

Environmental Services Committee – 6 April 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **6 April 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr J E Grey (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr Mrs L Hungate
Cllr R A Oatham

Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr C J Lumley

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R A Amner, Mrs H L A Glynn and A J Humphries.

SUBSTITUTES

M G B Starke

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
S Clarkson	Head of Revenue and Housing Management
S Scrutton	Head of Planning Services
J Crawford	Transportation Manager
J Desmond	Assistant Transport and Revenues Administration Manager
M Martin	Committee Administrator

157 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

158 ISSUES ARISING FROM ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a recommendation that the proposed Supplementary Planning Guidance regarding education contributions should be approved for public consultation and further recommending that a report be brought back in due course.

In response to Member request, officers agreed to liaise with the County Council's Learning Services officers and report back to the Committee on what Section 106 funds are spent on within this District.

Resolved

That, subject to the following comments from Members, the proposed Supplementary Planning Guidance regarding education contributions be approved for public consultation and that a report be brought back in due course.

- This policy could lead to a distortion in future housing developments; the district requires smaller properties, but not dense developments. The policy, however, would seem to encourage bigger properties or dense developments.
- It was deemed unnecessary for there to be a differential between educational contributions for private housing, compared to those for social housing, which were higher.
- The pupil product factor for private flats should be the same (0.250) for both standard and high-density development.
- The pupil product factors for private and social housing should be the same (0.250)
- The Policy would encourage further increases in house prices. (HPS)

159 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions and in response to Member questions the following was noted:-

Village and Town Centre Regeneration Schemes (Minute 318(03)/03)

County Highways had indicated that further works in Hullbridge were due start during week commencing 12 April 2004.

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement – Quarterly Progress Report (Minute 58/04)

A new parking patrol vehicle will be ordered for delivery in August 2004 and this would be used prior to the introduction of decriminalisation of parking enforcement while the existing vehicle was being re-sprayed in corporate colours.

Air Quality Review and Assessment (Minute 59/04)

Officers would write to Members of the Committee to confirm where the air monitoring in Rochford would be taking place. Officers were reassured that any planning application relating to future development within the centre of Rochford would be referred in the normal way to environmental health officers as part of the consultation process.

Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

160 DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management, which invited Members to note the progress towards implementing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) and agree a number of recommendations.

Members noted that:-

- the appeal process against parking enforcement would culminate in adjudication by the National Parking Adjudication Service (NPAS) and that when assuming DPE powers, local authorities were required to appoint Members to represent the Council on the Joint Committee.
- This would not involve any additional cost to the Council.
- The availability of dispensations would be advertised but it was noted that there would be a further opportunity prior to the implementation of DPE to explore other circumstances where these might be waived.
- routes for patrol officers were currently being worked on and would continue to be re-evaluated once DPE had got underway.
- contractors could apply for and pay for a dispensation where they regularly needed to park on the highway for a period of time in the course of their work.
- A new Traffic Management Bill was currently passing through Parliament which would cover the issue of parking on verges and footways, and other controls on highway obstruction, such as locating disposal skips on the highway.
- Under DPE the responsibility would transfer to the District from the Police, to deal with issues where a general obstruction to the free flow of traffic was being caused, such as driving the wrong way along one-way streets.

Members agreed that charges for dispensations be waived for funeral directors and wedding cars.

Members of the Committee wished to commend officers for the efficient and professional way in which the DPE operation was being progressed.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council enters into an agency agreement with Essex County Council to manage the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement within the District.
- (2) That the Council adopts and implements Decriminalised Parking Enforcement throughout the District with effect from 1 October 2004.
- (3) That the Council formally seeks membership of the National Parking Adjudication Services (NPAS) and that the Council's Solicitor be authorised to sign the Agreement.

- (4) That Cllr T G Cutmore be nominated to serve on the NPAS Joint Committee and Cllr P A Capon as a substitute member.
- (5) That the £60 Penalty Charge level be approved.
- (6) That charges for dispensations be approved at £15 for the first day and £5 per day thereafter.
- (7) That charges for dispensations be waived for funeral directors and wedding cars. (HRHM)

161 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 1: CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES – CONSULTATION DRAFT

Resolved

That this item be referred to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee for more detailed discussion (HPS)

162 SOUTH ESSEX CATCHMENT ABSTRACTION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services, which outlined the key elements of the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) for South Essex associated with maintenance of required levels of water supply to the District.

Members noted that:-

- the Crouch and Roach Management Study which was currently underway would also be dealing with similar issues and that Members would be kept informed via further reports to this Committee.
- The Environment Agency were taking the issues very seriously, but the Council would continue to urge that caution was needed.
- The Environment Agency had confirmed that they were satisfied that increases in the number of dwellings would not result in any shortage.

Members were reminded that the Environment Agency would shortly be making a presentation to Members of the Council on their flood management strategy when these issues could be raised. The Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee might wish to invite them to speak specifically on these issues at one of its meetings.

Resolved

That the Environment Agency be advised that, whilst additional licences might be issued for abstraction in some circumstances in the South Essex CAMS area, it is essential that further work be undertaken to assess the impact on the protected areas of the Crouch and Roach rivers. (HPS)

163 FORMATION OF A GROUNDWORK TRUST FOR THE THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX AREA

Note: Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being the Council's representative on the Rural Community Council of Essex.

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which sought Members' agreement in principle to the Council being involved in the creation of a Groundwork Trust. Members were advised that at this stage no decision to commit to a Trust was required.

A Member expressed concern that there had been no mention made of the work already being carried out by the Rural Community Council of Essex, whose objectives included shaping the rural policy agenda of the public, private and voluntary sector and promoting community led regeneration initiatives to tackle disadvantage and social exclusion in rural areas.

Officers confirmed that discussions would be continuing and that this issue could be raised with the consultant engaged to promote the Trust, in order to ensure there would not be any duplication of initiatives.

Resolved

- (1) That the creation of a Groundwork Trust for the Thames Gateway South Essex Area be supported in principle.
- (2) That officers continue their involvement in the formulation of the Business Plan and the setting up of the Trust. (CD(F&ES))

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Chairman

Date