

**COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 22 APRIL 2008**

Present:- Councillor C M Dean – Chairman.  
Councillors S Anjum, S Barker, E L Bellingham-Smith, C A Cant, R H Chamberlain, R P Chambers, J F Cheetham, A Dean, C D Down, K L Eden, M A Gayler, E J Godwin, E Gower, E W Hicks, S J Howell, J E Hudson, D M Jones, A J Ketteridge, T P Knight, R M Lemon, J E Menell, M Miller, D J Morson, D G Perry, J A Redfern, H S Rolfe, D J Sadler, J Salmon, S Schneider, G Sell, R D Sherer, C C Smith, A D Walters, L A Wells and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- J Mitchell (Interim Chief Executive), R Auty (Head of Community Engagement), D Burrige (Director of Operations), R Harborough (Head of Planning and Housing Strategy), M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive), P Snow (Committee and Electoral Services Manager) and A Webb (Acting Director of Central Services).

**C93 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Prior to the meeting, a statement was made by a member of the public and a summary of that statement is attached to these Minutes.

At the conclusion of the statement, the Chairman reminded the large public audience that it was not in the Council's tradition to clap, cheer or boo speakers.

**C94 MEMBERS' QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

Councillor Morson directed his question at Councillor Barker as Chairman of the Environment Committee. He reminded Members that, at the December meeting, he had asked for clarification about the number and status of the proposed houses in Elsenham. Councillor Knight had reprimanded him for sleeping through that decision.

He referred to an expression of interest to develop an eco-town at Elsenham, submitted by Fairfield in October 2007 and said that this document had been lodged with the Council by November last year. His question was twofold. First, was Councillor Barker aware of the Fairfield submission? Second, the Fairfield submission document referred specifically to decisions of the Environment Committee in September and October of last year in support of the bid. In that case, why were councillors not made aware of these developments?

Councillor Barker responded that she was not aware of the document and had not seen it. She was aware in December 2007 of three bids for eco-towns to be developed but she did not know why this matter had not been included on the Environment Committee agenda.

In view of this comment, Councillor Morson asked for a response from either the Interim Chief Executive or the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy. The Chairman said that this would be provided in writing.

Councillor Sell asked the Leader to update Members on the work of Colin Rockall.

The Leader confirmed that the bid to Building Capacity East – now renamed Improvement East – for funding had been successful. The money had been received during the previous financial year. A meeting had been held with Improvement East to discuss how the support being offered could be continued and developed. Mr Rockall was working with Mr Mitchell to prepare a development plan. This would be shared with staff at planned briefings next Monday.

He referred to the Liberal Democrat amendment at Minute C88 of the previous meeting. During the discussion of that item it had been stated that officers at GO-East were unhappy with what the Administration was proposing. This had been proven wrong. Councillor A Dean had attempted to undermine the Council's bid to Building Capacity East and his actions had not been helpful. The support being offered was essential to the Council's future financial wellbeing and the ability to move forward. Mr Rockall would continue to support Mr Mitchell's role for two to three days a week.

In posing his question to the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Rolfe congratulated Councillor Wilcock upon his adoption as the prospective Parliamentary candidate for Saffron Walden. He said that Nick Clegg had spoken on environmental issues in a recent party political broadcast during which he had said 'our Uttersford council had stopped expansion of Stansted Airport because of the impact on climate change'. He asked for confirmation as to whether the previous Administration had stopped Airport expansion.

Councillor Wilcock thanked Councillor Rolfe for his words of congratulation and confirmed that the words quoted had been used by Nick Clegg. If consulted, he would have used different words. The G1 application had been stopped and he hoped that there would be another Liberal Democrat administration in the future. In the meantime, he expressed the wish that all Members would unite to jointly oppose further expansion at Stansted.

Councillor A Dean asked the Leader to confirm that an application for Judicial Review had been received challenging the Local Development Framework process. The Leader responded that application had been made and was presently before a judge who would decide whether there was a case to answer. His view was that the application was unlikely to proceed.

Councillor A Dean asked why Members had not been told about the application. The Leader said that there was, as yet, no Judicial Review.

Councillor Cant reminded Members that she had asked, on more than one occasion, for a meeting of the Local Development Framework Group to be arranged but that this had not happened. This matter had now become more

urgent as there were new issues to discuss. The Chairman of the Environment Committee apologised for this omission and said that she would again ask officers to arrange for a meeting to take place.

Councillor Wilcock asked the Chairman of the Community Committee if the Council was supporting the Neighbourhood Watch scheme as there had been a marked lack of support since the departure of the Community Safety Officer.

Councillor Schneider confirmed that the Council wholeheartedly supported Neighbourhood Watch. Recent talks had taken place with the local Police and the Chief Constable with a view to taking the matter forward.

*Councillor Chambers declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Police Authority. He said that Neighbourhood Watch was in the forefront of the Police Authority's work and £65k worth of new money had been announced for the development of Neighbourhood Watch throughout Essex. A meeting of the co-ordinating committee had taken place today and a sum of money allocated for use in Uttlesford. Alan Johnson would be receiving that money on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch in Uttlesford.*

Referring to option 4 of the Core Strategy, Councillor Knight asked the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group whether his group would work together with the Administration to defeat the efforts of the Government to impose a new Eco-town development on the district by directive.

Councillor Wilcock said that the Liberal Democrat group wholeheartedly opposed the imposition of an Eco-town at Elsenham but continued to have issues with option 4.

C95

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Abrahams, Artus, Clover, Foley, Loughlin, Mason, Wattebot and Yarwood.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Menell to the meeting following her recent accident and wished her a speedy recovery.

C96

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*Councillor C Dean declared an interest as a member of SSE and the National Trust.*

*Councillors Gayler, Hudson, Ketteridge and Sadler declared their interest as members of SSE.*

*Councillor Cheetham declared her interest as a member of NWEHPA, the National Trust, East of England Regional Assembly and Hatfield Forest Management Committee*

*Councillors Bellingham-Smith, Chamberlain, Knight, Lemon and Rolfe declared their interest as members of the National Trust.*

*Councillor Barker declared her interest as a member of the County Council, SSE, the National Trust and the Regional Housing authority.*

*Councillor Chambers declared an interest as Chairman of the Essex Police Authority and as an Essex County Councillor.*

*Councillor Godwin declared her interest as a member of SSE and the Regional Housing authority.*

*Councillor A Dean declared his interest as a member of SSE and the Regional Assembly.*

C97

## **DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON 'ECO TOWNS – LIVING A GREENER FUTURE'**

The Interim Chief Executive summarised the current proposals from DCLG for the development of Eco-towns, as contained in the consultation paper published at the beginning of April and said that a more detailed report would be submitted to the Environment Committee in June.

A prospectus had been published last year inviting bids for the development of carbon neutral new towns. This provided the opportunity for local authorities, developers and housing associations to come together to make a major contribution towards meeting affordable housing targets. Among the key objectives were the provision of new employment opportunities and the use of brown field land.

The Government had allowed a period until the end of June for responses to the consultation. The paper had identified sites to the north east of Elsenham and at Hanley Grange in Cambridgeshire (just outside the Council's boundary) as potential Eco-town settlements. The 15 sites selected would be reduced to ten sites as locations with potential for development.

He expressed concern that the DCLG consultation had quoted a housing need of 3,954 households on the waiting list in relation to Elsenham. This figure was far in excess of the actual figure of 1200 on the waiting list in Uttlesford. Clarification had been sought from DCLG as to the source of the figure quoted in the document.

The Council was required to make provision for an additional 4,200 houses by 2024 as part of the agreed Local Development Framework. It was presently unclear about the extent to which the 5,000 houses proposed for the Eco-town site at Elsenham would contribute towards the minimum housing targets set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Mr Mitchell set out the four key stages of the eco-towns process and said that a decision on the list of locations was expected between November and February 2009. The final stage would then involve the submission of individual planning applications.

The submission for the Elsenham site was a slim document. The proposal would need a great deal more work, including robust business planning, before the impact on the area and on regional housing targets could be properly assessed. It was important to protect the interests of the Council and of the district's residents in reacting to the proposal.

**NOTICE OF MOTION – ECO-TOWNS CONSULTATION**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Barker and seconded by Councillor Ketteridge:

‘This Council is totally opposed to the development of an Eco Town north east of Elsenham as proposed in the Department of Communities and Local Government’s consultative paper, “Eco-Towns – Living a greener future” published on Thursday 3 April and will campaign to have this proposal removed from the shortlist. We will also support objectors to other locations that would be detrimental to our District.’

She explained that the second sentence of the motion had been added to the original Notice of Motion included on the agenda.

