

# **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

## **17 October 2002**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on 17 October 2002 when there were present:

Cllr P A Capon (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs R Brown (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr C I Black  
Cllr C A Hungate

Cllr P F A Webster  
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R S Allen, R A Amner and P K Savill.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor T Livings

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Scrutton	- Head of Planning Services
J Bourne	- Leisure and Contracts Manager
S Whitehead	- Solicitor
C Evans	- Legal Officer
J Bostock	- Principal Committee Administrator

### **490 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 September 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **491 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor T Livings declared a personal interest in the presentation by the National Express Group by virtue of being a pensioner of British Rail.

### **492 PRESENTATION BY NATIONAL EXPRESS GROUP**

The Committee welcomed Mr Ken Bird of the Greater Anglia Franchise, National Express Group Plc, who was in attendance to outline the latest arrangements relating to rail franchising within the Anglia area and receive any views Members may have given that the National Express Group would be one of the organisations bidding for the new franchise.

The Department of Trade and the Rail Authority had decided to introduce a "Greater Anglia" operation, absorbing the current arrangement involving a number of smaller operators. The prime driver of change had been the objective of having one operator into Liverpool Street. In terms of time frame, a preferred bidder would be determined by the summer of 2003, with a view to handover on 1 April 2004.

Responding to Member questions, Mr Bird advised that-

- Since privatisation, fare structures had been controlled and tied to performance. Where a company was offering a supreme service, it was possible for charges to be set above the retail price index.
- The Strategic Rail Authority believed that one operator into Liverpool Street could make better use of tracks. It could be acknowledged that, given the nature of Liverpool Street Station, the only significant change likely to reduce congestion and improve service times would be the introduction of a cross rail network for slower trains. There was unlikely to be any significant improvements without a substantial investment in rail infrastructure.
- Improved links between rail and bus services could improve performance. Much had been done within the Castle Point Borough in this regard.
- The new franchisee for Greater Anglia would inherit new rolling stock. A franchise over a 20 year period would involve a commitment to a list of delineables, including new trains/air conditioning.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bird for his attendance and confirmed that copies of the documentation provided by National Express on the revised franchised arrangements would be placed in the Members' Lounge, Rayleigh.

#### **493 OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

The Committee received the schedule relating to previous decisions. Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

#### **494 MINUTES OF THE RAYLEIGH TOWN CENTRE SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Rayleigh Town Centre Sub-Committee held on 26 September 2002.

**495 REMOVAL OF FLY POSTERS**

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which set out areas of responsibility in relation to the removal of fly posters and, in particular, the role of the Council's Contract Monitoring Officers.

**496 REMOVAL OF CHEWING GUM, RAYLEIGH TOWN CENTRE**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) on a method of cleansing pavement areas, to remove chewing gum and other staining, initially focusing on Rayleigh Town Centre.

In discussing the potential value of the method detailed in the report, the Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to consider the possibilities for including the centres of Hockley, Rochford and Hullbridge in proposals and undertaking consultation with Town/Parish Councils to determine if they would be prepared to contribute towards costs given that they would be prime beneficiaries.

**Resolved**

- (1) That consultation be undertaken with Town/Parish Councils to ascertain whether, if the centres of Rayleigh, Rochford, Hullbridge and Hockley are included in a chewing gum/stain removal scheme, they would be prepared to contribute towards costs.
- (2) That a report on the outcome of the consultation be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee. (CD(F&ES))

**497 WEBSTERS WAY ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which sought views on options for environmental improvements to Websters Way, Rayleigh.

During debate, Members endorsed the observation in the report that, as there is no provision within the capital programme, Essex County Council and Rayleigh Town Council should be approached on providing funding towards the scheme.

Noting that any scheme was likely to involve partnership working with County Highways, reference was made to costing and other concerns which could be associated with such working on the Town Centre Enhancement schemes.

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Planning Services advised that the largest proportion of proposed works would be on County Highway land and, therefore, subject to the type of contracting arrangements in place for the Town Centre schemes.

**Resolved**

That Officers consult the County Council and Rayleigh Town Council on scheme proposals and the possibilities for funding assistance and report back to this Committee on the outcome. (HPS)

**498 ACCESS TO BACK LANE CAR PARK**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which sought views on a proposal to alter the access arrangements to Back Lane car park in order to improve traffic flows in Rochford Town Centre.

Responding to Member questions, the Head of Planning Services advised that work was still under way to clarify precise ownership interests and that a report could be brought back on this aspect if necessary. Any parties who had direct access into the car park (including Renoufs, the Doctor's surgery and the Day Centre) would be consulted on proposals.

**Resolved**

That the proposals for new access arrangements to Back Lane car park be supported in principle, with further reports into the Committee process as necessary. (HPS)

**499 PROPOSED EXTINGUISHMENT OF PART OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH 5, ASHINGDON**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services on an application for the extinguishment of a section of Public Footpath 5, Ashingdon.

**Recommended** to the Environmental Services Committee:-

- (1) That, subject to the owner of Ashingdon Hall bearing the cost of any necessary accommodation works and all the Council's expenses recoverable under the Local Government (Recovery of Costs for Public Path Orders) Regulations 1993 as amended, the proposal to extinguish the section of Footpath 5, Ashingdon, from points A to C shown on the plan annexed to the report, be approved.

- (2) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making and confirmation of a Public Footpath Extinguishment Order under the terms of Section 118 of the Highways Act 1980. (HLS)

**500 REVIEW OF BUS SUBSIDIES – CONSULTATION PAPER**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services on the submission of views on Government proposals for changes to the existing bus subsidy mechanism.

During debate, it was recognised that there would be some attractions to Local Authorities being able to exert control over funding arrangements. It could be considered fairer and more local to bring arrangements to Council level. Whilst functional responsibility would be with the County Council, opportunities for joint working could be explored.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs M A Weir and seconded by Cllr C I Black, it was:-

**Resolved**

That the Government be advised that this Council's preference would be for a change in the bus subsidies mechanism to Option 4 – transferring funds from the Fuel Duty rebate to Local Authority funds for tendering. (HPS)

The Meeting closed at 8.28PM.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_