

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EAST ESSEX AREA FORUM HELD AT
THE MARKS TEY PARISH HALL ON 17 MARCH 2010**

Membership

County Councillors:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| * A Brown Vice Chairman | * J Jowers |
| * K Bentley | * J Lucas |
| * L Barton | S Mayzes |
| R Callender | L Mead |
| S Candy | M Skeels |
| C Griffiths | * M J Page (Chairman) |
| * Mrs M Fisher | * D Robinson |
| * Mrs T Higgins | * Ms A Turrell |
| | Ms J Young |

*** present**

Partner Organisations:-

Tendring District Council

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Neil Stock | Leader |
| John Hawkins | Chief Executive |
| * Mike Badger | |

Colchester Borough Council

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| * Ian Vipond, | Executive Director |
| Cllr Tim Young | |

Essex Police

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Jason Gwillim | Superintendent Essex Police |
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Essex Fire & Rescue

Essex County Council Officers:

- * Jane Gardner, Area Co-ordinator for East Essex
- * Louise Albright, Committee Assistant
- * Janet Mills, Committee Officer
- * Geoff Harris , Area Manager Highways
- * Alan Lindsay, Senior Transportation Planner
- * David Moses Head of Member Support and Governance

Parish & Town Councils

- * C. Abnett Fordham PC
- * D. Winter Langham PC
- * M. Brown Frating PC
- * J Chinnery Myland PC

Tendring E.A.L.C (Essex Association of Local Councils)

Robert Taylor

Other Bodies Represented

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| * Edmund Chinnery | Resident |
| * Cllr Pauline Hazell | Tendring District Council |
| * Caroline Blackler | Tendring CVS |
| * Owen Bennett | Colchester Gazette |

11 Welcome and Introductions, Members Officers and Invited Representatives of Partner Organisations

The Chairman welcomed those present and set out a summary of the business for the meeting.

12 Apologies

The Committee Officer reported apologies and substitution notices as follows:

Apology	Substitution
Cllr S Mayzes	
Cllr J Young	
Cllr M Skeels	

13. Declarations of Interest

Councillor K. Bentley declared a personal interest in connection with Albert Road which was mentioned during the Forum.

14. Minutes

With an addition to Minute 10 to read "*There was currently local deliberation by residents as to whether what was now an 'open space' should be turned into a village green rather than a surgery Essex County Council were currently dealing with the matter*" the minutes from the previous meeting held on 27 January 2010 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15. Public Questions

The Chairman invited questions from the public on matters within the Terms of Reference of the Forum and not related to substantive agenda items. The following questions and responses were made:

Those present agreed to raise questions after the presentations had been made by the attending officers.

16. Transport

The Forum received a presentation outlining How the Transportation Group worked, transport challenges and the growth Agenda, an update on major schemes and the priorities for 2010 and onwards, from Alan Lindsay, Senior Transport Planner.

The Forum was advised as follows:

How the Transportation Group Works

How the Group Worked in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan (LTP), overarching strategies and major schemes was outlined to the Forum.

With regard to the LTP work included evidence gathering, identification of solutions, developing the delivery programme and monitoring of success. A great deal of consultation took place with regard to the local development process.

Work related to overarching strategies included modelling & data collection, identification of challenges and opportunities, consultation and liaison throughout with the public with Members and Districts,

With regard to major schemes work included securing funding, preparing business cases, delivering major schemes and supporting the Local Development Framework.

Transport Challenges and the Growth Agenda

The Haven Gateway was one of the fastest growing areas in the East of England and included Colchester Borough and Tendring District on the Essex side.

The Government assigned Growth Point status to Haven Gateway in 2006 in recognition of its ambitious housing targets set out in the emerging East of England Plan.

Haven Gateway population was expected to increase 12% by 2021 with the area catering for an additional 50,000 jobs.

The majority of the housing was expected to be in the principal town of Colchester with the ports of Harwich and Felixstowe acting as key regional economic drivers. Additional housing growth is also expected in Clacton and Harwich.

