

EAST AREA PANEL held at GREAT DUNMOW DAY CENTRE GREAT DUNMOW at 7.00 pm on 24 JULY 2007

Present:- Councillor M A Gayler – Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, E Bellingham-Smith, C A Cant, R Clover, C Down, M L Foley, E Gower, E W Hicks, R Sherer, C Smith and A M Wattebot.

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, M Cox, S Clarke, S Hayden, R Harborough, M Jones and S Nicholas.

Parish Council representatives:- Philip Leeder and Peter King – Thaxted; Linda White – Great Canfield, High Roding, Stebbing; Sue Hawkins – High Easter, White Roding; Gwyn Davies – Great Dunmow.

EP11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Miller.

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

EP12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2007 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EP13 HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Gaynor Bradley reported a reply from the Interim Area Highway Manager on the various highway issues that had been raised at the last meeting.

Members were still unclear about when work was likely to start on the road junction at Hoblongs, Great Dunmow and how this would be funded. Councillor Barker said that it was unacceptable that the extension to the 30 mph speed limit at Leaden Roding was not to be put in place at the moment. She said this was to accommodate the new affordable housing and the speed limit should be put in place before this was completed. Councillor Sherer said that the letter had not addressed his concerns about the location of the bus stop directly opposite the new entrance to Oakwood Park. Officers would raise this with the West Area Highway Office.

A number of Members commented on problems in obtaining replies from the Area Highway Office and apparent delays in implementing the road safety programme. It was reported that a new Area Highway Manager had been appointed and it was suggested that he be invited to attend the next meeting of the Panel.

EP14

BELL ROPE MEADOW THAXTED

The Panel received a report from Phil Hunt, the Council's Engineer on concerns from residents and the Parish Council over the disposal of surface and foul drainage from the Bell Rope Meadow development. The report gave details of the provisions for the surface water and for the foul drainage. Both aspects were covered by planning permissions requiring the measures to be approved before development commenced.

Residents were concerned that the system did not have enough capacity to cope with the additional demand in Thaxted as there were already incidences of discharging and flooding from the sewers in the village. The Engineer had been advised that the causes of these events had since been identified and dealt with. Anglian Water said it was unaware of any ongoing problems, but if it could be provided with precise details of the concerns, the local manager would investigate these as a matter of urgency.

Members of Thaxted Parish Council expressed concern that inadequate pipes were being used in the new development and this was likely to lead to overflowing during storm conditions. They said that Thaxted would like to accommodate additional houses, but was unwilling to do so until the drainage problems had been sorted out. The Parish Council did not consider that it had the technical expertise to prepare a report, but it did have historical information that could support the document.

RESOLVED that the District Council prepare, with the assistance of Thaxted Parish Council, a full and comprehensive report on the drainage system at Thaxted to be forwarded to Anglian Water for urgent consideration.

EP15

PLAY STRATEGY

Gaynor Bradley, the Council's Leisure and Community Development Manager gave details of the proposed play strategy for the District Council for 2007-2011. Officers had looked at current provision of services and facilities in the district and after wide consultation there was now a clear picture of the areas in the district that were lacking facilities. From the consultation findings, an action plan had been prepared. Specific projects for funding had been identified and in the East Panel area it was proposed to request funding for children's play equipment at Felsted.

A resident from Dunmow asked whether the facilities audit had included the Woodlands Park estate in Great Dunmow. She was advised that the provision of play facilities at this site was provided for under the Section 106 agreement attached to the development and was outside the scope of this particular bid. The members for Felsted said that there were similar problems at Oakwood Park where there were currently no play facilities for children.

The draft strategy was available on the internet together with further details of the proposed projects.

RESOLVED that Members endorse the strategy and forward to the Community Committee.

EP16 YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

Michelle Mooney from the Youth Forum attended the Panel meeting and explained how young people had been involved in community project in Stansted.

Councillor Foley congratulated her on the success of the project and said that he worked with young people in Thaxted and had found that access to transport was a big issue. He said that he had organised subsidised transport to various centres and suggested that there might be opportunities to link up with the Stansted Youth Group.

EP17 WEST ESSEX PRIMARY CARE TRUST – HEALTH STRATEGY

Toni Coles, Locality Director for Uttlesford, gave a presentation outlining the West Essex Primary Care Trust's plans for health care provision in West Essex. The Trust was now looking at the current service provision in the district and considering the best way to move forward.

The Panel made a number of comments and cited examples where there had been problems with health provision in the district. There was particular concern at the provision of GP surgeries in the Dunmow area, particularly with the increased number of houses being built. There also appeared to be a need to expand the provision of intermediate care to avoid unnecessary hospital admittance. It was also noted that the provision of NHS dentists was particularly poor in Uttlesford and it was hoped that further investment would be made in this area.

Councillor Cant said that treating patients in their own homes would have implications for social services and she questioned whether it would have the resources to deal with this. She also mentioned that the PCT now covered Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford and she hoped that Uttlesford would receive a reasonable share of funding.

EP18 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY – TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL'S VIEWS

Melanie Jones, Principal Planning Officer, updated the Panel on progress in preparing the core strategy. The Panel was reminded that the District would need to accommodate about 4,000 additional new homes. A number of options for the allocation of the new homes would be presented to the Environment Committee in September where the Committee would decide on the preferred option.