Councillor Wilcock proposed the following amendment:

‘Insert the words ‘and at Handley Grange’ to the wording already proposed, and then to add ‘Furthermore, the Council recognises that option 4 of the Core Strategy consultation that places 3,000 houses in the same locality would be less sustainable than the DCLG Eco-town proposal, but equally as damaging to the area and resolves to reconsider all options in the Core Strategy at the Annual Council meeting in May in the light of the recent DCLG announcement.’

He said that he had wished to propose a motion calling for the withdrawal of option 4 but that had been ruled out under the six month provisions in the Procedure Rules.

Councillor Morson seconded the amendment and spoke to it. He said that a large number of people from Elsenham and Henham were here to see what the Council was going to do to oppose the eco-town. It was contradictory to support development at Elsenham and at the same time to oppose the eco-town proposal. This position would give no credibility to the Council’s arguments.

The Government had used the selection of option 4 as a reason for the inclusion of the Elsenham site on the shortlist and Fairfield had been encouraged by the Environment Committee’s decision.

On practical grounds, the timetable for the consideration of the Core Strategy consultation would be overtaken by the eco-towns consultation and the Council’s processes would be discredited as a result. It was not too late for the Council to act and to use the evidence gathered to oppose the eco-town proposal.

Councillor Barker said that she could not accept Councillor Wilcock’s amendment. It was not possible to stop the LDF consultation as this would open the Council to potential legal challenge.

Councillor Cheetham said that she could not vote for the amendment for similar reasons. The Council was in the middle of a process in which one

option was being presented as the Council's preferred option. She would vote against.

Councillor Godwin said that option 4 had not been either looked for or wanted. That option would be worked out through the consultation process and could not be withdrawn. Uttlesford was in a vulnerable position because of the proposal for Hanley Grange and the existence of much unemployment in Harlow, where jobs would be welcomed. The Council must watch carefully developments in relation to airport expansion and that could only be achieved by holding firm and seeing the process through.

Councillor Morson said that he had asked Mr Mitchell at the South West Area Panel meeting what weight should be given to the various options and he had replied that it was up to Members. The identification of a single site had been placed 8<sup>th</sup> out of 9 options. Option 4 should therefore be abandoned to give the Council credibility in opposing the eco-town.

Councillor A Dean said there was a danger that the Council was giving the impression it could do something in six months' time. Due account should be taken of the process but political leadership was needed and the Council must be prepared to bend the rules if that was needed. It was necessary to stop in order to move forward.

There was a potential for planning applications to be submitted later this year. The Council's response demanded greater clarity and that would involve deciding what we were for rather than what we were against. A report was needed for discussion at Annual Council providing evidence for opposition to the eco-towns proposal. To do this it was perfectly possible to make an interim assessment of the LDF responses and then resume the consultation in a more sensible manner. It was lunacy to continue on the present path.

Councillor Knight said she had been present at the earlier briefing when Members had been advised that to withdraw option 4 at this stage would open the Council to legal challenge. The process had been agreed by the previous administration and should be continued. She would vote against the amendment.

Councillor Wilcock said that, in a spirit of unity, he would support Councillor Barker's words on the first part of the amendment, by withdrawing his wording. It was clear that the inclusion of Elsenham on the eco-towns list had changed the position dramatically. A 5,000 house settlement was preferable to a 3,000 house settlement without support. Once agreed, there would follow years of attrition to increase the size of the development. More unity would have been achieved if all Members had agreed to join the tour organised to view all of the potential sites.

He urged Members to think again and join with Sir Alan Haslehurst's recent initiative. The people of Elsenham and Henham deserved the Council's support and any reasonably minded person would do so.

Councillor Knight urged Liberal Democrat members to be realistic. The Council was being forced to accommodate 4,500 houses it did not need. To

add these to existing villages would mean that many would double in size without supporting infrastructure. The Council had to follow a legal process but could work together to stop unwanted development.

Councillor Sell said that he had heard no expression of regret that the selection of option 4 had laid open the way to an eco-town. Whatever now happened, this would change the face of the area and was a Trojan horse.

Councillor Barker said that all Members had heard the Interim Chief Executive say that the site at Elsenham would have been selected regardless of whether it had been the preferred LDF option or not. Eco-town bids had been invited in March 2007.

The amendment, as now clarified with the omission of the words 'and at Hanley Grange', was put to the vote and declared lost by 24 votes to 10.

Councillor Barker then proposed the substantive motion. She thanked Councillor Wilcock for his opening remarks in support of opposition to the eco-town settlement. Uttlesford was a rural district with 31,000 houses. The location of 4,200 new houses presented a real dilemma. The proposed provision of a new town with 5,000 houses was an imposition on the district and rode roughshod over local planning and democratic processes. It was difficult to see how the standards being demanded as part of a 'stand alone' development could be provided at Elsenham.

There was currently no clear guidance as to who would determine any resulting planning application, only that it would initially be submitted to the local planning authority. The idea that such an application could be called in by the Government was appalling.

People in Uttlesford were in need of decent housing. Officers were working hard to achieve that. She then dissected the numbers on the waiting list to demonstrate that 767 out of the 1289 on that list were in current need of social housing. That number of new social housing units could be achieved at Priors Green, Rochford Nurseries and Woodlands Park as well as at other small scale locations.

Councillor Barker then set out a summary of the responses received to date as part of the LDF consultation. For option 1 there were 70 objections and 205 letters of support. For option 2 there were 172 objections and 90 letters of support. The figures for option three were 271 and 25 respectively. For option 4, there were just over 1,000 objections and 160 letters of support. There had also been 770 letters of objection to the development at Chelmer Mead (not part of the consultation).

Failure to provide for 4,200 more homes could open the way to speculative applications with no policy structure in place. The Council had choice and control over its own local policy framework, but would have no choice or control over a Government imposed eco-town. She invited everyone's support for this position.

Councillor A Dean said that he considered the substantive motion to be defective but he would support it. He questioned what would happen next and was concerned about the prospect that the Council would oppose the eco settlement because of the cost of providing infrastructure.

The Leader said that the Council's intention was set out in the motion. This was important because the Local Government Association intended to convene a meeting of all affected authorities in the near future. The LGA would mount a vigorous campaign and would seek, as far as possible, to support the wishes of all those authorities, whether they either supported or did not support the development proposals.

He confirmed that further information would be available at the next Environment Committee meeting. In the meantime, the Government should stand by its stated intention that all eco-town settlements would be developed on brown field sites. Of the 15 sites short-listed in the consultation, only Hanley Grange and Elsenham were situated on green field land.

The Council's position was quite clear. It did not wish for housing growth to be imposed upon us. For that reason, a delegation recently met Hazel Blears, the Secretary of State at DCLG, to seek a reduction in Uttlesford's housing requirement. He wished the Council to play a full part in the LGA meeting; at that stage it would become apparent which districts were in favour of eco-town settlements and which were against.

He made it clear that, in his view, option 4 was a red herring, as the assessment report had been made in July 2006 and the assessment of the Elsenham site was made in February 2007.

Councillor Wilcock said that the housing needs survey demonstrated the need for affordable housing in Uttlesford, and the particular need for young people who were in danger of being driven away from the district. Sir Alan Haslehurst's recent initiative had clearly shown that the local community could find locations for at least 2,500 houses and this possibility should be pursued.

Councillor Chamberlain felt that opposition should be concentrated against the eco-town proposals, especially as the consultation ended in June. It was essential to secure 100% opposition to this proposal. The Government must be challenged on its assertion about the number of households in need of housing. The figure quoted in the document represented a failure of research.

He said that 230 of those on the waiting list had no housing need points, 190 were on the transfer list, 205 had between one and ten points, and 350 had between eleven and thirty points, and were therefore in the greatest housing need. The Council was able to fill 250 vacancies per annum; including housing association nominations this figure rose to 400.

Although he was in no doubt there was a clear need in the district, it was important for the figures quoted to be rigorously tested by officers and to ensure that the facts being discussed were accurate.

Councillor Chambers said that he would support the motion. He had been invited to attend a meeting in Whittlesford in opposition to the Hanley Grange proposal, which should more properly be referred to as Hinxtton Grange. As part of the Council's consideration of these proposals he felt that the expertise of South Cambridgeshire District Council would be helpful, particularly in view of that Council's proposed development at Northstowe to the north of Cambridge. South Cambs would consider Northstowe becoming an eco-settlement thus ensuring that the eco-town for the Eastern region could be located there. Unfortunately, the Government had rejected this option.

There were strong reasons why an eco-town should not be located at either Elsenham or Hanley Grange. It was imperative for the two councils, and the various parish councils, to get their act together in opposition.