A comprehensive transport strategy was required to support the proposed growth.

With regard to the Colchester area, Colchester is expected to accommodate in excess of 19,000 new houses and 20,000 new jobs between 2001-2023.

The Core Strategy was adopted in 2008 and identified five key Growth Areas and three Strategic Employment Zones. The Core Strategy included a comprehensive transport strategy which identified a package transport improvements required to support growth

The strategy included delivery of the following projects:

New A12 Junction 28, North Colchester.

In February 2009, Essex County Council was awarded Community Infrastructure Funding (CIF2) to deliver a new A12 junction at North Colchester. The scheme will cost approximately £12 million with the majority of the funding being provided by the Homes and Communities Agency as part of the Community Infrastructure Fund.

The delivery of the new A12 junction is a joint effort between several partners including Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council, East of England Development Agency, Haven Gateway Partnership, Homes and Communities Agency and the Highways Agency.

Good progress has been made with detailed design and procurement having been completed. Construction commenced in December 2009 with Carillion Civil Engineering being awarded the contract for the A12 junction. The scheme is on programme to be open to the public by March 2011.

Northern Approaches Road - Phase 3

Linked with the securing of CIF2 monies, ECC and HCA had entered into a forward funding agreement to deliver the final phase of the Northern Approaches Road. Repayment of the loan would take place on the receipt of selling the former Severalls hospital site.

The scheme would deliver a new link road across the former Severalls Hospital Site in North Colchester, between Axial Way roundabout and Mill Lane, and will complete the Northern Approaches Road, linking to the new A12 junction.

The final phase of the Northern Approaches Road is expected to be opened by March 2012 with an estimated to cost over £9million.

Cuckoo Farm Park and Ride

Essex County Council in partnership with Colchester Borough Council aimed to provide the first purpose built Park and Ride facility in Colchester to the north of the A12 at Cuckoo Farm. The site would be accessed directly from the new A12 Junction (28) which would be opened in March 2011.

It was currently envisaged that the bus service would be at 10 minute intervals and operate six days a week from Monday to Saturday – 7am until 7pm. It would serve key locations within the town centre including the train station and hospital.

It was estimated that The Cuckoo Farm Park and Ride site would cost £3.4million and it was proposed that it would be open to the public in early 2012. A public consultation event was currently on going, with planning application being submitted for determination (to ECC) in April 2010.

The proposed layout diagram was shown presented to the Forum

Colchester Town Centre Projects

Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council had a long standing commitment to reduce through traffic and improve public transport in Colchester town centre. This aspiration was part of Colchester Borough Council's vision to deliver a better town centre.

In September 2009 work was jointly commissioned by ECC and CBC to develop a number of emerging ideas which focused on creating workable solutions for the public transport challenges facing the town centre, including the closure of the existing bus station.

Works to improve transport the East of the Colchester Town Centre
Improvements to existing facilities to the South of Colchester Town Centre.

Following feedback from the bus and taxi operators, ECC and CBC jointly agreed that a phased approach should be taken to delivering town centre transport improvements with further investigation being undertaken into the following:

Phase 1 – Proposed two-way Head Street bus interchange and complementary measures (2010-12)

Phase 2 – Proposed Stanwell Street bus facility and complementary measures (post 2012)

The coming months would see CBC and ECC working together to further develop the emerging ideas and consultation was planned for Autumn 2010.

Cycling

Colchester was awarded cycling town status in 2008, there was an ambitious target to increase the number of cyclists regularly cycling by 75%. There would be £4.2 million of funding used over three years (2008 to 2011).

Achievements to date included the following:

1. Highwoods Cycle Route,
2. Greenstead Cycle Route,
3. Garrison Cycle Route

There would be a strategic launch of these three cycle routes, which would include a launch event, production of a strip map and personal travel planning to help communities to cycle more.

With regard to the Tendring District

Tendring is expected to accommodate in excess of 6,550 new houses between 2011-2026. Tendring is also expected to accommodate in excess of 7,100 new jobs between 2008-2026.