The Chairman questioned whether the Council held sufficient information about community needs in relation to affordable housing, open spaces community facilities etc to enable a decision to be made on future provision of

housing. He was advised that a number of surveys had been undertaken on employment land, open spaces and some information was available on the need for affordable housing. Roger Harborough, the Head of Housing and Planning Policy considered that the Council had enough information to support strategic decisions and to suggest initial policies.

The Chairman then asked representatives from each of the wards to comment on the existing community needs and the capacity for further housing development in their areas.

Barnston and High Easter

Barnston — there was concern at the recent increase of traffic through the village as a result of the new A120. The village was very much a satellite of Dunmow, but there was concern that the green swathe between the village and Dunmow should be maintained.

High Easter – the village was currently investing in better play facilities, there had been a small development of affordable housing, but no further land had been identified. The village was very rural in nature and there was generally a negative attitude towards additional housing.

The Rodings

High Roding – the recent suggestion for affordable housing on the garage site in the village had been strongly apposed as the site was needed for essential car parking. However, the village was not against affordable housing on a different site. The village was linear in nature and the Parish Council did not want to encourage infilling as this would change the character of the village.

White Roding – the residents were positive towards affordable housing, but no site had yet been identified.

Aythorpe Roding – there was an identified need for housing in the village if there was land available. However, the school was at capacity and this would need to be addressed if additional houses were to be built.

Leaden Roding – the elderly persons sheltered housing was now empty and funding was required to develop the site.

Great Dunmow

Dunmow Design Group - There was concern at the quality of the new development and the impact on people's amenity. Residents were not negative about additional homes but wanted them to be properly managed and planned so that the physical and social character of the town could be maintained. Insufficient work had been done to determine the capacity for further development. A number of issues to be considered including flooding potential, landscape and land form, economic issues including employment and retail and commercial development if the town continued to grow. The Woodlands Park development had been a failure and was an example of how not to develop the town.

Town Council – the Woodlands Park site had been slow to develop and had not integrated within the town. Many residents commuted outside the area and there were only a few open spaces and no plans for a shop or surgery. This was producing a strain on the existing infrastructure. Any future development would require a comprehensive master plan. Old business premises now allocated for housing. Nowhere for local people to work, affordable business premises required.

Thaxted

Two important local businesses were being forced to move out of the village because there was no room for expansion. Other business sites had been lost to housing. The Parish would welcome more development, particularly of small houses provided the sewage and drainage could be sorted out. There was concern about jobs in the village, no land for light industrial sites. 40% of people work outside Thaxted. Housing development was required to enable local businesses to be supported. The development of tourism was very important to the village. New settlements, if on the edge of the village, should be properly integrated. Additional leisure facilities were required. Existing industrial sites should not be allocated for housing.

Felsted – Little Dunmow

Concern at the spread of Oakwood Park and the lack of facilities within the new development.

Great and Little Easton, Tilty, Broxted and Duton Hill

The area was particularly affected by the airport. All villages had play areas, no shops but the pubs were well supported.

Little Easton - fearful of Woodlands Park expanding nearer to the village, wants to preserve its own character. Easton Lodge once proposed as a new town, this still of concern.

Great Easton had taken a few additional houses but no more space had been identified.

Duton Hill was experiencing demographic changes as a number of properties were being bought by BAA and let to young families and this was changing the needs of the community.

Stebbing and Lindsell

Stebbing was a rural village with a large conservation area. Recently proposals for housing development in the centre of the village had been approved on appeal which had led to local concern about future developments. The option of three thousand houses on the Andrew's airfield site was totally opposed by the village. The village could probably absorb a small development of 15 houses and needed new affordable homes. The Council's owned one bed bungalows were difficult to let and these could be demolished and replaced with two bedroom houses.

Lindsell – the village was very rural and could probably take two to three affordable houses. Lack of public transport in the area.

The Chairman then put forward the following recommendation which was duly seconded.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 Officers compile a parish by parish summary of comments made at the meeting to forward to September's Environment Committee.
- 2 More work be undertaken to ascertain the capacity of different settlements to take further development, and the infrastructure required. Information from additional studies being undertaken should be made available to the local community as part of a further stage of consultation before the Council takes a decision on its preferred option.
- 3 More work be undertaken to identify the needs of each community for affordable housing.
- 4 Development should to be allied to the availability of employment land and the plan should require developers to provide employment opportunities adjacent to their housing developments.

EP19

STANSTED AIRPORT UPDATE

The Panel was informed that SSE was completing its evidence and the Inquiry was still on schedule. After the summer recess, the Inquiry would hear evidence on surface access and it was likely that the programme would slip as BAA had yet to release additional material on this matter.

There would be a report to the Development Control Committee on the obligations and conditions proposed by BAA during the Inquiry. The Committee would be asked to consider if it would have made a different decision if the proposals had been on the table at the meeting in November when it had decided to refuse the application.

EP20

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Panel received a report which outlined related community development activities and schemes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) Community Projects Grants

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a decision was needed before the next Panel meeting.

The Panel considered a request by Broxton Parish Council for a grant towards trolleys to store tables and chairs in the village hall. This would be funded by the remaining balance on the 2007/08 budget with the remaining surplus to go forward to the 2008/09 East Area Panel Budget.

RESOLVED that Broxton Parish Council be awarded a Community Project Grant of £174.74.

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm.