of Private Sector Renewal Grants. From 1st April 2000, the whole cost in respect of general grants would fall to this Council. Grant support in respect of disabled facilities would continue. The loss of the 60% in grant support would have to be covered by the capital programme in future years.

In response to Member questions relating to the renewal grants Officers indicated that:-

- No further expenditure could only be an option if determined in line with a suitable policy.
- Whilst current Government paperwork identified a "single pot" for housing, indications were that the Government would consider all capital as a "single pot" by 2001/2002.
- It would be possible to identify commitments to date and then identify the implications for the Council's capital programme if no further expenditure was committed.
- It would be possible to provide information which identified grants paid against each tax banding

During debate, Members expressed concern at the implications for the capital programme if the Council was to continue with renewal grant arrangements. Whilst it could be recognised that the Council had to review the situation against the housing needs survey, the Monitoring Group was charged with considering the impact on the budget

Bearing in mind the long term implications for the Council of this change and on a motion moved by Councillor D E. Barnes and seconded by Councillor P.F.A Webster, it was:-

RECOMMENDED

That there be a moratorium on 1999/2000 approvals in respect of General Private Sector Renewal Grants pending the development of a policy of no further expenditure. (CD(F&ES))

LEASING FINANCE

The Group considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) on the types of leasing and finance available to the Council.

RECOMMENDED

(1) That the financial appraisal of leasing opportunities continue to be carried out in respect of equipment purchases and the most cost effective method of procurement be used.

(2) That the policy of utilising leasing for reasons other than cost be kept under review during the budget cycle. (CD(FES))

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraph 9 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

LAND AT BLATCHES FARM, EASTWOOD - MEMBER LEVEL MEETING

Note: The Chairman admitted this item of business as urgent in view of the short timescale available to arrange a Member level meeting.

The Chief Executive reported in confidence on a proposal from Essex County Council that the Inter Authority Member level meeting in respect of land at Blatches Farm, Eastwood be scheduled for the afternoon of Monday 16th August 1999. The Chief Executive had asked the County for confirmation that there would be no marketing activity undertaken in respect of the land prior to the Member meeting. He also advised on recent communication with the tenant of the site.

At this stage Members agreed that it would be appropriate for an announcement about the proposed meeting to be made at the forthcoming meeting of the Planning Services Committee with referral to the Working Party set up to consider this matter

The Meeting commenced at 6 00pm and adjourned at 7.14pm

14th July 1999 (Reconvened)

SUBSCRIPTIONS - FURTHER INFORMATION

Further to Minute 13, the Chief Executive provided the Group with further information on the work of various organisations/projects to which the Council may wish to subscribe

In response to Member questions relating to economic development, the Chief Executive advised that a feature of this work was the bidding for agency funds via other agencies. In the near future, Officers would be able to report to Members the outcome of extensive research into the aspirations of employees within the District.

During debate, Members recognised that it was useful to be able to determine whether organisations to which the Council subscribe are desirable or essential. A Member made specific reference to the influence which the District may be able to exercise on economic activity in terms of the Local Plan Review. It was important to ensure that as much economic information as possible was available for the forthcoming review

RECOMMENDED

(1) That the Council subscribe to the following organisations/projects during 1999/2000.-

- (i) Rochford Economic Profile Research.
- (ii) South East Essex Economic Strategy.

(2) That the Council does not subscribe to the following organisations:-

- (i) East of England Investment Agency.
- (ii) Essex Economic Partnership
- (iii) Urban Environment Today.
- (iii) Essex Brussels Office
- (iv) East of England - Local Government Conference (CE)

27 TRAVELLING SUBSISTENCE AND CAR ALLOWANCES

Note: It was accepted that all Officers of the Council had an interest in this item

The Committee received the report of the Head of Financial Services detailing information on travelling and subsistence and car allowances and the changes from the 1998/99 estimates to the 1999/2000 estimates

During debate, the Corporate Director of Finance & External Services indicated that the potential for leased vehicles could be reviewed under a future process review.

