

Minutes



Witham Local Committee

30th June 2009

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
J E Abbott	Yes	J E B Gyford	Yes
Miss L Barlow	Yes	Mrs S A Howell	Yes
D L Bebb	Apologies	P J Hughes	Yes
G Cohen	Apologies	M C M Lager	Yes
J G J Elliott	Yes	S J Lambourne	No
R Elliston	Yes	A M Meyer	Yes
Dr R L Evans	Yes	R G S Mitchell	Yes
T J W Foster	Yes	Mrs J M Money	Apologies
Mrs M E Galione	Yes	R Ramage	Apologies

Councillor Lady Newton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Well-Being, was also in attendance until 8.55pm.

12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:-

Councillor J E Abbott declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 (a) – Local Committee Funding Draft Action Plan 2009/10 as he was a Member of Rivenhall Parish Council which had approved joint funding for improvements to a recycling area.

Councillor Miss L Barlow declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 (a) – Blackwater Rail Trail as she was a Member of Witham Town Council which had submitted representations on the matter.

Councillor Lady Newton declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 (a) – Health Care Review as a non executive Director of NHS Mid Essex.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct all Members remained in the meeting for these items, unless stated otherwise, and took part in the debate and decision thereon.

13 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the minutes of the meeting of Witham Local Committee held on 19th May 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the first paragraph of Minute 8 – Local Committee Funding Priorities being amended as follows:

'Kitty Barrett, the Locality Coordinator, presented the report and referred to the capital and revenue funding allocated to each Local Committee, and for this to be directed to local priorities rather than a grant system. The priorities are to reflect the aspirations of local people, and it was proposed to hold an extra meeting to identify those priorities for 2009/2010. Each Member was requested to propose three items from their own knowledge and local Wards, including estimated costs, and create an Action Plan for the next Witham Local Committee on 30th June 2009. It was noted that later in 2009 the Committee would be required to hold a consultation event to involve the community in identifying priorities for 2010/11.'

Matters Arising

Minute 7 – Appointment of Representatives for the Civic Year 2009-10

It was reported that Braintree District Leisure Community Association Consultative Board and Silver End Memorial Gardens Management Advisory Group had been disbanded.

Minute 9 – Asset Management Plan 2009-10 (Witham Station Footbridge Extension)

Members considered a briefing note prepared by Essex County Council which provided an update on this scheme. It was noted that, as the next step, the County Council would be requested to approve contractual arrangements and enter into a Basic Implementation Agreement with Network Rail for the design and construction of the footbridge and improvements to the station.

Minute 9 – Asset Management Plan 2009-10 (Braintree Rail Study)

Councillor Abbott indicated that he had received a response from the Head of District Development regarding the allocation of finance received via Section 106 Agreements. Councillor Abbott expressed concern that despite Witham Local Committee agreeing priorities for expenditure, Essex County Council had determined that the money should be spent differently.

14 **QUESTION TIME – ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

INFORMATION: There were three statements made, a summary of which is contained in the Appendix to these Minutes.

15 **HEALTH CARE REVIEW**

INFORMATION: The Chairman advised Members that the representative of NHS Mid Essex who had been due to give a presentation to the Committee on health care matters was unwell and unable to attend. In the circumstances, it was suggested that this matter should be deferred and that an additional meeting of the Committee should be arranged to consider it.

DECISION: That an additional meeting of Witham Local Committee be arranged to receive a presentation by NHS Mid Essex on health care. (Note: The meeting has subsequently been arranged for Thursday, 13th August 2009).

16 **BLACKWATER RAIL TRAIL, WITHAM**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the improvement of the Blackwater Rail Trail by providing a cycle/pedestrian path from Pasture Road to

Blackwater Lane, Witham. This could be achieved by utilising the remaining balance of finance provided via a Unilateral Undertaking Agreement with Benton Hall Golf Club.

Members were advised that Phase 1 of the improvements to the Blackwater Rail Trail, which had provided a cycle/pedestrian link between Constance Close and Blue Mills Hill, had been completed in the Summer of 2008 and that approximately £37,000 of the financial contribution remained which had to be spent by 2011.

