

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 26 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Present: - Councillor A R Thawley – Chairman
Councillors E C Abrahams, K R Artus, C A Cant, J F Cheetham,
A Dean, C M Dean, C D Down, S Flack, B M Hughes, A M
Wattebot and A C Yarwood.

Also present:- Councillors M A Gayler and A J Ketteridge.

Officers in attendance:- W Cockerell, V Harvey, C Humphries, R Millership,
J Mitchell, R Pridham and L Scott.

E11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E J Godwin and E
Tealby-Watson.

Councillor Flack declared a personal interest as a Member of Essex County
Council in relation to agenda item 8.

Councillor C Dean declared a personal interest as a Member of Stansted
Parish Council, in relation to agenda item 5.

Councillor Ketteridge declared a personal interest as a Member of Saffron
Walden Town Council.

E12 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2006 were agreed and signed by
the Chairman subject to the omission of “on the understanding that it did not
alter the application of the policy” under E3 Matters Arising (ii) E32- (i) Policy
Fro Wheelie Bins, as this was not said.

E13 MATTERS ARISING

(i) E9 – Economic Development

The Economic Development Manager post had been advertised and
the closing date was imminent. Interviews were due to take place within
the next two or three weeks.

E14 **GOLD ENTERPRISE ZONE, ELSENHAM**

A report had been prepared by the Executive Manager (Housing Services) to advise the Committee of the current situation regarding lettings and empty units at the Gold Enterprise Zone, up to 31 August 2006.

Some Members were concerned that some tenants may walk away from their lease having stayed six months rent free. Councillor A Dean proposed that if tenants left after one year they should be made to pay back the first six months rent, and that this was included in the lease to indicate so.

It was felt that this recommendation was not strong enough and

RESOLVED that

1. Members note the current situation.
2. Members agree to the request from Sunrise Organics to break with the lease for unit 4 on the condition that they pay back the 6 months rent relating to the rent free period plus 3 months rent.

E15 **PARKING CHARGES REVIEW**

The Parking Enforcement Manager presented reports and minutes from the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement Working Group, held on 7 August 2006 and asked Members to endorse the recommendation.

Councillor Flack suggested the reports needed to provide a history of previous charges. She also questioned the number and type of ticket machines and asked why machines with a change facility were not being introduced. The Parking Enforcement Manager said that machines with a change facility were undesirable because they needed to be inspected regularly to ensure enough change was available and were very susceptible to robbery.

Councillor C Dean said that the charges did not have to be raised every two years as they were reviewed. She proposed that charges were not raised.

Councillor A Dean said the report was not substantial enough and said it was not possible to make a rational decision with the information at hand. He proposed this report be referred back to staff for further clarification.

Councillor Cheetham agreed that the report was unsatisfactory, and that prices should not go up. She said the vitality and viability of the town centres depended on attracting custom from Bishop's Stortford and other larger settlements, and the cost and availability of car parking was a key element in

Uttlesford town centres' attractiveness to shoppers and that charging policy could be delegated to the area panels. The Executive Manager (Development Services) said that area panels would not review parking charges, as these need to be set consistently and in line with strategy.

Councillor Ketteridge said the half hour car parking proposed for Stansted and Great Dunmow should be extended to Saffron Walden so as to be consistent over the whole district. He also drew attention to the poor signage for on street parking.

Members also sought clarification over the pig market spaces. Clarity was also sought over the role and terms of reference of the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement Working Group. The report should include a history of parking charging, include a comprehensive strategy and make reference to the background to all the issues set out in the recommendation.

RESOLVED that the item be referred back to officers for a more comprehensive report and returned to this Committee prior to further consultation.

The Executive Manager (Development Services) asked Members to email himself or the Parking Enforcement Officer with any further comments.

E16 ESTABLISHMENT OF A WEST ANGLIA ROUTES GROUP

A report had been prepared by the Planning Policy / DC Liaison Officer about the proposal by North London Strategic Alliance (NLSA) to establish a West Anglia rail corridor to enhance capacity, improve reliability and promote growth. This Council was invited to Associate Membership of the Group, incurring an estimated fee of £1,250 per annum.

Members viewed that in principle this was a good group to join as long as work was undertaken.

RESOLVED that Members agreed to the principle of the Council becoming an Associate Member of the West Anglia Routes Group for an initial period of one year with one Member and one Officer.