The Meeting closed at 7.30pm

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Committee Report

4



Rochford District Council

To the meeting of:

CORPORATE RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE

On:

28TH SEPTEMBER 1999

Report of:

HEAD OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND MEMBER SERVICES

Title:

MINUTES OF CORPORATE RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE

Author:

G Brazendale

At a meeting held on 14th July 1999. Present: Councillors D.E. Barnes (Chairman), R. Adams, Mrs. J.M. Giles, C.R. Morgan, V.H. Leach, T. Livings, R.E. Vingoe, P.F.A. Webster, D.A. Weir and Mrs. M.A. Weir.

Apologies: Councillors G. Fox, D.R. Helson, Mrs. J. Helson and R.E. Vingoe.

Substitutes: Councillors Mrs. S.J. Lemon and Mrs. W.M. Stevenson.

Representatives from the Rayleigh Chamber of Trade, the Rochford Chamber of Trade and the Federation of Small Businesses and Bestax Taxi Company were also present, and were welcomed by the Chairman

246: MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 9th June 1999 were approved as a correct record.

247 MEETING WITH CHAMBERS OF TRADE

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which explained the procedure for meeting the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 under which Local Authorities are obliged to consult formally with the business community prior to setting the Council Tax for the coming year. In addition to a Meeting in July for suggestions to be put forward for the coming budget cycle and to review progress on initiatives taking place in the current year, a further Meeting is to be held with the Sub-Committee on 11th November in order to give an update to the business community on the progress of the budget for next year. The formal consultation exercise will take place through correspondence between 18th January 2000 when the budget is agreed and 22nd February when the Council Tax is set.

Members also considered a number of issues raised by the Chambers of Trade, as outlined below, further details of some of which were contained within an addendum report which included a letter from the Rayleigh Chamber of Trade.

1) Trade Refuse

The Hockley Traders' Association had drawn attention to the level of charges made for the disposal of trade refuse, and had enquired about the possibility of a subsidy being made available by the Council. Members were informed that whilst, in theory the

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Council could amend the contract in order to reduce the charge to businesses, this would result in a significant cost. It would also be extremely difficult to devise a system of reduced charging which targeted specific areas and was seen to be equitable across the District.

ii) Cardboard Collection

The Hockley Traders Association had also requested the provision of a cardboard collection/recycling facility for waste cardboard. Members noted that as a result of the high cost of servicing such a facility, it was unlikely that a cardboard recycling scheme could be developed at present. However, the Agenda 21 Officer was working with businesses on the Eldon Way and Hockley Foundry Industrial Estates on a "green business club", which included a waste "swap shop;" in the long term, this initiative could include cardboard.

It was agreed that whilst it would not be appropriate to pursue either this or the previous request at present, both issues would be noted and could be examined as part of the forthcoming review of the Council's refuse collection contract.

iii) Pavement Vehicle

This proposal, put forward by the Rayleigh Chamber, envisaged the provision of an electrically powered, chauffeur driven pavement vehicle for the benefit of those residents who have walking difficulties. Bestax Taxi Company had agreed to provide, at its own cost, the electric vehicle, and a driver/staff to administer the service. The Rayleigh Chamber had submitted a request to the Council for a grant to subsidise the users of the electric vehicle, so that Bestax does not have to make a charge. It was anticipated that the grant would be sufficient to enable the provision of the electric vehicle free of charge for a period of six months. The grant, if awarded, would be met from the budget provision of £5,000 available for carrying out joint schemes with the local Chambers of Trade.

The representative from Bestax gave a brief presentation to the Sub-Committee, providing further details about the proposal, and indicated that recent investigations had discovered the possible illegality of using a pavement vehicle of the type envisaged. The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) confirmed that the Hackney Carriage Officer's informal discussions with the local Police had highlighted similar potential difficulties. Members were informed that a number of possible alternative schemes were currently being considered, to attempt to meet legal requirements, for example by shopmobility and in association with Care & Mobility Ltd with whom a meeting was soon to be held. Reference was also made to the recent consideration that had been given by Transportation Sub-Committee to a mobility scheme for the District, and it was suggested that any initiative to provide a pavement vehicle in Rayleigh should be reported to that Sub-Committee. Members were generally supportive of the proposal, subject to its legality being determined, but were keen to ensure that the service would be available to all residents rather than just those using taxis. Following discussion, and on a motion put by Councillor V.H. Leach and seconded by Councillor D.A. Weir, it was agreed to recommend that a grant of £1,000 towards the cost of the project be awarded, with a review after three months, subject to the scheme satisfying the necessary legal requirements and it being available for use by all residents wishing to visit Rayleigh Town Centre.