At the Witham Local Committee meeting held on 24th March 2009 Members had agreed that the remaining balance of funding should be used to contribute towards a Toucan crossing (pedestrian and cycle crossing) on Maldon Road, subject to consultation with Benton Hall Golf Club. However, Essex County Council Highways had since agreed to fund the full cost of the crossing. This would be installed as a wide Puffin crossing for pedestrians only, but there would be an option to upgrade it to a Toucan crossing for pedestrians and cyclists if required at a later date. In the circumstances, it was proposed that the finance should be used to fund the provision of a cycle/pedestrian link from Pasture Road to Blackwater Lane.

The improvement of this section of the Blackwater Rail Trail would provide a strategic link to the Town Centre, the adjacent Industrial Estates, Whetmead Nature Reserve and Witham River Walk. It would also form part of the National Cycle Network Route 16 (Maldon to Witham). If approved, it was anticipated that the improvement works would commence in August 2010.

In discussing this matter, reference was made to the following decision which had been made by Witham Town Council on 29th June 2009.
'The Council supports an alternative amenity route for pedestrians and cyclists that joins the current cycleway at Constance Close to the path that runs from Maldon Road to Whetmead. In essence the route follows Constance Close to its dead end junction with Carraways down to the river, which it crosses and joins the path from Maldon Road to Whetmead,. In addition the Council urges the Witham Local Committee, at its meeting on 30th June, to investigate the feasibility of this alternative route.'

Members of the Local Committee supported this suggestion and requested that a feasibility study should be undertaken.

DECISION:

- (1) That the remaining funding provided under the Unilateral Undertaking Agreement with Benton Hall Golf Club be utilised for improvements to the Blackwater Rail Trail by providing a cycle/pedestrian link from Pasture Road to Blackwater Lane, Witham.
- (2) That a feasibility study of the alternative amenity route for pedestrians and cyclists joining the current cycleway at Constance Close to the path that runs from Maldon Road to Whetmead, as suggested by Witham Town Council, be undertaken.

17 **DEVELOPMENT BRIEF TERMS OF REFERENCE – DOROTHY SAYERS DRIVE/LABURNUM WAY SHOPS AND RICKSTONES PAVILION AREA, WITHAM**

INFORMATION: The Committee considered a report on the Terms of Reference and site area for the proposed Development Brief for the Dorothy Sayers Drive/Laburnum Way shops and Rickstones Pavilion area, Witham.

Members were reminded that on 15th July 2008, Witham Local Committee had recommended to the Local Development Framework Panel that a Development Brief should be prepared for Rickstones Pavilion and the surrounding area. The Panel had agreed that a Development Brief would bring consistency and order to the area.

It was reported that the site currently had no designation on the Braintree District Local Plan Review 2005 Proposals Map and that part of it was owned by Braintree District Council with the remainder being in private ownership. Landowners had been notified of the proposed Development Brief.

The Development Brief would be published as a supplementary planning document giving guidance for landowners and developers in preparing plans and provide a basis for the consideration and determination of any future planning applications.

It was proposed that the Development Brief should include Rickstones Pavilion, The Little Elms Public House, the existing shop/takeaway and residential units and the car park. The site area measured approximately 6,600 sq metres. The Development Brief would investigate the potential for redeveloping the site area as a mixed-use scheme to include residential, retail and community facilities, it would include a financial viability assessment to determine if it could be delivered and it would include details of the design and layout principles of any redevelopment. Consultation with the local community, landowners and tenants would be undertaken and a sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment would be prepared.

Subject to the approval of resources, it was anticipated that consultants would be appointed in October 2009 to prepare the Development Brief, for completion in early 2010.

In discussing this item, it was suggested that an adjacent of land which was currently occupied by ten garages should be included within the site.

DECISION: That the Terms of Reference and site area for the proposed Development Brief for the Dorothy Sayers Drive/Laburnum Way shops and Rickstones Pavilion area, Witham, as set out in the report, be approved, subject to the inclusion of the garage site adjacent to The Little Elms Public House within the area of the Brief.

18 **LOCAL COMMITTEE CONSULTATION EVENT**

INFORMATION: Members were advised that the Draft Annual Plan for 2009/10 included a project entitled “Local Committee Consultation Event.” The purpose of the Consultation Event was to provide an opportunity and encourage local people

and local organisations to give their views on issues affecting them currently and in the longer term.

It was proposed that each of the Local Committees should hold a consultation event. This would increase the Local Committees' understanding of local needs, identify issues and concerns, identify priorities, help in developing an Action Plan for 2010/11 and influence the Local Committees' priorities for future spending. It was proposed that the Action Plan should be subject to regular monitoring, review and updating to ensure that it continued to meet local priorities.

It was suggested that the Local Committee Consultation Event for Witham should be held on 15th September 2009 with the Action Plan and work programme being agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 10th November 2009.

Details of the proposed format of the Consultation Event, the people who were to be invited and the alternative means of consultation which could be used were set out in the report attached to the Agenda.

The Committee supported the proposals put forward in the report.

DECISION:

- (1) That a Consultation Event for Witham Local Committee be held on 15th September 2009 in order to identify local priorities for 2010/11.
- (2) That the Draft Programme for the Consultation Event, as set out in the report attached to the Agenda, be approved.
- (3) That Councillor A M Meyer be appointed to a Focus Group which will consider appropriate ways of involving people in the work of the Local Committees.

19 **WITHAM REPLACEMENT POOL**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the future of Bramston Sports Centre swimming pool, Witham.

Members were advised that essential structural work on the swimming pool, which had opened in 1974, had been completed in December 2008 following a six week closure period and consultant engineers had indicated that the main structure of the pool hall should remain secure for approximately five years.

Scott Brownrigg, Architects had been instructed to provide indicative costs and designs for a replacement pool and two options had been put forward. These were a 'standard' option based on the provision of a 25 metre, six lane pool, learner pool and spectator area, and an 'enhanced standard' option which included the same facilities as the standard option, but also a gymnasium, squash courts and diving pool. It was proposed that if the enhanced standard option was pursued, only two squash courts should be built, as opposed to the existing four courts, as usage figures showed the popularity of this sport to have declined. Furthermore, it was proposed that the two courts should be separated by a sliding partition enabling other activities to take place in the space.

The cost of the proposal had been calculated based on a requirement to provide facilities to Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standards at 'good' and 'excellent' levels. It was noted that facilities built to the 'excellent' standard would have reduced running costs as their construction would make them more efficient. Members were advised that the cost of the 'standard' option at a 'good' BREEAM rating was estimated to be £3.61m and at an 'excellent' BREEAM rating it was estimated to be £4.45m. The cost of the respective BREEAM ratings for the 'enhanced standard' option had not been calculated. However, Members were advised that the estimated cost of providing the enhanced facilities would be £1.4m for a gymnasium and squash facilities and an additional £1.02m for a diving pool based on a 'good' BREEAM rating.

The Committee was advised that, subject to the specification of the pool and the capital funding being agreed by Cabinet, detailed design work could commence immediately with building work commencing on site in the second quarter of 2010 following the receipt of planning permission and the appointment of consultants/contractors. It was anticipated that construction of the facility would take 18 months. It was anticipated that the Academies Enterprise Trust would manage the day-to-day operation of the facility as part of the new Maltings Academy building which was planned to open in September 2011.

In discussing this item, some Members of the Committee considered it important that the new pool should incorporate, as a minimum requirement, the 'dry-side' gymnasium and squash court facilities and diving pool which were currently available at the Sports Centre. In particular, it was noted that the diving pool was used by a successful diving club, with the nearest alternative facility being approximately 50 miles away and, due to its unique moveable floor, the diving pool was also used by other people, including those with disabilities.

DECISION: That it be **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the 'enhanced standard' option for the replacement of Witham pool, incorporating a gymnasium, squash facilities and diving pool, constructed to the 'good' BREEAM rating, be approved and the Cabinet requested to approve appropriate capital funding.