Councillor A Dean said that Councillor Chambers' prescription would not work as the Government's intention was to provide additional housing on top of that already planned. He foresaw the danger of an urban extension to Harlow encroaching towards Uttlesford.

Councillor Cheetham confirmed that she would support the motion. She echoed the views of other Members about the importance of full consideration being given to this matter at the next Environment Committee meeting and hoped all councillors would attend. She mentioned the proposed eco-town development at Rushcliffe and said that authority was keen to talk to Uttlesford about the way ahead. She expressed amazement that the Government had apparently rejected the re-branding of Northstowe as an eco-settlement and said that all options should continue to be considered.

The Leader thanked Councillor Dean for the way she had chaired the meeting in difficult circumstances, especially given that her ward was the one most affected.

Councillor Godwin echoed these sentiments and agreed with other members that further research was needed on the basis of the housing need figures quoted in the document. She felt that no thought had been given to the logistics whereby people would effectively be shipped into the district to be housed. It was important to achieve a proper balance between selling the virtues of the area and, at the same time, protecting it.

At this point the substantive motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that this Council is totally opposed to the development of an Eco Town north east of Elsenham, as proposed in the Department of Communities and Local Government's consultative paper, "Eco Towns – Living a greener future" published on Thursday 3 April and will campaign to have this proposal removed from the shortlist. We will also support objectors to other locations that would be detrimental to our District.

C99 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2008, having been received, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C100 **BUSINESS ARISING**

(i) **Minute C85 – District Council Budget Requirement and Council Tax 2008/09**

Councillor Barker pointed out that the introduction to the Budget Book 2008/09 contained an inaccurate figure relating to the Council Tax increase. The Interim Director of Central Services confirmed that he would correct the information and reissue it.

Councillor A Dean referred to recent staff reductions and asked whether anyone was keeping track of the impact of staffing levels on the provision of services. His impression was that, in a number of areas, things were not as they should be.

The Interim Chief Executive responded that officers were acutely aware of existing problems and these would be addressed as part of the improvement plan being developed by Mr Rockall. In view of the upheaval suffered in recent months some difficulties were inevitable.

Councillor Chambers reiterated that leading Members were keeping a careful watch on staffing and services. In his view, the existing staffing level was sustainable now. He hoped that it would be possible to fill vacant posts with a view to ensuring it remained sustainable in the long term.

C101 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman asked members to clear their pigeon holes to save on postage costs.

Since the last meeting she had attended a joint meeting with the Chairmen of Epping Forest and Harlow Councils at Harlow Museum to celebrate International Women's Day as all of the Chairmen concerned were women. Valda Edmonds, an employee of BAA, had taken a group of young people to India with the challenge of renovating a school. Valda and two of the young people had given a presentation at the lunch. A paralympic competitor called Anna Wafula Strike had also given a talk.

Together with Councillor Alan Dean she had been a guest of Sir Alan Haslehurst on budget day.

At County Hall recently, she had met with troops of the Royal Anglian Regiment who had served in Afghanistan. She referred specifically to the weight of the kit carried by the soldiers and said this had greatly added to her

admiration of the role they played. She passed around a bucket for funds in aid of the Royal Anglian Regiment Memorial Fund.

She said she was delighted to welcome Councillor Menell following her recent serious accident.

Finally she reminded Members that the Chairman's reception would be held on Thursday evening and that long service awards would be made to staff.

At this point, she invited Councillor Gayler to make a personal statement.

Councillor Gayler announced that he was getting married in September and moving to Exmouth in Devon. As a consequence he would be tendering his resignation from the Council at the conclusion of this meeting.

It was a huge honour for him to have represented the community in which he had spent his entire life, and to have acted as Leader of the Council during a period in which Uttlesford had won environmental awards, redoubled its recycling rates and refused further expansion at Stansted Airport.

In his 17 years as a councillor, he had always tried to work hard and to be ambitious for high quality services. It was a huge wrench for him to move away from the district and he thanked officers and Members for their help and support. He wished the district well in meeting future challenges and said that Uttlesford was the best place in the country in which to live.

The Chairman said the whole Council would want to wish Councillor Gayler well in this next stage of his life. When elected he had been the youngest councillor and he would be much missed in Dunmow in particular.

## C102 **LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Leader said he did not wish to add anything further to the comments about staff made earlier in the meeting.