iv) Tree planting in Hockley

This suggestion, received from the Hockley Traders Association proposed that, where the pavement is very wide between Somerfield and the entrance to the Somerfield car park, trees should be planted to soften the aspect. If this proposal was to proceed, it would be necessary to obtain consent from Essex County Council, as Highways Authority, and to ensure that there are no public utilities in the locations proposed for

the trees. It was agreed to defer consideration pending further details being presented by the Hockley Traders Association to a future meeting.

Trader Refund Scheme

Officers reported that the Council would be carrying out an annual review of the car parking policy in September, part of which included the Trader Refund Scheme and, following the introduction of free parking on Saturday afternoons, the Chambers' views about continuing with the scheme were sought. They, together with the representative from the Federation of Small Businesses, agreed that it should be retained and, if possible, expanded. It was suggested that the scheme could be included within the forthcoming Retail Study for Rochford, and Officers undertook to contact the consultants who were currently preparing the Study's Terms of Reference.

There were no further issues for consideration with the Chambers of Trade, and the Chairman thanked their representatives for attending the meeting.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the requests relating to trade refuse and cardboard collection put forward by the Hockley Traders Association be noted for future consideration when appropriate.
- (2) That consideration of the Hockley Traders Association's request for tree planting be deferred pending more details being reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- (3) That £1,000 be earmarked as a contribution towards the Rayleigh Chamber's proposals for a pavement vehicle subject to:

- a) the scheme meeting the necessary legal requirements;
- b) a three monthly review;
- c) the service being available for use by all residents wishing to visit Rayleigh Town Centre; and
- d) a further report to Transportation Sub-Committee. (CD(F&ES))

248. **SOUTH EAST ESSEX ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy & Initiatives which informed Members of progress on the development of the economic strategy for South East Essex and arrangements for its public launch. A copy of the final draft of the strategy document was appended to the report.

The draft strategy had been prepared by Castle Point, Rochford and Southend Councils, working in partnership with Essex TEC and Essex County Council. Following approval of the draft a series of focus groups were held to test the concepts identified within the strategy. The comments of the groups had been included in the final draft, the majority of which supported the general thrust of the strategy without the need for any major alterations. Members noted in particular Part 8 of the strategy which dealt with partnership arrangements and the relationship between the key stakeholders involved in its implementation. It was reported that a South East Essex Members Group had been meeting on a regular basis to discuss the development of the strategy as well as to give focus to a South East Essex input to the Essex Economic Partnership. It was proposed that this Member Group becomes the primary steering group for managing the implementation of the South East Essex Economic Strategy, including continuity at the board meetings of the Essex Economic Partnership. It was suggested that the Group comprises four Members from each of the three Local Authorities, together with three representatives from the private sector and one each from the education and voluntary sectors, and the Sub-Committee agreed that the Council's current representation on the Group remain unchanged.

The Sub-Committee also received, and agreed, proposals for a formal launch for the document at a South East Essex Business Event on 30th September 1999.

A sum of £3,000 was required to complete the preparation of the Final Strategy and to develop a communications plan prior to the launch on 30th September 1999. There was currently provision of £2,000 for this project, and it would therefore be necessary in the first instance to meet the additional £1,000 from contingency. If, during the year, savings could be made on other budget heads, then a virement would be authorised in order to maintain the level of the contingency provision.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) That the contents of the final draft of the South East Essex Economic Strategy be endorsed.
- 2) That arrangements for partner development and implementation as set out in the Head of Service's report including the provision of a secondee from the Essex Economic Partnership, be pursued.
- 3) That arrangements be made formally to launch the Strategy at a business event to be held in September 1999.
- 4) The the additional expenditure of £1,000 be met in the first instance from the contingency provision. (HCPI)

249. ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST - FUNDING

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives concerning a request from the Essex Wildlife Trust for a contribution towards the funding of a County Biodiversity Project Officer for a further two years from September. The Trust had written to all local authorities requesting financial support to cover staff costs for 18 months, at a total cost of £24,000, with a contribution being sought of approximately £1,500 - £2,000 from each authority over the 1999/2000 period.

On a motion put by Councillor P.F.A. Webster and seconded by Councillor D.A. Weir, it was

RECOMMENDED

That £1,500 be allocated to the Essex Wildlife Trust for the Biodiversity Project. (HCPI)

250. MEMBERS' TRAINING

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which outlined progress following the last meeting, and suggested proposals for future action. At that Meeting, it had been agreed that all Members should be asked to complete a survey of training needs which included a question seeking views on the use of external facilitators as part of the Member interview process. The Chief Executive had been asked to obtain costings for these external facilitators.

The Sub-Committee considered the results obtained from the questionnaires that had been returned, which identified the most important areas of work considered by Members. the development of personal skills; the areas of Government policy seen as most important; possible training methods for new Members including a comprehensive induction package and the possibility of a mentor, in the form of an experienced fellow Members, and the use of external facilitators to interview Members. The cost of external facilitators was estimated at £5,500 to £6,000, which would effectively use the entire Member training budget for 1999/2000, and it was therefore agreed not to pursue this proposal.

A number of themes were identified which would represent a positive first step in taking Member training forward in a more structured fashion and these were considered by the Sub-Committee to determine priorities.



Following discussion, it was agreed that training should focus initially on the following areas: community consultation, crime and disorder; housing; and policy formulation. Other topics for which training was considered necessary, as soon as practicable, were time management, finance and priority budgeting. A number of Members made reference to the potential value of induction sessions, particularly for newly elected Councillors, to cover subjects such as standing orders. The Chief Executive indicated that, for next year, consideration could be given to holding a series of evening training sessions for this purpose between Annual Council and the commencement of the first Committee cycle. Once a suitable training package had been identified, a further report would be brought back to the Sub-Committee giving details and costs.

RECOMMENDED:

That a structured training and development programme be produced for this year focusing on the principal areas outlined above. (CE)

251. APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL REVENUE GRANT - SOUTHEND EMERGENCY NIGHT SHELTER

NOTE: The Chairman agreed to admit this item as urgent business by virtue of the financial position of the Shelter.

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services, giving details of Southend Emergency Night Shelter's current financial circumstances, which had recently deteriorated. This situation had been brought about by a reduction in the pool of volunteer staff which, in order to keep the Shelter running, had necessitated an increase in the number of paid staff employed, together with overtime to cover sickness absence.

Members noted the substantial weekly deficit and considered the possibility of making financial assistance available to the Shelter but were aware that the Council's grants fund currently stands at £1,463, and that it was unlikely that further funds would be added during the year. It was recognised that, even if the whole of the balance of the fund was to be granted to the Night Shelter, this would be of little assistance given the current weekly deficit, and that this would preclude the consideration of any other grant applications for the remainder of the year.

RECOMMENDED

That, reluctantly, no grant be made to Southend Action Group for the Homeless on the grounds that it would not be sufficient to enable the Shelter to continue to operate. (HFS)

252. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 9 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

253. SHOPS - 172 AND 174 ROCHFORD GARDEN WAY, ROCHFORD

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential addendum report of the Head of Legal Services which provided details of progress regarding the future of 174 Rochford Garden Way following the last meeting. Members were reminded that there were two adjacent retail premises on the Rochford Garden Way estate, a general grocers and a currently empty tobacconists/newsagents/confectioners shop.

There were problems of vandalism to the plate glass at the front and side of 172 Rochford Garden Way, the general grocery store, and general concern about the viability of two adjacent shops providing similar goods and services.

Members considered possible solutions to these problems, with the main objectives being to prevent property remaining disused by ensuring a continued presence in both units, and to maintain the provision of a community service in the area which is a key component of the Crime and Disorder strategy.