20 **LOCAL COMMITTEE FUNDING – DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR 2009/10**

INFORMATION: Reference was made to the special meeting of Witham Local Committee which had been held on 10th June 2009 to identify priorities, develop an Action Plan and to allocate the Committee's budget for 2009/10.

The Committee was requested to approve the draft Action Plan and to identify a Lead Member for each project. It was noted that a budget of £11,897.68 capital and £89,870.00 revenue totalling £101,767.68 was available for allocation in 2009/10.

Members supported the draft Action Plan in principle, but considered that specific funding should not be allocated until detailed costs had been calculated for each scheme. It was also agreed that the lower priority schemes listed at the end of the Action Plan should be deferred for consideration at a later date when the amount of available finance would be known, with the exception of the proposed survey of parking problems near to Silver End school which it had been calculated would cost approximately £5,000. It was proposed that a Lead Member should be appointed for

each project, who would be responsible for progressing and monitoring the project and providing updates to the Local Committee.

With regard to the General Fund for Community Projects, it was proposed that a Sub-Group should be established to ensure that an appropriate funding system was developed which would comply with the 'Braintree District Local Compact for Funding and Procurement – Code of Practice'. It was suggested that Councillor Miss Barlow should be appointed as Witham Local Committee's representative on the Sub-Group.

DECISION:

- (1) That the Witham Local Committee Funding Draft Action Plan 2009/10 be approved in principle, subject to specific funding being allocated once the detailed costs for each project are known.
- (2) That Lead Members be appointed for each project contained in the Draft Action Plan as follows:-

Parking, Traffic and Highways

Speed Indicator Device, Faulkbourne
Black Notley & Terling Ward
Councillor Meyer

Speed Indicator Device, Hatfield Peverel
Hatfield Peverel Ward
Councillor Elliston

Appearance and Tidiness

Landscaping, planting and maintenance
Witham South Ward
Councillor Elliott

Resurfacing, landscaping and improved facilities at Rivenhall recycling area
Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall Ward
Councillor Abbott

Renew/repair all street and name plates in Witham
All Witham Town Wards
Councillor Lager

Improve the appearance of industrial areas in Witham
Witham South Ward
Councillors Elliott, Mrs Money or Ramage

Additional litter collection
Witham West Ward
Councillor Miss Barlow

Education about litter via the citizenship curriculum
Witham Chipping Hill and Central Ward

Councillor Mrs Howell

Litter collection/graffiti removal
Hatfield Peverel Ward
Councillor Elliston

Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

CCTV extension to Hadfelda Square, Hatfield Peverel
Hatfield Peverel Ward
Councillor Bebb

Community Buildings and Sports & Leisure Facilities

Energy efficiency audits for village halls and community buildings
Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall Ward
Councillor Abbott

New heating system at White Notley Village Hall
Black Notley and Terling Ward
Councillor Mrs Galione

Extension to The Institute, Kelvedon
Kelvedon Ward
Councillor Foster

Extension to Kelvedon and Feering Cricket Club Pavilion
Kelvedon Ward
Councillor Mitchell

New changing rooms and toilets for Terling Football Club
Black Notley and Terling Ward
Councillors Mrs Galione and Meyer

Health

Lobbying for a minor injuries clinic and local outpatients clinic, over three
years
Witham Chipping Hill and Central Ward
Councillor Lager

Expansion to the number of allotments at Hatfield Peverel
Hatfield Peverel Ward
Councillor Bebb

General Community Fund

General fund for community projects
All Wards
Councillor Miss Barlow

Other (lower priority) - Parking, Traffic and Highways Proposals

Survey of parking problems near Silver End School
Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall Ward
Councillor Hughes

- (3) That Councillor Miss Barlow be appointed as Witham Local Committee's representative on the Sub-Group which will seek to ensure that the funding system adopted for the Community Projects General Fund complies with the 'Braintree District Local Compact for Funding and Procurement – Code of Practice'.

21 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. This document was currently subject to consultation and it would be submitted to the Cabinet in December 2009 for approval.