E17 UTTLESFORD TRANSPORT FORUM

Members noted the minutes from the Uttlesford Transport Forum held on 26 July 2006.

E18

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION STREET LIGHTLING POLICY AND PRACTICE

A report was presented on the views taken by Members of Area Panels in relation to the decision taken by the Essex County Council Cabinet Member of Highways and Transportation – Councillor Rodney Bass – with regard to the proposal to switch off street lighting in parts of the District.

Councillors Gayler and Thawley had met with Essex County Council and had brought away maps of areas within Uttlesford showing the proposed lights which would be switched off. These lights would be switched off between the hours of midnight and 5am in winter and 1am and 6am in summer. The street lights were light sensitive and would not light up if it was already daylight.

Members looked at some of the maps and viewed that in more rural villages switching street lights off would be beneficial, but in more urban areas street lighting also acted as a safety measure.

Councillor Cheetham suggested that Parish Councils and Area Panels be consulted before any street lights were switched off.

Councillor Yarwood said the map of Newport proposed to turn off lights in areas of sheltered accommodation, and suggested this be checked against Health & Safety legislation. He also found a discrepancy between the lights that belonged to the County Council and the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the Council respond to the formal request accepting the criteria as a starting point, but that Essex County Council carry out a consultation with Town and Parish Councils, and Area Panels.

E19

DOG CONTROL ORDERS

A report was prepared asking Members for their views on introducing Dog Control Orders to replace the existing Byelaws which were scheduled to be repealed, and made a number of suggestions.

The existing byelaws would be automatically repealed in the near future and there would be an opportunity to replace them with Dog Control Orders and to expand the range of applicable measures.

There were however, parcels of land directly under the Council's control, for example Radwinter Road Cemetery, Jubilee Gardens, Walden Place Gardens Bridge End Gardens and Dorest House Garden where dogs could be required to be on a lead or excluded entirely.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said if Dog Control Orders were made then fixed penalties notices could be issued and could be enforced by Police Community Support Officers.

Members thought that Town and Parish Councils needed to be consulted, as should the land owners. Councillor Gayler expressed a view that Uttlesford District Council should take the lead on recommending the extent and range of Dog Control Orders on all the land it owns, not just that land mentioned in the report.

RESOLVED that the Committee instructs Officers to start the consultation process to introduce a range of Dog Control Orders, in consultation and co-ordination with Town and Parish Councils, across the whole district.

E20 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR REFUSE

Three options were available to achieve waste collections over the holiday period. This would be the first year of collections on the new scheme. Officers recommended Option 2 as set out in the report which minimised disruption to householders. The 'wet' kitchen waste bin had the greatest unused capacity and should not cause too much concern during the cold weather if left for two weeks. This would cause least disruption to householders' collection day and Saturday working would be avoided for all but one week.

Members were happy with the proposed option and asked that communication to the community be plentiful and well in advance.

RESOLVED that Members endorse option 2 to achieve waste collection over the holiday period.

E21 FUEL PUMPS AT DEPOT

A report had been prepared advising Members of the need to replace the fuel pumps at the Shire Hill Saffron Walden and Dunmow Depots. Currently vehicles would fill up at the end of each day and would need a supervisor to dispense the fuel. The new system would allow drivers to fill up at any time without supervision.

Members were concerned that these pumps may be installed at Dunmow and then the depot would move. The Services Officer said that the pumps could be transferred to a new location.

RESOLVED that the Operations Committee is requested to support capital expenditure to replace fuel pumps and to install a fuel monitoring system at the Council's two depots and was asked to request that Full Council makes such provision in the Council's Capital Programme for the current financial year.

E22

RECYCLING IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE 2

A report had been prepared which summarised the Recycling Project and updated Members on its progress. The 3 bin system was due for completion by the end of October, and a 48% recycling rate was being worked towards. Appendix two of the report provided recycling figures across the whole of the district. Overall the total waste arising was decreasing.

Councillor A Dean asked if an agreement had been made with Essex County Council on the LATS figures. The Services Officer said that he was to attend a meeting with Essex County Council this week which would discuss the figures of waste to landfill and sustainability. If principles were agreed, this would provide a good basis for the figures.

The Chairman and Members congratulated Officers on the work undertaken by the roll out of the Waste Strategy and the recycling targets that had been met.

