
**MINUTES OF THE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 7.30 P.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Challinor (Chairman), D R Mayzes (Vice-Chairman), Aldis, R Callender, Colbourne, D Oxley, Simons and Talbot.

Also Present: Environment and Coast Protection Portfolio Holder (Councillor N Turner)

In Attendance: Corporate Director (Public Experience) (June Clare), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Engineering and Coastal Protection Manager (Mike Badger), Street Scene Manager (Tim R Clarke), Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice) and Street Scene Officer (Darren Weaver).

13. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all members of the Committee and Officers to the meeting and thanked the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coast Protection (Councillor N Turner) for attending.

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies for absence on this occasion.

15. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 2 July 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none on this occasion.

17. UPDATE ON THE COAST PROTECTION SCHEME FOR CLACTON-ON-SEA AND HOLLAND-ON-SEA

The Coast and Engineering Services Manager (Mike Badger) provided an update on the work undertaken so far on the Coast Protection Scheme, which had started on Tuesday 22 July of this year.

Mr Badger started by showing photographs of the different works that were being carried out, which had commenced with the removal of groynes from the radar mast to the Esplanade at Holland-on-Sea and said that most of the concrete material was being used to make a temporary beach access ramp. He added that beach material was being brought in from a licensed Crown Estate dredge site by the Sospan Dau, which was a specialist craft, 'rainbowing' each load onto the beach at high tide and around 20,000 cubic metres of material was being used to build up the area for the initial beach recharge.

Mr Badger said that the commencement of the works had caused huge interest from members of the public and a business centre had been opened on a daily basis from 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. (including weekends) with positive feedback from the public being received. He added that a link had been placed on the Council's website (www.tendringdc.gov.uk) giving weekly updates with a live webcam feed.

He said the first delivery of rock from Norway had arrived on 28 August, which came from a transshipment barge linked up with a coaster 2.5 miles from the beach and that 32 tons of rock had been placed on the first kilometre of beach. Showing pictures taken at high tide, Mr Badger said that Groyne 22 was nearing completion and work had started on G.21 with the recharge platforms being protected by rock, he said there was a target of completing a groyne every two weeks.

Mr Badger went on to say that the main recharge of the beach would start late October with the first phase of work being to construct seven fishtail groynes, which would take until January 2015, and the second phase would commence in March 2015. However, he added, if the winter was favourable in terms of weather, the construction work should be able to work through winter, which could mean an early completion of August rather than September 2015. He said that there would be some minimal disruption as the beach and promenade would be closed during certain parts of the work, but that sections could be opened depending upon progress on the work.

On the plus side, Mr Badger said that the café at Holland Gap had been able to stay open with fencing in place and was doing very well from visitors and the construction crew.

In response to a Member's question, Mr Badger said the work had started at Holland Haven as it had the weakest frontage and needed to be secured before it worsened, with another couple of weak areas at the Holland end also being made safe.

In response to another Member's question, Mr Badger reassured Members that the work being undertaken was being done safely in light of the enormous weight of the rocks.

Members and Officers were encouraged to visit the works at a time of major transformation for Tendring District Council

Members agreed that it was a pleasure to see the work underway at last, with positive publicity and good press releases, and the whole scheme was a thorough credit to the Council. It was noted that the work could not have even started without the Council's foresight in setting aside £3 million to start the whole process.

The Chairman commended the work of the efforts of the Council and its Offices and Councillor Turner added that the support of the whole Council had made everything possible and thanked everyone for their involvement.

The Corporate Director (Public Experience) (June Clare) informed the Committee that the work was awe inspiring and a real opportunity of a lifetime to watch and that the scheme was a legacy for the whole of the Tendring District.

Following discussion, the Committee **COMMENTED** to **CABINET** that the Service Development and Delivery Committee, having had received a progress report and presentation on the progress of the Coastal Defence Scheme Project, expressed its extreme satisfaction as to the progress made and the manner by which the operation until now, had been managed.

Mr Badger left the meeting following consideration of the foregoing item of business.

18. ENFORCEMENT OF DOG-FOULING AND LITTER-DROPPING OFFENCES WITHIN TENDRING

There was submitted a joint report by the Council's Democratic Services Manager and Street Scene Manager, which provided the Committee with details in respect of the Council's enforcement practices as these related to dog-fouling and litter-dropping offences within the Tendring District.

The Democratic Services Manager (Mr Sweeney) reminded Members that the matter was before the Committee, following its decision on 19 May 2014, to scrutinise the Council's enforcement function. Given that this was a vast area, the Chairman had agreed that the Committee focus on concerns it had with regard to dog-fouling and litter-dropping related offences within the District.

As a starting point for Members, the Democratic Services Manager advised Members that he had taken it upon himself to write to all Local Authorities in Essex to seek details of any Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued by them in relation to these two areas. Subsequently, four local authorities (Basildon, Braintree, Castle Point and Epping Forest) responded and the figures provided (including those of Tendring District Council) were detailed in Appendix A to the report.

