

EAST AREA PANEL held at the FOAKES MEMORIAL HALL GREAT DUNMOW AT 7.00 PM on 6 JUNE 2007

Present:- Councillor M A Gayler – Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, E Bellingham-Smith, C D Down, M Miller, R Sherer, C Smith and A M Wattebot.

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, M Cox, M Jones, A Stewart, A Clarke and D Toombs.

Parish Councillors :- G Davies – Great Dunmow Town Council and S Hawkins – White Roding Parish Council.

EP1 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first East Area Panel meeting of the new Council. He paid particular tribute to the work of the former Chairman, Councillor Gregory.

EP2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C A Cant, R Clover, M L Foley, E Gower and E W Hicks.

Councillor Barker declared a personal interest as a Member for Essex County Council.

Councillor Gayler declared a prejudicial interest in item 6 as he was an elder of the United Reformed Church, Great Dunmow that had applied for a grant. He would leave the room for the consideration of this item.

EP3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2007 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EP4 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute EP44 – Question and Answer Session

It was confirmed that Stansted Airport would be a standing item on all future agendas.

(ii) Minute EP50 – Rural Transport

Councillor Wattebot asked if there had been any progress on the provision of a bus helpline number at bus stops. Mr Gravatt, Transport Strategy Manager from Essex County Council would be asked for this information.

(iii) **Minute EP51 – Street Lighting**

It was confirmed that the pilot scheme to turn off some street lighting during night time hours had now commenced.

EP5

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Melanie Jones from the Council's Development Department informed the Panel of progress with the consultation on the LDF Core Strategy. The strategy included policy proposals and options for growth. 200 responses had been received to date from key stakeholders, town and parish councils, developers and statutory undertakers.

The responses were still to be properly collated and evaluated, but a summary graph was circulated, which gave an idea of the support for the various growth options. The most popular option was for development to be dispersed in a range of settlements around the district. The responses could be viewed on the consultation website which was accessed through the Council's main web page.

The core strategy would report to the Environment Committee on 4 September 2007 from which the preferred option would be put out to public consultation between September and October.

The Chairman thought that the consultation should adopt a more bottom up approach and suggested that a future Panel meeting could look at the villages and towns in this area, see what facilities they had at present and what they might need in the future. Melanie Jones said that the parishes had been asked for their comments during the consultation process but the Chairman thought it would be useful to have this discussion in an open forum and suggested that parishes be invited to the next meeting to present their views.

EP6

STANSTED AIRPORT UPDATE

Melanie Jones updated the Panel on Stansted Airport issues. The Public Inquiry into the expansion of the airport beyond 25mppa was now sitting. The Council had presented some of its case and would conclude this next week. BAA would then present its case.

The Council had been consulted on surface access arrangements for the Generation 2 application. The Council had sent its views, which had supported the concerns expressed by the East of England Regional Assembly and Essex County Council Highways about the capacity of the M11 junction and the lack of clarity on the provision of the rail service. All comments were prefaced with the statement that the Council was opposed to any second runway at Stansted Airport. The G2 application was expected later this year.

LOCALLY DETERMINED BUDGET

Davina Millership, the West Area Highways Manager, outlined the progress of highways projects in the Panel area. She explained the functions of the Area Office and the various budgets that were available to fund schemes in the district.

She explained that the Locally Determined Budget (LDB) was allocated to each district and from within those funds, the district could determine its priorities for schemes. She circulated the programme for 2007/08 which showed the progress of the schemes allocated for the current year. This was a working document which would be updated monthly and could be accessed by district Councillors by an extranet provided by the County. The Chairman said that it would be helpful if the description of the schemes was more detailed. He also asked whether the town and parish councils could have access to this new site. The LDB between 2005 and 2009 had been agreed by the last meeting of the Environment Committee. However, there had been some concern about the prioritisation criteria and Members had sought an explanation of this.

The Panel then asked questions about various highway issues and Davina Millership agreed to investigate these and report back to the Member concerned.