Tendring was at present preparing the Core Strategy for the next LDF plan period 2011 – 2026, with preferred options expected to be consulted on in summer 2010. It was likely that the majority of these jobs and houses would be located in Clacton and Harwich, with the port of Harwich acting as a key economic driver for the district. ECC transportation team were currently working with the district council to develop a comprehensive transport strategy which will identify essential transport infrastructure required to support growth. An Examination in Public for the core strategy is expected in Spring 2011.

Key Priorities

The following issues were seen as being the key priorities:

1. A12 Junction - open March 2011
2. NAR3 - open 2012
3. Colchester Cycling Town-completed 2011
4. Colchester Station Travel Plan-completed 2012
5. Park and Ride-proposed opening 2012
6. Colchester Town Centre Improvements-proposed phase one 2012
7. Tendring LDF Improvements - post 2011

The following questions and responses were made:

- A Councillor Fisher raised a question regarding the proposed Park and Ride Scheme.

(ii) How much and who funded the revenues costs associated to the scheme?

Alan Lindsay advised the Forum that there had been a number of lessons learnt from the recent implementation of the Chelmsford Park and Ride Scheme. There would be a different pricing strategy for the Colchester scheme and a different marketing strategy to minimise costs. Ultimately Essex County Council would be responsible for any ensuing revenue costs.

- A Councillor Robinson, advised the Forum that he was disappointed at the current provision of bus shelters, he considered some of these were not

suitable for elderly residents and raised a question regarding the proposed Town Centre Improvements

- (i) Would the schemes ensure that bus shelters would be suitable for use by elderly people?

Alan Lindsay advised the Forum that suitable good quality, covered shelters were proposed for the Head Street Bus Interchange development.

- Councillor Higgins raised questions regarding cyclists.
 - (i) Would it be possible to have covered cycle parking facilities?
 - (ii) Would roadways be resurfaced on the newly proposed new cycle routes?
 - (iii) Could speed humps not cover the area in which cyclists use, (near to the kerbside) as these force cyclists into the middle of the road?
 - (iv) What planning groups and societies had the Council consulted with in relation to the town centre proposals.

Alan Lindsay advised the Forum that Users, Pedestrians, Cycle Groups and Disability Groups had been invited to give their views and comments before full consultation had begun:

- A Councillor Jowers commended the schemes for Colchester Districts and raised a question regarding the a two way bus route proposed for Head Street.
 - (i) Had the route now been decided?

Alan Lindsay advised the Forum that as yet there were no firm proposals. Further consideration was needed to be taken across a wide range of users, (pedestrians', cyclists, delivery vehicles, taxis and buses) before a final decision was made.

- A Councillor Tim Young CBC raised concerns that there would be no bus station facilities at the existing bus station site in Head Street whilst the newly proposed terminal in Stanbridge Street was being put into operation. It was acknowledged that this was acceptable for a short period of time however, in order to minimise inconvenience to bus users CBC would wish to see the new facility put into place as soon as possible. Councillor Young raised a question regarding project timescales
 - (i) Was the development of the new Bus Station facility on schedule?

Alan Lindsay advised the Forum that immediate focus was being given to the closure of the Head Street Bus Station proposed for 2012. The new Bus Station in Stanbridge Street would be a much better facility, which also provided driver facilities. Work with other current development at the Stanbridge Street site was currently on going.

- David Winter Langham PC raised concerns and a question regarding Phase 3 of the Junction 28 A12.
- (i) What impact would Phase 3 have on traffic flows in the North Station, with its proposed 2000 new homes, and Town centre area of Colchester.

Alan Lindsay advised the Forum that town centre and the station development plans took into account the need to ensure proper traffic flows through the area.

17. Local Highways and Transport Issues

The Forum received an oral presentation giving details of the roles and functions and work undertaken by the East Area Highways from Geoff Harris, Area Highways Manager.

