

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 6 SEPTEMBER 2007

Present: Councillor L Marmara (Chairman)
Councillor B Mainstone (Vice Chairman)
Councillor I Dixon (Town Mayor)
Councillors Mrs Bennett and Mrs Brunsdon
Councillor Joyce-Nelson

Also present: A representative of East Grinstead Courier and two members of the public

123 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

County Councillor Mrs Ball, a Member of the West Sussex Joint Health Committee, said that there were concerns from across the county about distribution of leaflets by West Sussex PCT in respect of the Fit for the Future proposals. These concerns were not unique to East Grinstead. She said that the West Sussex Transport Model is currently being used to identify journey times that might help in any strategic response. She said that there is a need to look at travel times within towns, across county borders, to look at parking issues in relation to hospitals and also consider the seasonal variations. She was pleased that John Wilderspin had made clear that the West Sussex PCT would, in addition to the three options that comprise the current consultation, also welcome alternative options put forward by stakeholders and consultees. In this regard Sir Graham Cato, the Chairman of the BMA would be chairing a West Sussex option assessment panel and she hoped that the Town Council might wish to put forward specific proposals in respect of East Grinstead over and above any more general response to the three options currently tabled. She said that regrettably she isn't able herself to get involved in a formal alternative proposal as she would make herself liable to accusations of predetermination as a member of West Sussex County Council. She was thanked for her comments.

District Councillor Mrs Glynn understood that some years previous there had been a suggestion that there should be a separate northern review of health services in West Sussex. She wondered what the status of that might be now. Nobody at the meeting knew anything about this.

Public Question Time concluded at 7.55 p.m.

124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Baldwin, Banks, Mrs Collins DL, Lord and Mrs Waddingham.

125 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 7th June 2007, having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

126 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTEREST

* Councillors Mrs Bennett, Mrs Brunsdon, Dixon and Joyce-Nelson disclosed personal interests in King Street Public Toilets as elected Members of Mid Sussex District Council (Min. 135).

127 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE, HIGHGROVE, IMBERHORNE LANE
(Min 145 9.09.06)

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Peter Robinson, Recycling and Waste Handling Contracts Manager in Waste Management Services at West Sussex County Council who was kindly standing in for Phil Russell, Head of Waste Management, who regrettably had another engagement.

Mr Robinson explained the redevelopment proposals for the East Grinstead Household Waste Recycling Site. He stressed that the site doubles as a transfer station. The main points of interest being addressed within the new proposals are to ensure that there is a split level/post box design, additional recycling facilities, improved access from Imberhorne Lane, provision for over-height vehicles, enhanced opening hours and a completely new operating team.

In respect of the closure period during which development would take place he said that the concerns to be addressed by West Sussex County Council were relating to alternative arrangements and seeking to ensure that there is no fly tipping during the closure period. He said that the recent enhancement of Burgess Hill Centre, which was closed from September 2006 to March 2007 had shown that some of the waste went to mobile sites, some was dealt with by bulk collections, a larger amount, 1,100 tons stayed at an alternative site within Burgess Hill, an unspecified amount went to other household waste recycling sites but the vast majority of the 7,500 tons, about 6,000 tons, that would ordinarily have gone to Burgess Hill didn't show up on their records. It was felt this was because the site closure had been planned; and the public had got rid of much of their waste in advance and was prepared to wait for the reopening to get rid of that which had accumulated during the closure period.

In respect of the alternative service it was stressed that there can't be a direct replacement. They will be seeking how to utilise part of the existing site for weekends only. There would be some restrictions and no recycling. Other possible alternatives being looked at were obviously to promote the other household waste recycling sites within the county (it was acknowledged that some might find its way to sites over the county boundary but this would not be encouraged by West Sussex), the possible provision of some mobile services, bulky collections on which there are negotiations going on with Mid Sussex District Council and possible late night opening.

West Sussex County Council have found the success of any redevelopment scheme depended much upon communications with the public and West Sussex were now experienced in this sphere liaising with help points, towns and parish council offices, forums/committees, producing briefing notes, liaising with the press, producing leaflets and signage, web site information and maps and directions.

Councillor Mainstone asked what the time-scale proposals were. Mr Robinson said that West Sussex County Council is currently finalising design issues. This will lead to a planning application and then up to a six-month development proposal. The County Council are currently seeking to reopen the redeveloped site during the first six months of 2009. Development time was estimated at six months. Mr Robinson said there would be a need to look at the road width leading to the site off Imberhorne Lane and site lines into/out of the site are also critical to ensuring smooth access and egress.

In response to a Member question Mr Robinson said West Sussex County Council are not seeking to put bulky skips on residential estates. They prefer single option

sites. He emphasised there are real planning issues which would be difficult to address and issues of neighbourliness.

Regarding consultation Mr Robinson said there would be a statutory planning consultation and a planning road show, which would be advertised. He anticipated consultation would start late in 2007.

There was a general welcome to the fact that the closure period during redevelopment would take place in 2008 as it was felt that by this time the public would have become used to the new recycling bins and household waste collection services and those should be working well. Councillor Joyce-Nelson suggested that if the County Council are looking to provide some temporary facilities outside of the High Grove site they could look at the other end of Imberhorne Lane where Mid Sussex District Council has a car park with facilities for certain recyclables already provided from there.

In response to a question from the Town Clerk Mr Robinson said that the redeveloped East Grinstead waste and recycling centre will have the same facilities as Burgess Hill within a smaller footprint. In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Brunson Mr Robinson assured her that the newly redeveloped site would be able to cope with any housing expansion from East Grinstead. It was emphasised that the East Grinstead site does take less waste than, for example, the Burgess Hill site, and the current volumes being serviced from the site are about 300,000 tons a year. It was emphasised however that the newly redeveloped site would take in additional waste and recycle materials including, soils, bricks and hardcore.

At the end of this item the Chairman thanked Mr Robinson for his considered presentation and for the efficient way in which he had dealt with Members questions.

128 POLICING ISSUES IN EAST GRINSTEAD (Min. 36 7.06.07)

Members noted the report prepared by the Town Clerk and thanked him for the volume of information provided therein. Members noted the information and were pleased that it was now possible to provide more detailed data regarding crime both within Mid Sussex generally and East Grinstead specifically.

In response to a question from Councillor Dixon regarding speeding along residential roads the chairman advised him to pursue this through his local action team.

129 FIT FOR THE FUTURE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS (Min 37 7.06.07)

The Committee gave consideration to the detailed report prepared by the Town Clerk. Many Members had been at one or another of the Fit for the Future public meetings held in East Grinstead on 29th August and 3rd September, and all had studied the detailed consultation document posted on the West Sussex Primary Care Trust web site.

Councillor Mrs Bennett said that she had been disappointed about the Meridian Hall meeting on 28th August. She felt that it had been poorly managed by the PCT providing inadequate time and opportunity for the public to ask questions. She also thought it had been held at an inconvenient time of the day. She and her colleagues were pressing for a further meeting to be held in East Grinstead.

The Town Clerk advised Members that an application had been received for a grant from the Princess Royal Hospital Campaign Group fighting against closures to the accident and emergency and maternity services at that hospital. He advised that the

Leader of the Council wished this to be considered at Finance & General Purposes Committee on 20th September 2007.

Having given consideration to this matter it was agreed that the best way forward would be for the Town Clerk to ask all Members to let him have in writing their detailed responses to the consultation together with any specific proposals for Health Services in West Sussex, specifically looking at issues pertaining to East Grinstead, so that a detailed consensus response could then be prepared and agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee in consultation with the Town Clerk and formal ratification at Council on 1st October 2007. That proposal was duly RESOLVED.

130 JOB CENTRE PLUS – RELOCATION OF SERVICES (Min 58 8.06.06)

The Town Clerk's report advising of the closure of Gatwick Job Centre was noted.

131 BAA GATWICK NOISE AND TRACK KEEPING SYSTEMS (Min 380 3.9.06)

Members noted the detailed information provided by the Town Clerk in respect of BAA Gatwick's new noise and track keeping system. He advised that subsequent to preparing that report he had sought further information from BAA regarding suggestions that the 08 Seaford flight path, as moved in 1986, was not now being used in preference to over flying East Grinstead. He said that he had subsequently received detailed information from BAA confirming that the 08 Seaford departure route is indeed still in use and that track deviations on this route in the period April 2006 to January 2007, for example were only showing 36 deviations from 8,043 departures resulting in 0.45% off track, a figure in proportionate terms less than a third of what it had been during the period April 2003 to March 2005. The Town Clerk further advised that over the past four years flights on 08 Seaford account for approximately 30% of easterly departures varying between 29% and 31.4%. Members were grateful for the information provided.

132 LONDON ROAD FOOTWAY WORKS (Min 40 7.06.07)

The Town Clerk's report informing of the deferral of footway improvement works in London Road until 2008 was noted.

133 ON STREET PARKING IN EAST GRINSTEAD (Min 301 12.01.06)

Committee gave consideration to the report prepared by the Town Clerk. It was acknowledged that the consultation being undertaken by the County Council with the Town Council, which was generic to East Grinstead was not the same consultation as that which the County Council is undertaking with individual householders although it was recognized that there could be some synergy in the work being undertaken.