As a point of clarification, the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) informed the Sub-Committee that it would not be possible to fund the provision of security glazing from the Crime and Disorder Budget.

RECOMMENDED

1) That the Council provides polycarbonate security glazing to 172 Rochford Garden Way, at no cost to the tenant and also to 174 Rochford Garden Way to replace the existing steel roller shutter in order to deter vandalism, to enhance the appearance of the area and to protect the Council's interest as well as the tenants.

2) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into negotiations with the tenants of 172 Rochford Garden Way regarding their occupancy of 174 Rochford Garden Way and, if appropriate, complete a lease on the basis outlined in the report with suitable amendments to the existing lease.

3) That in the event that the tenants of 172 Rochford Garden Way do not wish to take up the occupancy of 174 Rochford Garden Way, the lease of both premises be amended to permit operation on the basis that use must be beneficial to the area and agreed by the Council in writing, and the Head of Legal Services be authorised to place 174 Rochford Garden Way on the open market. (HLS)

254. MILLENNIUM WORKING

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Chief Executive which sought Members' views with regard to the payment of specific staff over the millennium period. At the Sub-Committee's meeting in March, it was agreed that any decisions on the award of special payments for out of hours/emergency cover over the millennium/new year period should await the outcome of national negotiations. At the national level, it had since been decided that such payments should be settled locally.

Members received details of payment levels that had been agreed at other Authorities throughout Essex, and considered whether a special 'one-off' payment should be offered to Rochford's staff to ensure that adequate out-of-hours and emergency standby cover over the holiday period is provided. A condition of receipt of the standby payment would be that staff would be available for a call through New Year's Eve until midnight on 3rd January 2000. In order to make the package attractive enough to secure enough volunteers over the 4 day holiday period, the suggestion that the remuneration arrangements for call out for staff above Scale Point 28 mirror those for staff below Scale Point 28 was also considered. It was anticipated that a total of approximately 20 people would be appropriate to provide an adequate level of standby cover for both out-of-hours and emergency planning purposes, although in the case of a major emergency additional staff would need to be used. Following discussion, the Sub-Committee took a vote on the proposals outlined above and agreed, by three votes to one, the recommendation shown at (1) below

For Sheltered Housing Wardens, who normally work on a rostered basis through the Christmas and New Year holiday period with one third (7 staff) on call at any one time, no additional payments had in the past been given. In the light of information provided by the Chief Executive concerning the situation across the County Members considered that any decision regarding these staff should be deferred pending feedback on decisions across the County and further information concerning their contract arrangements.

RECOMMENDED

1) That the Council agree to the level of staff coverage contained in the Chief Executive's report with regard to out-of-hours and emergency planning, with a one-off special standby payment of



£200 being offered to those who participate, to cover the 4 days, 31st December 1999 to 3rd January 2000, together with the call out payment arrangements as outlined.

2) That consideration of the payment arrangements for sheltered housing wardens be deferred with a report back to the September meeting.

3) That (1) above be the subject of negotiations with Umson. (CE)

255. REPLACEMENT FOR PRINTROOM HIGH VOLUME COPIER

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services concerning proposals for the replacement of the high volume copier. Two specific improvements to existing arrangements were examined:

- The introduction of a digital copier/printer in the print room to replace the existing high volume copier.
- The installation of a networked digital copier/printer in the Word Processing Unit.

The Sub-Committee received details of the specification issued to prospective suppliers and the tenders that had been received. It was concluded that the preferred option was to accept the quotation from CBS, including the additional networking options, added to which would be the installation of network points in the various rooms. It was noted that the total cost identified, including maintenance, was below the budgetary provision, the savings from which would be released to the capital programme.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) That two digital copier/printers are purchased from CBS with the additional networking options and network points installed at a total cost of £27,410.
- 2) That one of the purchased digital copier/printers be installed in the Printroom and one installed in the Word Processing Unit to facilitate more efficient production of committee papers and other high volume work.
- 3) That the existing copier is retained for use as back-up copier providing capacity contingency.
- 4) That the savings of £12,590 made on the original budget provision of £40,000 be released to the capital programme (HAMS)

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

jul20d.rpt