## C103 **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEES**

### **(i) Constitution Task Group on 19 March 2008 – Minute CTG 90(iii) and Minute CTG 91**

It was noted that the Constitution Task Group had recommended the Task Group be re-appointed as a working group and that the existing area panels be replaced by two area forums. These matters were referred to in the Council's Constitution and would therefore stand adjourned to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 13 May.

Upon being proposed and seconded, it was agreed accordingly.

### **(ii) Constitution Task Group on 19 March 2008 – Minute CTG 91**

The Task Group had recommended that the terms of reference of the Housing Initiative Task Group be changed to enable the group to review the appropriate Member mechanism to carry out the housing service and report back to the Council via the Constitution Task Group within six months. The HITG had been established by the Community Committee and was time limited to the Annual Council meeting.

Councillor Chamberlain said that this review had been put into place because there was no specific housing committee. He proposed the recommendation.

Councillor A Dean asked whether it was intended to put into place a committee responsible for housing management or housing strategy? In response, Councillor Chamberlain said that this would be examined in detail. The housing service was a huge one and it was essential in his view to have a specific body dealing with the landlord function as well as more strategic matters.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Constitution Task Group to extend the terms of reference of the Housing Initiative Task Group as proposed be agreed.

### **(iii) Finance and Administration Committee on 27 March 2008 – Minute FA52**

The Finance and Administration Committee had recommended approval of the 2008/09 – 2010/11 Medium Term Financial Strategy and the actions included in it.

RESOLVED that the MTFS document be approved in full.

C104

### **NATS CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO AIRSPACE**

The Interim Chief Executive presented a detailed report outlining the Council's suggested response to the NATS consultation on proposed changes to airspace in the light of comments already made at the STAAP meeting on 25 March and comments collected from a number of individual Members. He said this was a difficult matter for the Council to consider as different parts of the district would either benefit or suffer disadvantage from the proposals.

Councillor Chamberlain urged Members to take account of the noise and nuisance to many of the district's residents that would result from adoption of the NATS proposals. Many concerns had been raised last week at a meeting arranged by Saffron Walden Town Council and SSE.

He said that the airspace over the South East was the most congested in the world and planning for further capacity was unsustainable. He had attended the NATS presentation at the STAAP meeting. The presentation was highly technical and it had concerned him that NATS staff had been working on these proposals for a number of years. This has resulted in a number of options being rejected at the outset. This was unacceptable as it had limited the scope for consultation.

He asked why NATS had not circulated a package of information to every household in the area affected and said the consultation undertaken had been compromised by this omission. The ward he represented (Ashdon) was greatly affected by the proposed changes and he asked the local press representatives to expose the flawed consultation undertaken, especially in the north of the district, and urge more people to respond directly.

In concluding his remarks, Councillor Chamberlain asked for the following specific points to be added to the Council's response:

- The Council issue a press release outlining the consultation being undertaken and having a significant impact on a number of communities within the district, especially in the north, and urging residents to respond to NATS and the CAA, and copy their concerns to the local MP.
- That NATS formally be requested to significantly extend the consultation period and to enter into full consultation on all options, including those already dismissed by NATS, the consultation to include public meetings and information provided directly to all affected households, and to make clear that comments by letter would be welcomed, and that a name and address for the receipt of these comments be published.
- That the CAA be notified of the Council's concerns.

Councillor Godwin commented that parts of the district were overflowed by 17 different routes. The point should be made that airspace in Uttlesford was seriously overloaded.

*Councillor Wilcock declared a personal interest as a member of the noise and track keeping working group.* He said that under the NATS proposals there would be no winners or losers because of the increase in traffic movements. This was the biggest ever consultation undertaken by NATS. If anyone was aggrieved by the consultation process they should write to him.

There was immense pressure on airspace and, because of the complexity of the routes in use, he did not see how the proposals could be improved. He supported the proposed response.

The Leader said that, although not present at the meeting, Councillor Artus had asked for comments to be held back until the close of the consultation on 21 May and that any further points arising in the meantime be added.

Councillor Smith made the succinct point that NATS were the experts on routing flight paths and should be trusted to adopt workable proposals.

Councillor Knight referred to red lines that were followed by pilots and asked how it was possible to police these if pilots were short circuiting them? She thought it would be sensible for more flight paths to follow the M11.