The Forum was advised as follows:

The East Area Highways department consisted of an area manager, four District Managers and a Business Support Officer.

Functions of the Highways Office

Functions undertaken at the Highways Office included the following:

- Reactive Highway Maintenance (revenue)
- Carriageway and Footway resurfacing (capital)
- New Highway schemes (capital and S106 contributions)
- Traffic Management
- Highway Adoptions
- Streetworks Coordination
- Provision of Vehicle Accesses, Skip licences, Scaffold licences, Con 29 Searches, enforcement, insurance claims.

The Localism Agenda

The Colchester Local Highway Panel now comprised of Colchester Members and Parish Council Members. The Local Panel Met quarterly to discuss and identify local priorities for highways. Decisions made by the Local Panel must comply with County Strategies and Policies but priorities can be influenced to meet local desires. Localism Included the Highway Ranger gang, surgeries and Highways CIF (Community Initiatives Fund).

This model of working was introduced as a trial in Colchester in April 2008. The model was now rolled out to most Districts. A Tending Local Highway Panel meeting was planned

What the East Area Highways Office Does Not Do

- Street cleaning (Borough Council)
- Refuse collection (Borough Council)
- Speed enforcement (Police)
- Parking enforcement (Borough Council but under review)
- Trunk roads (A12, A120 - Highways Agency)
- Land drainage (Pitt Review proposes changes)
- Public sewers (Anglian Water Services)
- Rivers, ditches (Environment Agency or riparian owner)
- Intervene in neighbour disputes
- Depart from County Policy (Officers can only follow policy)

The Forum was asked to note that the Area Office can offer advice on who to contact where it is not ECC responsibility.

Reactive Maintenance

A total of £3,363,375 had been used in the following areas of reactive maintenance. Most of this had been used in patching, potholes and minor repairs.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

17 Parishes had been visited as part of 5 year rolling programme and Surveyed in excess of 160 km of PROW, the department had achieved 68.5% pass in East Area, against County average of 62.2%. 10 long term obstructions had been resolved, included 120m new boardwalk, opening up a footpath that had been unavailable for 20 years. The Department was continuing to work with Natural England in support of Marine and Coastal Access Bill on shoreline management

Street Lighting

There was a 3 weekly programme of visits in response to knockdowns and public reports of outages. There was a 7 day target to respond to priority one repair, the department was achieving an average of 5 days. With regard to priority two repairs such as a random column replacement – the Target was within 10 days. The department was currently achieving an average of 11.4 days. With regard to illuminated bollards the target was within 3 within day the department was currently achieving an average of 3.1 days.

Column Replacement Strategy

A programme of electrical/structural tests were carried out on columns to determine their structural integrity. The capital replacement programme, columns were replaced based on findings.

Knock Downs

There were still some issues around the time taken to disconnect and reconnect after damage occurred. The Department was currently reviewing its internal processes as well as its links with EDF to see if this could be improved.

Capital Street Lighting Programme 2008/09

A total of £114,000 had been used in Colchester and Tendring District on replacing columns & lanterns, sign posts and sign lights

Carriageway Resurfacing 2009/2010

Carriageway schemes had been undertaken in Colchester and Tendring Districts. There had been improvements to 67 roads covering 26.7 km at a cost of £1.974M in Tendring District and improvements to 55 roads covering 23.7 km costing £2,326M in the Colchester District.

Footway Resurfacing 2009/2010

Footway schemes had been undertaken. There had been improvements to 13 footways, covering 9.7 km at a cost of £.43M in Tendring District and improvements to 9 footways, covering 3.1 km costing £.372M in the Colchester District.

Schemes Delivered in Consultation with the Local Highways Panel

There had been 17 schemes delivered to a total value of £264,000. Areas covered included, tackling congestion, safer roads, cycling and walking, new footways and footway renewals and traffic management (waiting restrictions.)

Other Projects Delivered

There had also been a number of other project delivered these included the following:

- Cycle Colchester Project
- Casualty reduction schemes at:
- Route Safety Improvements
- Route Spring Clean
- Cycling and Walking
- Prince Albert Road – making up a private street
- Quality Bus Partnership
- Harwich Quay Regeneration
- Frinton Town Centre

Highways Community Initiative Funds (CIF) Schemes Implemented

A number of schemes were undertaken using a Total £179,500 CIF funding. Projects were undertaken on behalf of Parish Councils, in Marks Tey, Layer de la Haye, Mount Bures, Tiptree, Myland, Birch and Dedham.

Adoptions and S106 Agreements

18 new Adoption sites had been implemented. There had been some success in moving on long standing sites towards adoption (West of General, Highwoods, Lakelands and Wivenhoe. Grove Road Estate virtually all adopted now

There had also been 29 new Section 278 Schemes implemented with regard to Advance Payment Code Notices, eight Advance Payments Code Notices had been issued. There was one ongoing prosecution

Area Office Statistics

There had been a total of 267 insurance claims during 2009/10 (cumulative *and predicted to end year*), 169 of these in the Colchester district and in the district of Tendring 31(rural) and 67 (urban).

With regard to customer enquiries and complaints there had been the following contacts:

- Post Received 12859
 - Emails 30,000 plus
 - Incoming Telephone calls 19093
 - Confirm Customer enquiries 6827
 - Vehicle Access enquiries 197105 approved and built
 - Complaints 2
 - Compliments 161
- A Councillor Fisher, commented that she was impressed by the services given by the department and raised a question regarding complaints.
 - (i) Did it cost a lot of money in staff time when dealing with complaints?

Geoff Harris advised the Forum that it was time consuming when dealing with complaints, there was a cost in terms of staff time. The department tried to deal with complaints on a face to face basis. Initially complaints were dealt with by the Manger, these could be passed to a Higher Manager and then to the ombudsman if necessary. There had been 2 complaints in this year, these took the equivalent of 1.5 days in staff time to resolve.

- A Councillor Bentley, commended and thanked the department for its swift action in rural areas in repairing pot holes that had appeared due to the extreme winter weather conditions.

Geoff Harris advised the Forum that additional capital funding from a major resurfacing project had been diverted to deal with the unprecedented number of pot holes that had appeared as a result of the extreme weather conditions last winter. The department was dealing with the pot holes as quickly as possible.

- M. Brown Frating PC, with regard to the extreme winter weather conditions, raised a question regarding salt bins.
 - (i) Asked why the salt bins had been removed from Frating and for clarification as to the provision and usage of salt bins?

Councillor Lucas advised the Forum that in some cases the salt in the bins was being stolen and then resold to residents. Suffolk had set up a workable scheme Councillor Norman Hume, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation was currently looking into the matter. ECC Highways department would be reviewing its actions during the cold winter to learn lessons from their experience last winter. There was to be a national 'Snow Summit' shortly from which ECC could learn and share good practice.

- Councillor Robinson raised a question regarding the Highway Rangers Team .
 - (i) The Councillor asked when these would be rolled out?

Geoff Harris advised the Forum that the teams would be rolled out in the Tendring district as soon as possible.

- Jane Chinnery Myland PC commended the Department for keeping the main roads open during the extreme weather last winter. The Forum was advised that the Association of Town Councils were concerned about the number of pot holes that had appeared recently and commented that the Highways Department were aware of the specific problems in the Mile End Road.
- Mike Brown Frating PC raised a concern that Parish Councils dealt with the matter of flooding in rural areas. Whilst all appropriate local partners met to discuss the matter, the Forum was advised that the local water companies would not accept their responsibilities in the matter.
 - (i) How could Parish Councils communicate a resolution with the appropriate authorities and water companies?

Geoff Harris advised the Forum that there were many complex issues related to the matter of rural flooding.

18. Date of Next Meeting

Members noted the next meeting was scheduled for 2.00 pm Tuesday 22 June 2010 the venue was to be agreed.

The Forum noted and approved the schedule of meetings for next year.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 3.20pm

Chairman