

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 14 September 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **14 September 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr P K Savill (Chairman)
Cllr P A Capon (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr K H Hudson

Cllr C A Hungate
Cllr R A Oatham

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs C I Black and Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs T E Goodwin and M G B Starke.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllrs G A Mockford and P F A Webster

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	- Head of Planning Services
D Timson	- Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
N Khan	- Solicitor
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

REPRESENTING ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr R Bass	- Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
T Ciaburro	- Head of Transportation
N McCullagh	- Area Manager South, Transportation & Operational Services

394 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2004 were approved as a correct record, subject to it being noted that under Minute 329 the word 'stakeholders' in the sixth paragraph of page 2 should be replaced with 'shareholders'.

395 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in item 6 of the agenda by virtue of being a member of the Essex County Council Highways & Transportation Policy Development Group.

Cllr R A Oatham declared a personal interest in item 7 of the agenda by virtue of being a Member of Rayleigh Town Council.

396 LOCAL SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH COUNTY HIGHWAYS

The Committee was pleased to welcome County Councillor R Bass who was in attendance to provide an update on proposals for the new Highways Local Service Agreement.

Cllr Bass expressed thanks for the invitation to attend the meeting. The County Council considered that the proposed changes to arrangements for delivering highways and transportation services within the Rochford District were evolutionary and, given that Rochford District was directly maintained, rather than an agent District, more powers would be yielded to the Authority with respect to local highways and transportation services. It was anticipated that an outline agreement should be available for consideration in October.

The Highways and Transportation department would be centralised and would focus on the following:

- highways maintenance
- network development (development of new roads; transport schemes)
- network management (traffic regulation; road safety; speed limits)
- passenger transport

There would be 4 area offices and the Rayleigh office would continue to work with Rochford District Council for the foreseeable future, although it would cease to work with Maldon. The proposals were aimed at providing services in an efficient and cost effective way. Management and commissioning of delivery of the service on the ground would be carried out by those best placed to do so.

In tandem, Contract 2000 would be terminated on 31 March 2006, to be replaced with composite contracts that would better reflect the market place, give better value for money and enable the County Council to have more effective control of arrangements.

The County Council was also seeking to set up a more effective working relationship with Thurrock and Southend on Sea Unitaries, the Department of Transport and the private sector in order to provide a better impetus for a transport and highways infrastructure within the Thames Gateway.

One of the basic principles of the proposed agreement would be to divide the network into County Routes, ie those routes used by people travelling on journeys between and across boroughs and districts to destinations beyond borough and district boundaries and which were roads of greater than local significance, and into Local Roads, which would be mainly used by those travelling within districts or localities. Within the Rochford District it was

estimated that there were 40% County Routes and 60% Local Roads. Under the new arrangements it was proposed that Rochford District Council would have responsibility for determining priorities for Local Roads with a budget in the region of approximately £600 - £700,000, compared to the current locally determined programme budget of around £49,000. It was considered that Members of Rochford District Council were better informed to make judgments relating to Local Roads than Members of the County Council.

A core agreement would be drawn up, which would relate to all 12 districts within the county. There would, however, be items that would relate specifically to the Rochford District, including, for example, grass cutting of verges, sponsorship of roundabouts, brown tourism signs.

The County Council was concerned about the lack of progress with respect to maintenance arrears. In conjunction with a more ambitious plan for dealing with essential works to the highway and for passenger transport, the County Council would be applying to the Department of Transport and to the ODPM for a one-off sum in order to deal with maintenance arrears.

It was essential that there should be a clear mechanism for political decision making. The County Council proposed the following:

- a one-to-one meeting at least once a year with this Council and the County Cabinet Member
- Area Forum
- Area Highways Panel, with representation from Rochford, Basildon and Castle Point Councils and the corresponding County Councillors for that area.

Responding to a Member concern relating to an outer bypass for Southend-on-Sea, the Cabinet Member confirmed that there were no plans for the main route corridors other than for the A13 to the west of Sadlers Farm, the A130 and the A127 to the east of Sadlers Farm. The County Council would consider any requests for realignments to roads, but would not accede to any that would result in new routes within the corridor.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the timing of the Local Service Agreement, the Cabinet Member advised that it was anticipated that the LSA should come into effect on 1 April 2005 and that the new contractual arrangements replacing Contract 2000 would commence on 1 April 2006.

The Cabinet Member, responding to a query relating to winter salting, confirmed that a central County Council budget would continue to be provided for the salting of main routes in severe weather conditions.

In response to a further enquiry, the Cabinet Member advised that there were precedents for one-off sums being awarded centrally for maintenance arrears, and that the County Council was liaising with these Authorities.

The Cabinet Member, in response to a concern raised with respect to the current practice under Contract 2000 of main contractors sub-contracting work to other, sometimes unsatisfactory, contractors advised that, although some work would inevitably be sub-contracted under the new contractual arrangements, such instances would be tightly controlled by the County Council.

Responding to a final enquiry relating to footpaths and bridle ways, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the Local Service Agreement would not seek to make any changes to current arrangements.

397 SECOND DEPOSIT PHASE OF THE ROCHFORD DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services informing Members as to the general nature of the representations received with regard to the Second Deposit Draft of the Replacement Local Plan.

Officers confirmed that the Public Inquiry would commence on 18 January 2005.

During debate of a concern raised with respect to policy TP9 on car parking standards, officers advised that there would be an opportunity following the Inquiry to make any further revisions to the document. It was further noted that officers would have delegated authority to make necessary adjustments to the boundaries of wildlife sites, should it be proven necessary. The following amendments were agreed:-

- Page 7.56
Under Officer's Comments replace the word "consistency" with "inconsistency".
- Page 7.59
Paragraph 5.48 should be removed, given developments relating to London Southend Airport.
- Page 7.131
Under Officer's Comments should be included a comment to the effect that there would be no change to the proposals map with respect to land at Wellington Road, Rayleigh.

Officers would produce a Schedule listing those elements of the Local Plan that were not subject to objection; these policies would be expected to go directly into the Adopted Plan and become material considerations for development control within the District.

Recommended to the Environmental Services Committee

- (1) That the response to representations received to the Rochford District

Replacement Local Plan (First Deposit Draft) be as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report, subject to the deletion of Paragraph 5.48, and that the proposed changes be incorporated in the Pre-Inquiry Draft of the Plan.

- (2) That details of all representations and the Council's response to the same be sent to all who made such representations and displayed in the Council offices and on the Council's website.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services to approve minor amendments to the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (Pre-Inquiry Deposit Draft) as may be required to ensure the accuracy of the published plan. (HPS)

398 COLLECTION OF APPLIANCES (WHITE GOODS)

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) inviting Members to amend the answer phone message relating to the collection of 'white goods'.

During debate Members concurred that, for reasons of safety for children, it was essential that the doors of all white goods left out on the highway by residents for collection should be properly secured.

There was also a general consensus that there would be merit in publicising arrangements for collecting white goods items from the homes of the elderly and infirm and of including an item in *Rochford District Matters* on health and safety issues associated with the disposal of white goods items.

Resolved

- (1) That the answer phone message should be amended to include the wording "in the interests of child safety, please ensure that the doors on all white goods appliances are properly taped shut".
- (2) That collection arrangements of white goods items from the homes of the elderly and infirm are publicised and an item included in *Rochford District Matters* on the health and safety issues relating to the disposal of white goods items. (CD(F&ES))

The meeting closed at 9.53 pm.

Chairman

Date