

**EAST AREA PANEL held at THAXTED PRIMARY SCHOOL THAXTED at 7.00PM on 21 NOVEMBER 2006**

Present:- Councillor D W Gregory – Chairman.  
Councillors C A Cant, C D Down, M L Foley, M A Gayler,  
E Gower, M Miller, J P Murphy, F E Silver, A R Thawley and  
A M Wattebot.

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, M Cox, R Goodey, H Joy, D Osborn,  
J Starr, P Snow and D Toombs.

Parish Councillors present:- Philip Leeder (Thaxted) Iorwerth Davies (Great  
Dunmow) and Nicolas Hinde (Felsted).

Members of the public present:- Carol Barbone and Maggie Sutton -SSE

**EP26 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Flack and  
E W Hicks.

**EP27 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2006 were received,  
confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the  
inclusion of the word “known” in the end of the second line of the third  
paragraph at Minute EP18.

**EP28 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute EP14 – Felling of Trees to the rear of Berbice Lane Great  
Dunmow**

Councillor Murphy asked if there had been any progress in the review of  
procedures for notifying nearby residents of work affecting trees that were  
subject to a tree preservation order. Councillor Cant said that officers had  
been busy dealing with the airport application, but she would now take this up  
with the relevant planning officers.

**EP29 THAXTED DAY CENTRE AND VICARAGE MEAD SHELTERED FLATS**

David Osborn, the Council's Senior Architectural Surveyor outlined progress  
so far in the design of the new day centre building in Thaxted. He explained  
that the new building would be an 'L' shape design with a much larger kitchen  
and dining area. The capacity of the centre had been doubled and future  
demand and use had been accounted for. Officers had been looking at  
environmental strategy options and had recommended the inclusion of the  
following measures:-

- Solar Panels
- A wind turbine
- Increased insulation
- The building to be constructed in recycled timber
- Energy saving devices.
- 'A' rated appliances

The inclusion of these measures would result in a £20,000 overspend. The provision of water harvesting had been looked at but not considered to be cost effective for the amount of water used within the building. However members asked that this be looked at again. The Committee supported the proposed measures, although consideration would need to be given to the size of the wind turbine and the effect on nearby properties. Councillor Wattebot mentioned a design of turbine which fitted into the roof of a building and asked officers to investigate this. The Repairs Manager said that he hoped that this building would be a pioneering scheme for the district.

The Tenant Participation Officer said that whilst the work was being carried out, half of the users of the centre would be based in the Vicarage Mead sheltered flats while the others would use the disabled centre. Meals would be provided on three days a week.

The Committee then viewed photographs of the new Vicarage Mead sheltered flats and were impressed with the design of the building. Councillor Foley said that this redevelopment had been an upheaval for the elderly people at the building and he had been impressed with the way that the Council had handled this. The Panel expressed their thanks to the Housing Management Team.

EP30

## **YOUTH INITIATIVES IN THE EAST AREA**

Ann Jones, The Children and Young People Locality Youth Work Manager gave an overview of the provision of youth services in the east area. She said that the youth service engaged with young people between the ages of 13 and 19 in their leisure time and on a voluntary basis. The service was provided by qualified staff and volunteers, and also provided information, support and learning opportunities. She outlined the various activities in the Uttlesford area which included running open centres in Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted, detached and outreach work and a mobile information service. It also ran other activities including the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Youth Forum, outdoor centres and residential exchanges. It worked in partnership with many organisations including the District Council, the PCT, the schools, ACAS and other voluntary services.

The Members thanked Ann Jones for the comprehensive service that was provided in the district. Councillor Thawley said a particular problem for young people in this area was the rural nature of the district making it difficult for them to access services. Ann Jones said that the mobile bus had been set up to address this need and she hoped to expand the service if more drivers could be found. Councillor Gayle thought that efforts should focus on

enabling young people to get to facilities in the district and neighbouring towns.

Councillor Foley then spoke on behalf of the Thaxted Youth Initiative Group. The purpose of this Group was to help organise groups of young people to access the district's leisure facilities. Funds were needed to support this scheme and the Group would be approaching the County Council for YOP funding, but was also asking the District Council whether it could assist in any way.

RECOMMENDED that officers be asked to look at possible funding for the Thaxted Youth Initiatives Group and report back to the next Area Panel or the Community Committee.

EP31

## **HIGHWAYS**

Davina Millership, the interim Area Highway Manager attended the meeting and gave an overview of the structure of the County's Highways Department. She said Policy was made centrally at the County offices in Chelmsford and was contained in the Local Transport Plan. The Highway schemes to be implemented were determined by the criteria set out in the Plan. The day to day operation of the service was devolved to the Area Offices. This district was in the West Area Office, also including Epping Forest, Harlow and Brentwood. The only budget available to the Area Office was the Locally Determined Budget for small scale schemes in the district. Any other scheme, over £10,000 would be subject to the Local Transport Plan criteria.

