

Environmental Services Committee – 7 September 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **7 September 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M G B Starke
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs L Hungate

Cllr R A Amner
Cllr J P Cottis
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J M Pullen.

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse	- Corporate Director (External Services)
J Bourne	- Leisure and Contracts Manager
A Lovett	- Street Scene Manager
M Howlett	- Senior Environmental Health Officer
A Law	- Solicitor
J O'Brien	- Committee Administrator
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

D Lester - Operations Manager (Serviceteam)

274 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

275 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee reviewed the progress on decisions schedule.

Formation of a Groundwork Trust for the Thames Gateway South East Area (Minute 222/05)

It was noted that arrangements would be made for a presentation to be made to Members highlighting what the Trust does for the Thames Gateway South Essex area and, in particular, for the Rochford District.

New Local Nature Reserve Designations (Minute 493/05)

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the RSPB, officers confirmed that the RSPB was very interested in the possibilities of joint working with this

Authority and that efforts would be made to involve the RSPB in achieving designation of the specified sites as local nature reserves.

276 SERVICETEAM PROGRESS REPORT – REFUSE COLLECTION, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANSING

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) to which was appended a progress report from Serviceteam Limited on the refuse collection and street cleansing contracts.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Lester from Serviceteam to the meeting.

Introducing the report, Mr Lester advised that there had been some errors in the recycling tonnage totals on page 10.3 of the agenda; revised figures were accordingly circulated to Members of the Committee.

The first of the recycling vehicles was currently having a bin lift fitted to it. It was anticipated that the vehicle would be back in operation next week. The other recycling vehicles would also be fitted with the lifts, one at a time. Although the Council had paid the costs associated with the supply and fitting of these bin lifts, Serviceteam had covered the transportation costs. When all 3 vehicles had been fitted with the lifts the programme of rolling out the kerbside recycling service to flatted accommodation around the District would commence. This would result in the majority of households within the District having access to the kerbside recycling service.

In response to Member enquiries the following points were noted:-

- Tonnages for cans were lower in 2005/06 than the previous year.
- The stretch of London Road, Rayleigh that was not previously covered by the kerbside recycling service had now been included in one of the recycling rounds.
- Flatted properties would be added to the scheme in a phased manner; there were likely to be high levels of contamination initially, as recycling would often be stored in communal recycling bins.
- Prior notification of areas of flatted accommodation about to be integrated into the kerbside recycling scheme would be included in the Members' Bulletin.
- All recyclable materials (other than contaminated loads) collected in the District were sent to recycling manufacturers within this country; none were sent abroad. Arrangements would be made for Members of the Committee to visit some of these recycling manufacturers, including Aylesford Paper, Abbey Cans and Midland Glass, in order to see first hand what happens to the recyclable materials.

- Any recycling that had been contaminated would go into landfill. Contamination levels in the District were, however, very low. Those residents that were recycling were doing so properly.
- Education was key in attempting to make an impact on static recycling uptake within the District. Advertising on the sides of the recycling vehicles commending residents for recycling a specified tonnage of materials, thus taking this out of landfill, could prove effective. It was also important to continue to run articles in Rochford District Matters and to target children in schools, educating them in the benefits of recycling.
- It had not been practicable to introduce 180 litre bins as replacement grey bins in the District, as the purchase cost of these bins was substantially higher than that of 240 litre bins.
- The current recycling contracts expire in March 2008. The tendering process for new contracts had already begun and would not rule out including a different mix of recyclable materials to those currently under contract. All options would be explored as part of the tendering process, although this would obviously be subject to cost.

Members observed that paper recycling rates in the more rural parts of the District could be lower as a result of paper being used in composting. It was further noted that, as trends tended to move towards the purchase of more fresh foods, recycling rates for cans would inevitably decrease. In concluding the debate, Members concurred that it was essential that different ways of educating residents in the importance of recycling were employed in order to try and increase recycling rates within the District.

Resolved

That the information and answers provided by Serviceteam's Operations Manager be noted. (CD(ES))

277 BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLAN – PUBLIC REGULATION, INSPECTION AND PROTECTION

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) updating Members on progress to date with implementation of this action plan.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to Environment Agency officers being authorised to enforce litter controls, officers advised that the Environment Agency would enforce controls relating to fly tipping or the dumping of toxic waste but would expect the District Council to enforce minor issues, eg, litter dropping.

In response to a Member question about the conduct of a gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment, officers confirmed that a report had been

included on the agenda for the Planning Policy & Transportation Committee on 12 September which recommended that this assessment was not required.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to civic amenity and recycling centres, officers advised that Southend on Sea Borough Council was continuing to charge Rochford residents for using the Stock Road centre. No progress had been made in identifying a suitable site for a centre in the east of the District. It should, however, be borne in mind that the Essex joint waste management procurement process would include the configuration of all such sites across the county. It was also noteworthy that Southend on Sea Borough Council's waste and recycling contracts were due to expire at the same time as those of this Council.

Resolved

That the final update be noted and that this best value review be now completed. (CD(ES))

278 AIR QUALITY REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT (THIRD ROUND)

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) updating Members on progress of the third review and assessment of air quality within Rochford District and providing a resolution for future air quality monitoring and assessment.

Officers advised that the Council's updating and screening assessment, as detailed in paragraph 3 of the officer's report, had been recently approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The dust monitoring programme in the vicinity of Rawreth Industrial Estate, identified in the assessment, would begin in the first quarter of 2007.

In response to Member enquiries, the following was noted:-

- Reviews of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels were conducted every 2 – 3 years as part of the updating and screening assessments. These would automatically identify any major new developments, eg, the expansion of London Southend Airport, or housing developments, that would be likely to impact on NO₂ levels. Any potential hotspots were thus identified for more detailed monitoring.
- In the event of exceedances of the prescribed standards being obtained as part of the current monitoring in Rayleigh High Street or that proposed at Rawreth Industrial Estate, the Council would have to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and consult with residents and other public bodies and would work in partnership with the County Council and other interested parties to identify any means of decreasing levels or the pollutants.

- The monitoring proposed in the report would be very accurate and would illustrate clearly whether acceptable levels were being exceeded, and if so, by exactly what amount.
- Members would be provided with cards for reporting commercial diesel vehicles, such as buses and lorries, which emitted smoky fumes. It was generally older diesel vehicles that emitted such fumes. An article would also be included in *Rochford District Matters* advising residents where to obtain these complaints cards.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted and that further reports be submitted once the results of monitoring were available. (CD(ES))

279 THE ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGN – FIRST YEAR REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) advising Members on the progress of the environmental campaign launched in September 2005 and how this had dealt with environmental issues affecting the street scene of the District.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to abandoned vehicles, officers advised that there was an untaxed vehicle initiative on trial in which both the DVLA and the Police were involved. Under the initiative, untaxed vehicles that had been abandoned could be removed by contractors within 24 hours. Although the Authority didn't have direct access to the national DVLA computer system, it could do so via Police links.

In response to a further enquiry relating to the reporting of abandoned vehicles, officers confirmed that residents could do so via the Council's website. Officers would find out whether the website included any direct telephone numbers for residents to use for this purpose, rather than call centre numbers.

Officers advised, in response to a Member enquiry relating to prosecutions, that no one had been prosecuted by the Council to date for environmental crime. Anyone who was caught committing an environmental street crime, for example, dropping litter or not clearing up their dog's faeces in public areas within the District would be prosecuted, if sufficient evidence was available.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to horse fouling, officers confirmed that horse owners weren't prosecuted for their animals fouling on roads or pavements because there were not the same health issues as those associated with dog fouling.

In response to a Member query about graffiti, officers advised that it was necessary to obtain an owner's permission before arranging the removal of graffiti from private property. It was often difficult to ascertain ownership, for

example, the walls adjacent to alley ways. It was also occasionally difficult to obtain an owner's permission for graffiti removal.

Officers agreed, in response to a Member observation relating to graffiti in areas under the jurisdiction of other public bodies, for example, electric sub-stations, that there would be merit in exploring the possibility of developing enforcement agreements with utility companies.

Resolved

- (1) That the implementation of the environmental campaign to date and the increased public interest in these issues be noted.
- (2) That a budget bid of £40,000 be made for the continuation of the environmental campaign, as outlined in Appendix A to the officer's report.
- (3) That a further budget bid of £32,500 be made for an additional officer and vehicle to enable increased enforcement activity. (CD(ES))

280 PROPOSED DIVERSION OF FOOTPATH 14, EASTWOOD

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services on an application received from Mr and Mrs Martin of 'Lichfield', Edwards Hall Park to divert the public footpath 14 in Eastwood.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the plan, officers confirmed that the area indicated on the plan above the hatched area was all situated in the Green Belt.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposal to divert footpath 14, as shown on the plan appended to the officer's report, be approved.
- (2) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making and confirmation of the Public Path Diversion Order under the terms of section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to give effect to the proposed diversion. (HLS)

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Chairman

Date