

Public Document Pack

ES

ES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE WAYTEMORE ROOM,
COUNCIL OFFICES, THE CAUSEWAY,
BISHOP'S STORTFORD ON TUESDAY 15
MARCH 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon (Chairman)
Councillors W Ashley, Mrs M H Goldspink,
P Grethe, G McAndrew, M Newman,
N C Poulton and R Beeching

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors M R Alexander, D Andrews,
K A Barnes and R I Taylor

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Andrew Pulham	- Parking Manager
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co-Ordinator

619 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A L Warman. It was noted that Councillor R H Beeching was in attendance as substitute for Councillor A L Warman.

620 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

621 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the recent sad news concerning Councillor D A A Peek and requested that Members stand and observe a minute's silence.

The Chairman welcomed members of the Public and Councillor M Newman to his first meeting of the Committee. The Chairman referred to the fact that it was the last meeting of the Civic Year and thanked Members and Officers for their continued support and hard work.

Members supported Councillor M H Goldspink when she thanked Councillor D L E Hollebon for her Chairmanship of the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

622 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink declared a personal interest in Minute 624 (Oak Tree Close Residents' Car Park) in that she used the local printing facilities of Anchor Press.

623 OAK TREE CLOSE RESIDENTS' CAR PARK

The Chairman welcomed Mr Grainger to the meeting. Mr Grainger thanked the Chairman and Members for the opportunity to speak and gave a short presentation (details as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'A' to these Minutes) explaining why the off-street car park (used for the benefit of local residents) was so important to local residents.

The Parking Manager provided the background to the parcel of land used as a local car park. The Officer

explained that the car park had spaces for approximately 22 vehicles and that it was leased and managed by the local Residents' Association, which paid the Council a rent of £300 per annum.

The Parking Manager explained that the original proposal to include the car park within the existing on-street permit parking scheme, which would make the car park available to all householders in the area, had evoked strong interest from ward councillors and local residents. The proposal was withdrawn and the matter referred to this Committee for further discussion. The Parking Manager confirmed that, since the introduction of the on-street parking scheme in "Newtown", there have been no complaints claiming a lack of on-street parking in the area. As such, the Parking Manager confirmed that the service had no current interest in absorbing the car park into the surrounding "Newtown" residents' permit parking scheme.

Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink thanked the Executive and the Chairman for allowing Members to consider the matter further following a decision to "call in" the issue. She explained how well the car park was managed and how closely tied in and necessary the car park was to the community.

Councillor Goldspink stated that if the car park was taken back by the Council, then the fine balance of the area would be upset and parking would go further afield. She explained how two particular local businesses relied on the car spaces and that should the car park be lost, the commercial and community viability of their businesses might be compromised.

Councillor Goldspink emphasised that there was no need for the Council to take back the car park. Residents paid rent to the Council and the Residents' Association managed the car park. She added that individual residents also paid their own Council Resident Parking Permit and of the damage which would ensue to local

businesses if the Council took back the car park. Councillor Goldspink urged Members to allow the current arrangement to continue.

Councillor K A Barnes supported a request that the existing arrangement be allowed to continue adding that the arrangement worked well for the area.

Councillor G McAndrew drew Members' attention to the report which stated that the Parking Service had confirmed that it had no current interest in absorbing the car parking into the surrounding "Newtown" resident permit parking scheme on traffic management grounds, as on-street parking provision in the area appeared sufficient for residents' current needs.

Councillor N C Poulton drew Members' attention to the options contained in the report now submitted, specifically that should the car park not be absorbed into the surrounding on-street scheme as there was no evidence it was needed. He stated that the report referred to the fact that other options for its future might arise including allowing the current arrangements to continue indefinitely, or that this might necessitate revising the current rent or even selling the land.

Members supported a request that the car park be not absorbed and that the matter be referred back to the Portfolio Holder for decision in the light of Members' comments and the contribution from the public as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'A' to these Minutes.

RESOLVED – that that the matter be referred back to the Portfolio Holder for decision together with Members' comments and the contribution from the Residents' Association, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'A' to these Minutes.

624 EAST HERTS CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN ANNUAL
REVIEW OF PROGRESS

The Acting Chairman of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group submitted a report on the progress made in implementing the agreed actions contained within the Climate Change Action Plan attached to the report now submitted. Subsequently, the Task and Finish Group had met on 17 February 2011 to review progress to date and made a number of additional amendments, which it wished to see included within the Action Plan. These were set out in the report now submitted.

Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink raised the issue of the success of the Hertford Film Festival and queried whether it was possible to hold such an event in Bishop's Stortford. The Environmental Coordinator confirmed that there had been a community partnership approach to the event which had contributed to its success.

The Head of Environmental Services explained that the event was planned and managed by a number of local environmental community groups and the location of events would be determined by them. He agreed to raise with them the possibility that such an event could be held in Bishop's Stortford. The Director of Customer and Community Services referred to the need to identify resources for such an event.

The Chairman referred Members to the Action Plan and to the additional comments raised by the Task and Finish Group on a number of Actions for inclusion in the Action Plan. Clarification was provided on a number of matters contained therein.

In response to a query from Councillor M Newman concerning the Gas Flow Regulator, the Environmental Coordinator confirmed that this would allow, via smart metering, monitoring of how much energy was being used on a daily basis.

Councillor R H Beeching raised the issue of energy consumption and condensation at swimming pools (Action 1.31) and asked whether SLM were contributing to the cost of the pool covers. The Director of Customer and Community Services was confident that covers had already been fitted at Hartham and Grange Paddocks. He undertook to write to Members confirming the position on the shared use pools.

Members noted the progress made contained in the Action Plan and the additional points for inclusion in the Action Plan be agreed subject to the following time scale amendments to two of the points:

Action Plan 1.33 – that the supply of bottled water in Room 27, Wallfields, should cease when the contract terminates and if possible, by the end of June 2011.

Action Plan 3.6 – that all laser printers and copiers be set to automatically default to double sided printing by the end of the Civic Year. It was also suggested that consideration be given to this facility to be rolled out to new Councillors following the May 2011 elections. It was noted by Councillor R I Taylor, however, that the future provision of printers to Members was a matter already under discussion by the C3W IT Member/ Officer working group.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress achieved by the Climate Change Task and Finish Group in relation to the implementation of the East Herts Climate Change Action Plan be noted;

(B) the Action Plan be amended as follows:

- (1) Action Plan 1.33 – that the supply of bottled water in Room 27, Wallfields, cease when the contract terminates and if possible, by the end of June 2011; and
- (2) Action Plan 3.6 – that all laser printers and

copiers be set to automatically default to double sided printing by the end of the Civic Year.

625 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY HEALTH CHECK - OCTOBER 2010 TO JANUARY 2011

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the performance of key indicators relating to Environment Scrutiny during the period October 2010 and January 2011.

Councillor P Grethe referred to the significant increase in the number of Planning Appeals and the costs involved. The Director of Customer and Community Services confirmed that he would ask the Head of Planning and Building Control to respond separately.

Councillor M Newman queried the discontinuance of two building control Performance Indicators and whether there were any costs incurred by the Council and whether any costs were incurred when the Council won on an appeal. He questioned whether the fact that they were not monitored was a consequence of an increase in planning appeals.

The Director of Customer and Community undertook to ask the Head of Planning and Building Control and would respond separately on this matter.

Members received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

626 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

The Committee considered items for scrutiny during the Civic Year 2011/12 and additional items for inclusion within the Committee's Work Programme. These were set out in the report now submitted. Additionally, following the scrutiny evaluation and planning sessions and consultation with Scrutiny Chairmen, Members were

provided with a wider list of potential topic interests which Scrutiny could investigate, resources permitting and the priorities of the Council.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the public would also be invited to submit their suggestions via an article the Link Magazine.

Members noted the work programme and supported a suggestion that Task and Finish Groups be established for Transport and Parking and Environmental Crime and that anticipated timeframe for a report back to Environment Scrutiny Committee might be November 2011.

RESOLVED – that the work programme be noted and amended by the inclusion of the Task and Finish Groups for Transport and Parking and Environmental Crime.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Chairman
Date

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Environment Scrutiny Committee 15th March 2011

Oral submission from PRA

Madam Chairman

- Our Association is grateful for the opportunity to make representations to your Committee.
- I'd like just to emphasise a few points with reference to our written submission which was circulated in advance
- As we say in our submission (para 5) , the overall situation in Portland Road and Portland Place is finely balanced with regard to supply and demand and though we knew this instinctively, this is something we have been able to substantiate thanks to the surveys we undertook at the end of last month
- Those surveys show consistently that of the cars parking in designated on-street areas in Portland and Portland Place, about 50% were occupied by permit holders not residing in these two roads but elsewhere in B4
- This means that the two roads already provide a substantial number of places for B4 permit holders
- Though the introduction of on-street parking in 2007 in the area was welcome and did much to alleviate some of the parking problems for which we are grateful, it should be pointed out that the Association now issues about 40% more permits currently than was the case back in 1996, reflecting the increase and pattern of car ownership. Therefore demand is up and at the same time on the supply side, some spaces have been taken out of commission due to redrawing of yellow lines and some excavation of front gardens in Newtown and Portland Roads
- We would say that we have shown that the continued provision of spaces in this car park is clearly of vital importance in maintaining the balance of supply and demand, not only in the two roads but also in Zone B4 as a whole. As our advisor, Stuart Davies, states in his report , if the current arrangements were to be changed, the effect would in all probability result in 'mutual' displacement as car owners from the two roads park seek spaces further afield and displace others in the process; and no advantage would accrue to the vast majority of residents in B4

- Finally, we would point to our good management of the facility which we see as an interesting and quite well established example of localism, a focal point for our local community. We are, of course, conscious that the land is Council owned but we have seldom troubled the Council over the last 15 years and just got on with the job of running it.

- We therefore request that the original proposal from officers in the Parking Service should not be proceeded with and that the current arrangements continue. We would look forward to working with the Council to ensure the continued good management of this car park.