Councillor Cheetham agreed with other Members that the proposals for flight path changes were too complicated to be explained in detail as part of a public consultation and that exhibitions were a preferable form of display for

the public to view. The best solution of all was for more flights to be diverted to the coast where noise was more easily swallowed up. She agreed with the approach suggested by Councillor Artus.

Councillor A Dean said that he did not agree with paragraph iv of the proposed response, particularly the reference to 'significant weight'. He asked for the wording to be amended.

*Councillor Menell declared a personal interest as a member of Littlebury Parish Council.* She was concerned at the lack of information available in all parishes and asked that officers should e-mail all relevant details.

Councillor Hudson agreed with Councillor Wilcock as he thought the effect on the district was broadly neutral.

In responding to Councillor Knight, Councillor Wilcock said that it was incorrect to say that pilots flew where they wanted as they were controlled strictly by air traffic control. The red lines allowed pilots to fly more precisely as they were required to fly within .1 of a mile of the lines.

The Chairman concluded the discussion by stating that all Members' comments would be taken on board in the response sent. It would say that the Council was dissatisfied with the nature of the consultation.

The Interim Chief Executive said that officers would try to find a form of words to satisfy all Members in compiling the response. The Chairman suggested this matter be delegated to the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of STAAP.

RESOLVED that a suitable response be sent to NATS by the Interim Chief Executive after consulting with the Chairman of STAAP.

C105

## **TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS IN 2008/09**

The Chairman referred Members to the two separate versions of the timetable circulated. Both versions could be adopted and the version then used would reflect the decision taken at the Annual Meeting about the structure of area panels/forums.

The Committee and Electoral Services Manager said that the two versions were identical except for the area meetings and asked members to agree to change the proposed initial meetings of the north and south area forums (if agreed) to 10 and 12 June respectively. This would allow more time for the meetings to be publicised.

Councillor Rolfe asked that the date of Performance Select Committee in September be changed to the 23<sup>rd</sup> and this was agreed.

RESOLVED that the two versions of the timetable be agreed subject to the changes suggested above.

C106

## **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The Assistant Chief Executive presented a number of changes to the Constitution either proposed by the Constitution Task Group; reflecting changes in legislation introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; or needing an update since the last review was undertaken.

There were two categories, those that could be agreed with immediate effect and those that would need to be proposed and seconded for adoption at the Annual Council meeting on 13 May. He invited Members to agree that parts 1, 2 and 3 should stand adjourned to the Annual meeting in accordance with the Constitution. Councillor Chambers so proposed and Councillor Ketteridge seconded.

Mr Perry said there was one further amendment needed in relation to the Access to Information Rules. This stated:

'New rule 11.6.8 (remaining provisions to be renumbered)

11.6.8.1 Information presented to the Standards Committee or a sub Committee of the Standards Committee set up to consider a matter under regulations 13 or 16 – 20 The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 or referred under s.58(1)(c) Local Government Act 2000.'

Having been proposed and seconded the Council agreed accordingly.

RESOLVED that:

1. the revisions to the Articles and Procedure Rules set out in the report to this meeting (Parts 1, 2 and 3) be adjourned to the Annual meeting of the Council without discussion, pursuant to Article 17.2 of the Constitution and Procedure Rule 19.2; and
2. the remaining proposed variations to the Constitution (set out in that report also) be agreed with immediate effect.

C107

## **COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Council received a report asking Members to approve the appointment of a committee to deal with the recruitment and appointment of a new Chief Executive. The committee was required to be politically balanced.

The Leader suggested appointing a five member committee with three members allocated to the Conservative Group, and one member each to the Liberal Democrat and Independent groups.

Each of the political groups made their nominations to serve on the committee and these were agreed. Members also voted to appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

It was noted that the first meeting of the Committee would be on 1 May and that Colin Rockall would act as Lead Officer.

RESOLVED that

1. Councillors Chambers, Godwin, Ketteridge, Redfern and Wilcock be appointed to serve on the Committee to deal with the Appointment of a new Chief Executive;
2. Councillor Ketteridge be elected Chairman of the Committee and Councillor Chambers Vice-Chairman;
3. the terms of reference be agreed as follows: To oversee the recruitment of a new Chief Executive; to have powers to work with consultants on the selection process; to ratify the job description and person specification for the post; to shortlist and interview suitable candidates and agree an offer of appointment, subject to ratification by the Full Council.