E23

AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION OF WASTE AND STREET SCENE

Members viewed the outcome of the Audit Commission inspection of waste and street scene. The inspection took place following the roll out of phase 1 of the recycling scheme, therefore the implementation of the three principal teams was undertaken. The possibility of a return visit was discussed and the National Audit Office wished to track the scheme's success and hoped to undertake a 'light touch' inspection. This would add a level of completeness to the inspection that measured performance as 'fair' in the old refuse/recycling arrangements.

Councillor Ketteridge made reference to the press release made by the Chief Executive on this item, stating he objected to it, as all comments relating to value for money were omitted. Councillor Thawley expressed his disagreement with these comments.

Councillor Cheetham concurred with the statement made by Councillor Ketteridge and suggested this item be passed on to the relevant scrutiny committee to monitor and review future work arising from the recommendations in the Inspection Report.

Councillor Gayler said the Audit Commission were identifying value for money as an issue in all Inspections in this and other authorities. The Council was already aware of its need to be able to demonstrate value for money - a medium term financial strategy was needed and was being prepared. He added that the Council needed to acknowledge it was heading in the right direction.

The Executive Manager (Development Services) reminded Members that local elections were due to be held next year and it would only be possible for the

'light touch' inspection to take place early next year or in the autumn. Members considered that later on in the year would be too much of a prolonged period.

RESOLVED that

1. Members note the report
2. Members invite the Audit Commission to return for a 'light touch' revisit early next year as the outcome of the recycling strategy becomes evident.
3. Progress with implementation of the Inspectors' recommendations be reviewed by the Performance Select Committee.

E24 **BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2006/07**

The Budgetary Control Report 2006/07 provided details of the Committee's spending and income compared to budget for period 1 April to 31 July 2006 and was based on data held within the Council's Financial Management Systems for the period ending 31 July 2006. The appendix attached to the report demonstrated that at this stage there was an overall overspend at month 4 compared to the profiled budget for the same period of 12% of the profiled budget. Although forward projections to the end of March 2007 showed the overall budget heading for a modest underspend, it was still too early in the financial year to draw firm conclusions.

Members were pleased with the report and it was

RESOLVED that the Committee note the budgetary position as at 31 July 2006.

E25 **GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2007/08**

The Executive Managers had prepared a report which provided the starting point for preparation of the Committee's 2007/08 General Fund Budget looking at new spending pressures against the background of the Council's likely overall financial position.

Members felt it was inappropriate to comment on car parking, due to the decision made on agenda item 5, but were satisfied with other items.

Councillor Flack asked for further information on the work undertaken by the Recycling Officer and team and suggested a case for these officers be presented.

Members confirmed all items to be used for a business case for further evaluation.

RESOLVED

1. That the ongoing and one-off spending pressures contained in Appendix 1 to the report be included in the draft budget be the subject of individual business cases in January 2007.
2. That assisted travel and waste management be the spending pressures which the Committee wished to be included in public consultation regarding the Council's budget.
3. That further research and appropriate consultation should be undertaken with regard to the possible development of the two budgets highlighted as having potential in this respect as indicated in paragraph 14 of the report.

E26 **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS**

A report had been prepared by the Principal Planning Officer which presented the Replacement Dwellings – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) with the changes proposed following consultation. Many of the changes had altered the word *should* to *must*.

Members had slight concern over the section titled “What Materials Should I use?” and felt that some brightly coloured materials were in keeping within some villages within the district, but these could be addressed on their individual merits. Overall the consensus of the Committee was satisfaction with the document.

RESOLVED that Members adopt the SPD to form part of Uttlesford Local Development Framework, as a supplement to the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in January 2005, subject to minor editorial changes.

E27 **A BUDGET FOR A SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL**

The Executive Manager (Development Services) had prepared a report which outlined one of the areas of Corporate Focus in the Council's Corporate Plan which was to a commitment to developing an action plan following signing of the Nottingham declaration. There was also a long standing policy to promote sustainable organisational practice, which the Council would focus on achieving.

The project team had identified that there was presently no budget for the promotion of carbon reduction and sustainable living. It was proposed to use Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) for the remainder of the financial year and to bid for a budget in the next year and beyond. Such budget could be self financing if savings accrued.

Members noted the report and it was

RESOLVED that a sum of £15,000 for the promotion of sustainable living and carbon reduction in the District be made available from the Planning Delivery Grant for the remainder of this financial year, that the Committee agree an appropriate annual budget after 2008/9 with the budget for 2007/8 coming from next year's PDG, as part of the budget setting for 2007/8 and beyond.

The meeting ended at 10.25pm.