Members were advised that the Town Council must respond to the County Council's consultation by 30th September indicating where it is considered there are specific on street parking issues/problems across the town and where there is potential for introducing measures to deal with these including, possibly, the extension of existing controlled parking zones. The assurance of West Sussex County Council that no specific proposals had yet been prepared was noted as was the fact that this is currently an information gathering exercise.

It was suggested by Members of the Committee that it would be best for each elected town councilor to respond with specific proposals for their wards and that

those then be coordinated and dealt with in a holistic response by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Council. Accordingly it was agreed that the Town Clerk would send an e-mail to each Member asking for their responses by no later than 20th September so that a formal comprehensive reply could then be sent out following prior agreement with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee. This was RESOLVED.

On a separate matter Councillor Dixon indicated that yellow lines need repainting in parts of the town centre including Railway Approach, London Road and Portland Road and the Town Clerk advised that he would notify the County Council accordingly.

134 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BILL (F&GP Min 332 26.01.07)

Having noted the Town Clerk's report it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk should write to John Healey, the New Local Government and Cohesion Minister, and Hazel Blears the new Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government, reminding them of the commitments previously made by Phil Woolas and the government in support of the Sustainable Communities Bill and urge them to stand firm on the Government's position of supporting this bill.

135 KING STREET PUBLIC TOILETS (Min 43 7.06.07)

The Town Clerk's latest update report regarding the King Street Public Toilets was considered by the Committee. They noted with regret that since the report had been prepared the toilets had been subject to major vandalism, which was now the subject of police investigations. Councillor Mrs Bennett had spoken with Mr Harper of Mid Sussex District Council earlier in the day and he had confirmed that, with the exception of the disabled toilet, all other cubicles at King Street were now closed pending repair works. The contractor was due to commence work on 10th September and these works were due to take between 10 and 15 working days with reopening planned for the first week in October. At the time of undertaking these works the District Council will also remove the brick planter from in front of the toilets as this currently creates an obstacle for the disabled, will upgrade parts generally and erect hanging baskets.

At the suggestion of the Chairman of the Committee it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk advise Mid Sussex District Council that it would be prepared to paint the toilets at Kings Street a DDA compliant green and cream scheme to meet the needs of local residents and that these works will be undertaken prior to the reopening of the facilities.

136 POST BOX FACILITIES IN EAST GRINSTEAD (Min 44 7.06.07)

The Town Clerk's report advising the Committee of the installation of a post box outside the new Post Office at 101 London Road was noted with pleasure.

137 PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES (Min 295 11.01.07)

Having noted the report prepared by the Town Clerk on the basis of information

currently supplied by the volunteer Public Transport Coordinator, Mr Leppard, Committee noted with pleasure proposals for the Thames Link modernisation programme and a possible improvement of the East Grinstead Station building

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk should write to Network Rail advising that the Town Council does support its rail utilization strategy for south London, including for the East Grinstead line, welcomes proposals to upgrade the East Grinstead Station site and urges that there should be liaison with the Town Council at the appropriate time, in respect of design issues pertaining to the East Grinstead Railway Station.

138 FOOTWAY LIGHTING AGREEMENTS (Min 384 9.03.06)

It was noted with pleasure proposals by West Sussex County Council to review their street lighting service. In the context of this it was noted that changes would impact upon the non-adopted lights, which are the responsibility of the Town Council and that there was likely to be an increase in charges for each light for which West Sussex County Council provide agency services.

Notwithstanding the increase in revenue costs however it was noted that the impact of the proposals would be that the new PFI contract to be entered into by West Sussex County Council would result in upgrading the Town Council's lights at no additional cost to the Town Council over a period of time and that these would be met by the overall contract costs. This was felt to be extremely beneficial given the age and condition of the East Grinstead stock. Accordingly it was **RESOLVED** that option one of the three options put forward, namely to enter into a new agreement for the maintenance of the Town Council's equipment under the terms of a PFI be supported.

139 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - CONCESSIONARY RAIL PASSES (Min 45 7.06.07)

Members noted details of Concessionary Rail Passes issued for April, May, June and July 2007.

140 WRITTEN REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL AND WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL (Min 46 7.06.07)

Members noted the detailed report prepared by Councillor Mrs Collins containing up-to-date information on the New Deal for Carers, a review of the County Council's Day Care services, information on a Rights of Way Improvement Plan, advance information on a public meeting in West Hoathly in relation to the Imberhorne Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre and information regarding the requested Call In, which has been rejected, in relation to payment of consultants fees.

The Chairman expressed gratitude for this informative report and reminded all District Councillors of the opportunity this agenda item presents for them to update on the work of that authority also.

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The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN.