

## **Review Committee – 11 April 2012**

---

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **11 April 2012** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr Mrs P Aves  
Cllr Mrs A V Hale

Cllr R D Pointer  
Cllr I H Ward

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr K H Hudson

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn and J R F Mason.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Gowers - Overview and Scrutiny Officer  
M Power - Committee Administrator

## **74 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. With regard to Minute no. 68/12 (08/12 Grove Wood Capital Works), it was noted that the funding provided by Essex County Council to relieve parking stress in Grove Road was due to the provision of a Children's Centre on the school premises.

## **75 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**

The Committee heard from County Councillor Mrs Tracey Chapman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

Members requested information about arrangements for the establishment of a Highways Panel in the District. The Panels had been formed to discuss local highways/transportation issues and to recommend where the budget should be spent. An available Highways budget in the region of £8 million per year for the next two financial years is to be divided among the Borough and District Councils across the county, with a minimum amount of £400,000 and a maximum amount of £1 million allocated to each authority. The amount for each District/Borough Council in the County had been calculated using a formula based on total road length, economic activity and population. A capital budget of £427,808 would be available to the Rochford District Highways Panel. It was noted that any recommendations made by the Panel for works to be undertaken must comply with the safety regulations and meet at least one of the following criteria: how does the scheme improve safety, will the scheme reduce congestion, will the scheme improve air quality, does the

scheme represent value for money, how does the scheme improve travel choice and travel by sustainable means.

There would be an equal number of County Councillors and District Councillors on the Panel, that is, five County Members and five District Members, although all District Councillors would be welcome to attend Panel meetings. A senior County Highways engineer will be at the meetings. The District Council Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation advised that the District Council Members of the Panel would be decided at Annual Council on 22 May 2012. A decision as to who would chair the Panel had not yet been finalised.

Although the Forums would initially be concerned with capital budgets only, in time revenue budgets may be considered in terms of local decision-making. The Panels will also have input into how the time of the Highways Rangers will be directed.

The company, Ringway Jacobs, has been appointed to run the County Council's Highways and Transportation Service. Ringway Jacobs will continue to use local tradesmen and suppliers, which will be of benefit to the local economy.

Members were reminded of the County Council's system for dealing with potholes. Reported potholes are graded in terms of size, with a grade 1 pothole being dealt with within 2 hours, a grade 2 within 2 days and a grade 3 being added to the maintenance programme. A pothole that is considered to be cosmetic only will not be dealt with.

An Essex 'app' for Smart phones, whereby residents can send photos and details of issues they have direct from their smart phones to County Highways, should be available by the end of the year.

Concern was expressed by Members regarding the quality of the repair work undertaken by utilities companies following work to the roads.

Parish/Town Councils will be able to bring issues to the attention of the Panel via Members or officers of both the District and County Councils.

In response to a question around bus subsidies for the coming year, Members were advised that there is currently a subsidy of £5 per journey, although the County Council is now re-tendering to try to achieve a cheaper rate. The availability of a subsidy is particularly important for bus routes in rural areas. Essex County Council operates alongside Southend Borough Council and the bus companies and work around a community transport scheme is ongoing. Issues around passenger transport could be taken to the Highways Panel.

It was noted that a County Council Members Enquiries System had been set up, which was designed so that residents and Councillors could get quick responses to questions they had.

Members were advised that Councillor Derrick Louis will be the new County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

### **Resolved**

That the Committee would consider the operation of the Local Highways Panel after its first year of operation.

## **76 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee considered the annual report on its workings, which would be submitted to Full Council.

Regarding item 11 of the report, it was requested by a Member that a review of the Shop at my Local initiative be added to the list of topics for consideration by the Committee during 2012/13. Any further topics that Members would like to be considered for review should be raised with the Review Committee Chairman or the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

It was noted that since the draft report was issued there had been an additional decision that the Executive had deemed urgent and not subject to call-in. The wording in paragraph 12.1 (6) should be amended to read, "During the year eleven decisions have not been subject to call-in".

### **Resolved**

That, subject to the amendment to paragraph 12.1 (detailed above), the annual report be submitted to Full Council. (HLEMS)

## **77 THE FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan and noted its contents.

The meeting closed at 9.01 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

If you would like these minutes in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.