C108

**TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2008/09**

The Chairman invited nominations to the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2008/09. These would be tabled at the Annual Council meeting on 13 May 2008.

It was proposed by Councillor Godwin and seconded by Councillor C Dean that Councillor Lemon be nominated as Chairman of the Council for 2008/09.

It was then proposed by Councillor Ketteridge and seconded by Councillor Cheetham that Councillor Walters be nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2008/09.

C109

**NOTICE OF MOTION – GREENING THEIR COMMUNITIES**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Wilcock and seconded by Councillor Morson:

**Greening their Communities**

Uttlesford District Council notes:

1. That green and brown spaces - whether commercial developments or public owned, well-planted local streets and roads, and blooming private gardens are all integral components of a modern sustainable community.
2. That trees and shrubs contribute to the control of climate change effects (e.g. absorbing rainfall, anchoring riverbanks), to a better environment (visual, air, and sound) to reducing violence and to improving quality of life.
3. That national statistics suggest landscaped areas have been reduced by 50% in new development plans compared with 10 years ago and that only 50% of the landscapes specified in planning applications are being delivered.
4. That developers are failing to deliver local enhancements of the environment through their failure to deliver adequate landscaping projects.

Uttlesford District Council believes:

5. That improving the environment should include providing greener commercial and domestic building and infrastructure projects i.e. with a higher level of planting.
6. That the Council should place a greater emphasis on enforcing the delivery of green spaces and gardens included in submitted planning documentation.
7. That the Council should increase the scale of specification of green spaces/garden space within planning guidance across the range of plans from Regional Spatial Strategies to Local Area Action Plans.

Uttlesford District Council resolves to:

8. Urge the Council to increase the amount of tree and shrub planting required within planning approvals across the range of plans from Regional Spatial Strategies to Local Area Action Plans.
9. Support exemplar schemes, which reflect the importance of green space and green planting on both public and private land, including the use of planting to improve the council owned street scene.
10. Ensure, using enforcement powers, that the planting required by planning approvals is actually installed and maintained.
11. Call upon the local MP to support the principle of more, properly maintained planting of trees and shrubs and raise the issue within Parliament
12. Ask the Regional Planning Authorities and the Regional Development Agency to support these proposals both politically and financially where appropriate.'

Councillor Wilcock said that this motion was meant to be non-contentious and to raise the profile of planting within Uttlesford.

Councillor Jones queried how the planting of more trees and shrubs would have the effect of reducing violence? Councillor Wilcock explained that

research had shown that open spaces tended to induce calmness and tranquillity.

Councillor Howell said that, although the motion was lengthy, he had no particular objections to the wording. However, he pointed out that Councillor Wilcock was not the author and the wording came from the Horticultural Trades Association.

RESOLVED that the Council adopt the policy outlined in the motion listed in full in the text of this Minute.

C110

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS – PARKING AND TRAFFIC REGULATION (OUTSIDE LONDON) ADJUDICATION JOINT COMMITTEE AGREEMENT**

***The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item on the grounds of urgency as the business needed to be transacted before the next meeting of the Environment Committee.***

The Director of Operations advised Members that it was necessary to approve the Parking and Traffic Regulation (outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee Agreement to smooth the transition to new arrangements. It would allow the agreement to be signed and for parking arrangements to continue without a break.

RESOLVED that the above agreement be approved and brought into effect.

The meeting ended at 10.00pm.

**COUNCIL MEETING – 22 APRIL 2008**  
**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**John Savident**

Mr Savident said that he was a resident of Henham and wished to thank Members for allowing him to address the meeting. He said that he was profoundly bewildered as to the predicament in which the Council found itself. He wondered how any reasonably minded people could be opposed to the proposal for an eco-town to be developed and still be actively supporting option 4 in the same location.

The Chairman of the Environment Committee, Councillor Barker, had stated the Council's stance on option 4 remained on the table in spite of all evidence to the contrary and the strong opposition of local people.

There was a simple solution to this conundrum. There was already enough evidence from the Local Development Framework consultation for the Council to make a judgement call and declare the proposal for option 4 to be null and void. By taking this decision, the accusation of hypocrisy would magically disappear paving the way for the Council to work in harmony with its electorate to prevent the eco-town development.

The decision on option 4 would otherwise be made after the decision on eco-towns. By acting now, the Council's standing and credibility would be restored within the community. He therefore appealed for councillors not to waste this opportunity but to exploit it.