Councillor Bellingham-Smith asked about the progress for a scheme at Station Road, Felsted. Councillor Sherer was concerned at the location of the bus stop that was directly opposite the new entrance to Oakwood Park. Councillor Barker questioned whether the footways at Barnston needed to be renewed as they had only been improved relatively recently. She also said that the surface dressing planned for High Roding, Proverbs Green, Rand Road to Bishops Road would not be sufficient to deal with the current state of the road. Mrs Hawkins from White Roding Parish Council was disappointed that there was no visit planned to the parish for 18 months.

A number of Members raised concerns about the road junction at Hoblongs, Great Dunmow. With the proposed civic amenity site, a new police station and the Travelodge all planned for the site, the junction was becoming particularly busy and dangerous. Councillor Smith said that it was a condition of the Section 106 Agreement that these new developments should not be opened until the junction work had been completed. Councillor Gayler said that he would have expected the County Council to liaise with the Highways Authority and come up with a suitable scheme during negotiations for the planning applications for the police station and civic amenity site. Davina Millership said that she would look at the 106 agreements at this site.

A number of Members and the parish council representatives said that they were frustrated at the difficulty of getting replies from the Highway Office. They were informed that there were staffing issues at the Area Offices and there were only two engineers to deal with all the visits and the correspondence.

Mr Davies from Great Dunmow Town Council asked about the progress in putting in a speed limit on the stretch of road between Dunmow and Leaden

Roding. He was advised that if this site had been identified as an accident site a scheme should come forward to the Area Office with the necessary funds and it would not need to be pursued through the Local Development budget.

The Panel asked if it could be provided with a list of all the requests for Highway schemes received by the Area Highway Office. Davina Millership said that this could be provided although the schemes would not have been assessed or prioritised.

EP8

COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS

The Panel was given details of applications received from organisations requesting grant funding from the Community Project Grants. The total budget for the Community Grants Scheme had now increased to £70,000; £12,000 to support Uttlesford Community Travel, £4,000 for district wide promotions leaving £18,000 per area to award to local projects.

The amount of money requested by this panel for projects was £15,868.81. This gave a surplus of £2,131.19 and it was suggested that parish councils who had not applied for funding be contacted to apply for a reduced grant, allocated within a defined time frame, and a further report be brought to the next meeting. There was concern that some organisations might have received funding from another body and officers would remind them that this should be declared.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The grant allocations as set out in the appendix to the report be agreed.
- 2 The parish councils who hitherto had not applied for funding be contacted inviting them to apply for a reduced grant allocation for the surplus of £2,131.19 within a defined time frame and a further report be brought to the next Panel meeting.

EP9

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN

Alaine Clarke, Head of Partnerships and Performance, gave details of the Council's Corporate Planning framework. After the change in political leadership, a workshop had been held in May between senior officers and Members to discuss the Council's goals and priorities for inclusion in the Council's Corporate Plan. Four new priorities had been set. The Council was now consulting on these priorities. This would include the Area Panels, an article in Uttlesford Life, all parish councils, the Local Strategic Partnership and local businesses. There was a very tight timescale for receiving comments, but it was hoped that initial views would be taken to the Operations Committee on 28 June 2007. It was planned to produce the Corporate Plan in August which would set out a clear statement of the goals and priorities for the year ahead. This would be followed by more detailed divisional plans.

Alaine Clarke circulated a form and asked the Panel members and those attending the meeting to submit any comments they might have.

EP10

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Panel was advised of related community development activities and schemes which officers had been involved with since the previous Panel meeting.

Councillor Barker said that next week would be Young Carers Week and as part of this young carers should be given access to the Council's leisure facilities free of charge. She asked officers if they were aware of this initiative. Gaynor Bradley said that the Leisure Centre already operated a scheme whereby carers could use the facilities for free. She would ask the Leisure Centre to provide numbers of the take up of this scheme including the numbers of young people.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm.