

# Minutes



## Witham Local Committee

19<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Present:

<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Present</b>
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	Yes	M C M Lager	Yes
J G J Elliott	No	S J Lambourne	No
R Elliston	Yes	A M Meyer	Apologies
Dr R L Evans	Yes	R G S Mitchell	Apologies
T J W Foster	Yes	Mrs J M Money	Yes
Mrs M E Galione	Yes	R Ramage	Yes

### 3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:-

- Councillor Miss L Barlow declared a personal interest in
  - (i) the Asset Management Plan item as the Vice Chair of Governors of the Witham Academies, and
  - (ii) the Proposed Merger of Braintree College and Colchester Institute as a Governor of Rickstones Academy/Sixth Form, and abstained from the vote.
- Councillor M C M Lager declared a personal interest in the Proposed Merger of Braintree College and Colchester Institute as he sits on the Governing Body of Chelmsford College.

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.

### 4 **MINUTES**

**DECISION:** That the minutes of the meetings of Witham Local Committee held on 24th March and 20th April 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Minute 53 – Question Time of the 24th March 2009 meeting being amended to Mr J Prime (not Prior) speaking as a Rivenhall Parish Councillor.

As a matter arising, the Chairman referred to the Sub Group established for the situation with Mr Rao trading at Witham Railway Station (Minute 52 refers) and advised that the notes of 7th January 2009 meeting had been subjected to

suggested amendments. These had been considered at the Sub Group meeting on 6th May 2009, where some amendments were made. The revised notes of 7th January 2009 meeting will be circulated to Members for information.

## 5 **QUESTION TIME – ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

**INFORMATION:** Councillor Mrs Galione referred to the number of shops closing in the district due to the current economic situation, and queried if the Council was assisting them in any way, i.e. business rates, if the properties were rented from the Council.

In response Councillor Lager explained the help for the business community, particularly small businesses, including additional instalments for payment, the National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) relief, and giving advice and information. For business premises rented from the Council this was no different to those that are owner occupied. It was noted that the Council premises are on medium to long-term lease to businesses.

## 6 **LOCAL COMMITTEE FUNDING**

(a) The Committee received a Summary of Funding as at 31st March 2009. .

**DECISION:** That the financial position to date be noted.

(b) **INFORMATION:** There were no applications to be considered for funding.

## 7 **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2009-10**

With regard to Council representatives to external organisations

- It was noted that Councillor Dr R L Evans would replace Councillor Miss L Barlow on the Witham Traffic Management Liaison Panel
- Queries were raised concerning (i) the appointed Member to the Witham Age Concern, and (ii) whether the Braintree District Leisure Community Association Consultative Board was still active
- It was agreed that, on notifying the organisations listed of the Councillor representative, it would be clarified the organisation was still in existence and required Councillor representation.

**DECISION:** That the following appointments of representatives to external organisations be made for the 2009/10 Civic Year:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Councillor</u>
Braintree District Leisure Community Association Consultative Board	P J Hughes A Meyer
Rivenhall Playing Field Association	J E Abbott P J Hughes
Silver End Memorial Gardens Management Advisory Group	P J Hughes
Witham Age Concern	Mrs S Howell

Witham Community Association (Executive Comm)	Mrs S Howell Mrs J Money
Witham Park – Management Advisory Group	Mrs J Money
Witham Traffic Management Liaison Panel	J E Abbott R Elliston Dr R L Evans Mrs S Howell R Ramage
Witham United Charities	J G J Elliott Mrs M E Galione J E B Gyford Mrs S Howell Mrs J Money

## 8 **LOCAL COMMITTEE FUNDING PRIORITIES**

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 a consultation event to involve the community in identifying those priorities for 2009/10. 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 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009. It was noted that later in 2009 the Committee would be required to identify priorities for 2010/11.

During the discussion Members referred to the short timescale in identifying projects, the need to look at suitable categories of projects, and to promote activities in the Witham area to link with the Council's priorities, i.e. Clean and Green initiatives. More public consultation was required to recognise the needs of the local community, and for assurance of their support.

Some concern was raised to the necessity to identify projects and move away from the grant system method as many community groups could achieve match funding for their schemes. The grants already approved had met specific criteria and displayed the categories of local schemes, and the new proposals were not considered the best approach as only a proportion of the Local Committee budget could be utilised for grants.

Members were advised that a proactive, structured process was proposed that would also allow an option to set funds aside for community grants.

The Locality Coordinator agreed to distribute relevant paperwork and the prospective dates for an interim meeting to identify priorities.

## 9 **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009/10**

The Committee received the Asset Management Plane 2009/10 and made the following comments

- Witham Academies (Page 34) It was clarified that funding for the replacement pool was from Braintree District Council, and that a funding provision from government of £50m exists for the replacement buildings
- Witham Station Footbridge extension (Page 11). Members clarified that funding for the scheme had been allocated, with an anticipated start date of Spring 2010. The Essex County Council officer dealing with the project will be contacted to provide a briefing note to the next meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009.
- Braintree Rail Study (Page 11). It had been understood that S106 monies would be included in the Study, with the provision of a footbridge at Motts Lane included in discussions. The outcome of the S106 money was therefore questioned. The Head of Asset Management agreed to provide information to Councillor Abbott on this topic.
- Carbon Management issues. Page 9 of the report refers to external influences – the growth of Stansted Airport and the dualling of the A120. It was questioned how this relates to economic growth as both projects were considered unsustainable and all contrary to the carbon management plan.
- Energy Saving Projects (Page 17). The financial savings on the 2008/09 projects were queried on how they had been calculated and the timescale period. The Carbon Manager is to provide a response.
- Members requested that public toilets should not be closed. It was noted that a new public toilet is shortly to open at Silver End Park.

**DECISION:** That the report, above comments and actions be noted.

## 10 **PROPOSED MERGER OF BRAINTREE COLLEGE AND COLCHESTER INSTITUTE**

The Finance Director introduced the report on the proposed merger of Braintree College and Colchester Institute, and the consultation process.

Members welcomed the retention of education in the local area, and requested that Braintree College should remain the title of the facility.

**DECISION:**

1. That the proposed merger of Braintree College and Colchester Institute be supported, and that the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Culture be authorised to consider all responses from the Local Committees and respond accordingly to the consultation on behalf of Braintree District Council.
2. That the name of Braintree College be supported.

## 11 **FUTURE ITEMS**

**DECISION:** That the agenda items for the meeting of Witham Local Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009 be noted.

Witham Replacement Pool - Councillor Gyford requested that information is supplied on the provision of the publicly accessible dryside leisure facilities that currently exist at Witham Pool, when taking the Replacement Pool item at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

T J W Foster (Chairman)