Updated figures had been received up until the day of the meeting and an amended Appendix showing the changes was tabled at the meeting.

The Street Scene Manager (Mr Clarke) said that, despite all officers within the Service being authorised to issue FPNs, it was extremely difficult to apprehend such offenders unless such incidents were reported by a member of the public. As a result, he said, only comparatively few Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had been issued of late (two (dog-fouling) and 13 (litter-dropping) in 2013). He said that if people saw anyone dropping litter or allowing their dogs to foul in public, without clearing it up, then they should feel able to let the Council know, as it would act positively to such approaches and ensure that appropriate action was taken against the offenders. With regard to litter-dropping from vehicles, it was noted that notice of the vehicle registration number would allow the Council to pursue the offender and issue the appropriate FPN.

Members of the Committee asked questions and made comments on:

- (a) Complaints being received by the public that the same people were regularly offending but just walked away;
- (b) Did the Council prosecute if fines were not paid?
- (c) If an area received a lot of complaints, did the Dog Wardens attend?
- (d) If a car registration was given to Officers, would they investigate?
- (e) How regularly were rubbish bins emptied in the town centre? and
- (f) What was happening with dog waste bins?

In response, Mr Clarke and the Council's Street Scene Officer (Mr Weaver) responded to the comment and questions above, as follows:

- (a) Brightlingsea Town Council had made a number of complaints, following which, the Council provided training to the Town Council in respect of enforcement of littering and dog fouling but, since then, not one statement had been received from that area;
- (b) It was not always cost effective to prosecute through the Magistrates' Court;
- (c) The Dog Wardens would go out as early as 5.00 or 6.00 a.m. in an attempt to catch dog fouling offenders but needed to be told where the complaints were in order for the Wardens to target the offenders;
- (d) If a car registration number was given to Officers it would need to be within five working days of the offence to enable the Council to obtain the car owners details and, if longer than that, a written request would have to be made to the DVLA, which was a time-consuming process and could take a number of weeks;

- (e) Bins were usually emptied before 8.00 a.m. and after 6.00 p.m. however, if Officers received a complaint that a bin was overflowing then an Officer would be sent out to deal with it; and
- (f) These were gradually being replaced with normal rubbish bins when they were damaged as it was acceptable to place wrapped dog waste into them.

It was suggested that more publicity needed to be produced advising members of the public that the Council would prosecute offenders. It was stressed again by Officers that if they were given details of offenders, then the Council could, and would, take action.

A Member mentioned an idea that had been tried whereby dog mess was sprayed with highly visible, fluorescent paint to make it visible and shame the offending dog owners into clearing up after their dog. Officers agreed to look into this and also provided Members of the Committee with leaflets and adhesive posters, which were being issued to help make the public more aware that dog mess was a real problem within Tendring.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Turner and the Officers for their attendance and information provided to the Committee.

After discussion of the above points, the Committee **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- (a) The Committee had noted there were constraints in staffing levels, which made enforcement of littering and dog fouling difficult;
- (b) The Council be asked to use any means possible to encourage the public to report littering and dog fouling immediately so it could be dealt with promptly; and
- (c) The Committee would like the idea of spraying dog mess with highly visible, fluorescent paint as a potential deterrent, to be investigated.

Councillor Turner, the Corporate Director (Public Experience), Street Scene Manager and Street Scene Officer left the meeting following discussion of the foregoing item of business.

19. POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR EXAMINATION BY A MEMBER WORKING PARTY

The Chairman invited Members to update the Committee on those areas of work they had chosen to look into and pursue.

Councillor Colbourne reported that ramps for disabled users had been put into a couple of shops in the Dovercourt area but that the issue of dropped kerbs for wheelchair users was still a problem. He informed the Committee that the Highways Authority had asked him to provide a list where the dropped kerbs were needed so they could have a look at the kerbs.

Councillor R Callender said his subject of Tourism was still a work in progress and that he intended to report to the Committee at a later meeting.

Councillor Aldis had nothing to report on Housing issues but the Committee was reminded that new Council Housing was an agenda item in January 2015.

There were no questions for Councillor D Mayzes on his subject of investment and growth.

20. FORWARD PLANS

The Committee noted the new items relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee contained in Forward Plans Nos 155 and 156.

21. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Mr Sweeney informed the Committee he would be meeting with the Chairman (Councillor Challinor) to discuss agenda items for the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 3 November 2014. He then asked the Committee if they had any issues they wished to be brought to Committee for their scrutiny.

Councillor D Mayzes asked when the Leisure Services maintenance review would come to Committee and Mr Sweeney informed him that he would be discussing the issue with the Leisure Manager (Mike Carran)

Councillor R Callender suggested contacting the Parish and Town Councils to see if they had any issues in their Districts.

Councillor Talbot raised the matter of the IT report which had recently gone to Cabinet and suggested that after the next District election would be a good time to introduce electronic reporting rather than Councillors receiving paper copies. He added that Councillors needed to be made aware that this would be the way things would be set out in the future.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.57 p.m.

Chairman