Nicholas Hinde from Felsted Parish Council asked questions about highway matters in the Parish. He asked about the progress of the Section 106 monies in respect of Oakwood Park and was advised that the Highways had a record of five possible schemes and would make contact with the Parish Council to discuss these further. There had been a delay in implementing the yellow line parking restrictions outside the school and he was told that this was expected to be finished by Christmas. He asked about car park spaces outside The Swan and Chequers public house and it was confirmed that highways had no intention of bringing them into formal use. He then mentioned pavements that were in a poor state of repair. He was asked to give details of the precise locations, although there was limited budgets for any repair works and the locations would have to meet specific criteria.

Councillor Silver asked if there were still staff shortages at the Area Highway Office in Harlow and it was often difficult to get a reply or make contact with officers. Davina Millership said that when the office had moved to Harlow, many staff had decided not to relocate. The office had an establishment of 90 staff, this was not sufficient, but currently only 70 were in post. It was proving extremely difficult to recruit qualified engineers. There was only one senior engineer for the Uttlesford area.

Members then asked for updates on various schemes in their areas.

Councillor Gayler asked about the Woodlands Park Traffic Calming scheme. He was advised that formal advertising had taken place and the scheme

would be implemented between April 2007 and March 2008. With regards to the Tesco to Great Dunmow Cycle Way, this was expected to be implemented in January/February 2007.

Councillor Wattebot asked why she had been told that a tourist sign to Thaxted, off the A120, would be a distraction for motorists. Davina Millership would find out the details and respond to Councillor Wattebot.

Councillor Foley asked about the progress of the speed limit for Bardfield Road, Thaxted and the possibility of a school crossing at that location. He was told that the order would be sealed in September for implementation in May 2007. In respect of the school crossing, he was advised that the school should prepare a travel plan and identify appropriate safety measures.

Councillor Cant mentioned the 30mph sign at Little Canfield on the old A120 just before the turning to Bambers Green and said that it was obscured. Maggie Sutton mentioned speeding traffic at Mole Hill Green, Takeley. Davina Millership would make enquiries of the accidents reporting section.

Councillor Murphy commented on the difficult relationship that currently existed between the Highways Authority and the District Council. Improved consultation was needed with the Council and with the public. Councillor Gregory said that the Locally Determined Budget did contain schemes that had been put forward by the town and parish councils. However, there was some confusion as to how the schemes were prioritised as there was only limited budget available each year. Davina Millership said that it was up to the District Council to prioritise the schemes, and in other districts a liaison officer was often appointed to act as a contact between the Highways Authority and the District. The Chairman suggested that a workshop be arranged for District and Parish Councillors on the operation of the Locally Determined Budget.

## **EP32**

### **PLAY STRATEGY**

The Leisure and Community Development Manager advised the Committee that the Big Lottery had made available £250,000 for play initiatives for children and young people aged 0 to 19. It had been made clear that funding would not be allocated if the strategy was not sufficiently robust so a strategy was being prepared for the whole of Essex co-ordinated by the Children's Fund Essex. The District was also to submit its own strategy. Consultants had been appointed to liaise with primary and secondary schools and district officers were consulting voluntary groups, strategic partnerships and pre-school organisations. Work undertaken to date had included a mapping exercise to identify existing open spaces, play facilities and sports facilities. Questionnaires would shortly be sent out to town and parish councils. All this information would be fed into the project and the strategy was to be drafted during January 2007 and completed in March 2007.

EP33                    **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Community Development Officer presented a report which advised the Panel of related community development activities and schemes which officers had been involved in since the last Panel meeting and outlined those that would be taking place during the next few months.

EP34                    **PARISH ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The Electoral Services Officer advised the Committee of the recommendations relating to the parish electoral arrangements that had been put forward by the Parish Review Working Party. These had now been approved by the Operations Committee. The recommendations had put forward a more proactive approach to determining the arrangements by suggesting criteria for the number of councillors for the size of a parish. There were two changes relating to the eastern area; a new parish council of Great Easton and Tilty and to increase the number of parish councillors in Little Dunmow to 11 until a new electoral scheme could be implemented with a new parish of Flitch Green. The move to establish a parish council in Lindsell had been deferred until it became clear that the Parish met the criteria for the number of residents required to establish a parish council. The Panel was advised that in the future any decision relating to the East Area would be delegated to this Panel.

EP35                    **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman said that the reports for the meeting of the Development Control Committee, which would determine the Stansted Airport application were now available on the Council's website. The recommendation was refusal. Carol Barbone, Stop Stansted Expansion, thanked the Council's officers for their considered view of the application and for taking into account the public's views.

The meeting ended at 9.50 pm.