The Strategy and Action Plan set out a framework for achieving a reduction in green-house gas emissions, principally carbon dioxide (CO₂), from the Council's own operations and the District as a whole, and preparing for and adapting to the impact of predicted climate change.

Members were requested to submit any individual comments which they may wish to make on the Strategy and Action Plan to Mr M Wilson, Climate Change Manager, by 20th July 2009.

DECISION: That the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan be supported.

22 DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2009/14

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to the draft Housing Strategy 2009/14. This set out the Council's housing related aims for the next five years. The Strategy was currently subject to consultation and it would be submitted to the Cabinet for approval in October 2009.

In discussing the draft Strategy, reference was made to the issue of people, who occupied property which was no longer suitable for their needs, but who were unable to move to more appropriate accommodation. This occurred particularly where older people were living in family size houses. It was felt that this issue should be addressed. It was reported that there was a general aim to move people to more suitable housing, but that a support structure was required to provide assistance. It was noted that the Government had established a scheme to assist with such moves nationwide. A workshop dealing with the topic of housing for older people would be held on 17th July 2009.

DECISION: That the draft Housing Strategy 2009/14 be noted.

23 **FUTURE ITEMS**

INFORMATION: As discussed earlier, Members were advised that a special meeting of Witham Local Committee would be arranged to receive a presentation by NHS Mid Essex on their health care review (subsequently arranged for 13th August 2009), and that the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 15th September 2009 would be a consultation event. It was reported that the following matters were scheduled to be considered at the meeting of Witham Local Committee to be held on 10th November 2009.

Review of Community Halls
Review of Off-Street Car Parking
Witham Area Partnership Scheme Update
Witham Replacement Pool

DECISION: That the schedule of Agenda items for future meetings of Witham Local Committee be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

At the close of the meeting reference was made to the following matters:-

Arrangements for Meetings of Witham Local Committee – It had been suggested previously that there should be a review of arrangements for future meetings of Witham Local Committee. In particular, it had been suggested that the table layout might be changed to the more informal cafe style used for meetings of Braintree Local Committee. It was proposed that a questionnaire should be sent to Members of the Committee to gauge their views on this proposal and to seek other ideas on how future meetings might be run.

Notes of Sub-Group Meeting Held on 7th January 2009 – Reference was made to the amended Notes of the Witham Local Committee Sub-Group meeting which had been held on 7th January 2009 to discuss the trading arrangements of Mr Rao at Witham Railway Station. The amended Notes were noted.

Mr Alastair Peace, Member Services Manager - The Chairman reported that Mr Alastair Peace had been appointed to the post of Member Services Manager and that he would be responsible for preparing the Agendas and Minutes for future meetings of Witham Local Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

T J W Foster
(Chairman)

APPENDIX

WITHAM LOCAL COMMITTEE

30TH JUNE 2009

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Summary of Questions Asked / Statements Made During Public Question Time

1. Statement by Mr J Boon, 2nd Witham Boys Brigade

Mr Boon expressed concern about changes to the funding arrangements for Local Committees and about a possible cut in the amount of finance that would be available for community groups.

In response, the Chairman indicated that £101,000 would be available to Witham Local Committee for the current financial year and that items 6 (c) and 7 (a) of the Agenda would provide more information on this matter.

2. Statement by Councillor R Wright, Rivenhall Parish Council, 303 Rickstones Road, Rivenhall

With reference to the Review of the Local Development Framework, Councillor Wright thanked the Committee for supporting local people and rejecting the proposed growth location at Forest Road, Witham (in the Parish of Rivenhall). However, Councillor Wright queried why the Committee's recommendation had been defeated at the full Council meeting and he questioned the amount of development which was proposed for Rivenhall including a possible waste site at Rivenhall Airfield.

3. Statement by Councillor J E Abbott, Chairman of Rivenhall Parish Council, 1 Waterfall Cottages, Park Road, Rivenhall

Councillor Abbott questioned why the views of Witham Local Committee, the Local Development Framework Panel and local people regarding Local Development Framework growth locations, had been ignored by the Council.