

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 7 NOVEMBER 2006**

Present: - Councillor A R Thawley – Chairman.
Councillors E C Abrahams, K R Artus, A Dean, C M Dean,
C D Down, V Pedder, A M Wattebot and A C Yarwood.

Also present:- Councillors R F Freeman and J P Murphy.

Officers in attendance:- V Harvey, J Mitchell and L Scott.

E28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C A Cant,
J F Cheetham, E J Godwin, B Hughes, S Flack and E Tealby-Watson.

Personal non prejudicial declarations of interest were received from:
Councillors Artus, Down and Thawley as members of CPRE.

Councillor C Dean as a member of Stansted Parish Council in relation to
agenda item 5.

Councillor Yarwood as the Chairman of Newport Parish Council Planning
Committee in relation to agenda item 7.

Councillor Murphy as member of Dunmow Town Design Skate Group and
Dunmow Town Council. He had been given a dispensation by the Standards
Committee to speak and vote on issues of waste collection charges in respect
of town and parish councils and village halls.

E29 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2006 were agreed and
signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendment of part of the title in E18 to
read Lighting.

E30 MATTERS ARISING

(i) E13 (i) – Economic Development

The Economic Development Manager post had been offered and accepted,
but confirmation was still awaited. It was hoped the officer would start early in
the new year.

(ii) E17 – Uttlesford Transport Forum

There were no minutes from the Uttlesford Transport Forum. Councillor C
Dean said she was to attend the next forum meeting.

(iii) E18 – Highways and Transportation Street Lighting Policy and Practice

The Executive Manager (Development Services) had received an email from Essex County Council in relation to this item which he would forward to Members. At the last parish liaison meeting with Essex County Council it was noted that they had put these plans onto their website and would keep Uttlesford District Council informed. Alex Stewart would collate all objections and forward them to Essex County Council. A representative from Highways was due to attend the next Scrutiny Committee and Area Panel meetings.

(iv) E19 – Dog Control Orders

These were in hand and were slowly being rolled out.

(v) E20 – Christmas and New Year Refuse

Some publicity about the collection would go in the next edition of Uttlesford Life, due out at the end of November, with some re-wording to enhance clarity. This would also be advertised on parish boards and Members hoped it would also make a feature in parish magazines.

(vi) E22 – Recycling Implementation Update 2

Since the roll out of the recycling implementation a number of churches, village halls, fire stations and day centres within the district were being charged for the collection. Members urged that the policy was applied consistently across the district and suggested that Officers maintain the status quo and this matter would be raised with the Executive Manager (Environment and Cultural Services).

E31 SAFFRON WALDEN HIGH STREET BUS SURVEY

Paul Garland from LA21 presented the Committee with a report detailing the findings from the bus survey undertaken in Saffron Walden. This was reliable data from LA21 on sustainability and was carried out on a market day from 6am to 9.30pm

The report outlined 10 recommendations. The first six were how to improve the current service and the last four suggestions were for implementation of new services. The recommendations were outlined on page two of the report and Paul Garland made the following supplementary comments to each:

- 1 Catherine Gaywood from Essex County Council would harmonise the display of Council name and Traveline designation. SMS code was used by Traveline to send text message alerts to mobile phones detailing bus times. If the codes were not present on the timetables this system would not work.

- 2 At the last Transport Forum, Essex County Council agreed that all existing bus stops would be equipped with Timetable boards. Members thought that every household in the District should be provided with a bus timetable.
- 3 At present most villages had a bus shelter with seating, the recommendation was to have this available at all stops.
- 4 Presently not all buses displayed information on route to a destination.
- 5 Not all buses provided reliable timetable information inside the buses.
- 6 The 301 bus running from Audley End to Saffron Walden, arrived 20 minutes before the train in the morning and 20 minutes after the train in the evening.
- 7 Currently the bus only went around the central core of the town. The recommendation of two buses, one serving the north of town and other doing south, should be harmonised with train times.
- 8 A comprehensive bus information board would draw peoples attention to taking the bus.
- 9 Shelters were inadequate, especially for the elderly.
- 10 Many people regarded bus travel as a second class form of transport and this perception needed to be changed.

Councillor A Dean said that unless the social perception changed, then not many people would use buses. There was a need to persuade people not to use cars; this survey was a good start but the public needed more persuasion. Paul Garland gave the example of the Park and Ride systems in cities and how well they were received and used.

Councillor Wattebot said bus services needed to be more reliable. Councillor C Dean added that there were a variety of bus operators in the district and these offered no cross ticketing between services and proposed this be endorsed by the Committee.

Councillor Murphy said the buses were paid for by Essex County Council and it actually cost money to process the payments. He suggested that if the bus service was free the County Council would be at no financial loss. Paul Garland agreed that marketing and flexibility of ticketing was an area needing investigation. He also pointed out that Jeremy Pine had written to the Department of Transport and had pointed out that LA21 were in agreement that legislation needed to be reviewed.

RESOLVED that the Committee

- 1 Endorses cross ticketing and flexibility between bus operators.

- 2 Writes to Essex County Council endorsing this report asking for further monitoring and a response.
- 3 Asks Officers to draw together any communication problems.
- 4 Obtains Terms of Reference from the Transport Forum.

E32 **CAR PARKING**

A report had been prepared by the Parking Enforcement Manager and the Executive Programme Manager detailing the findings of Officers and the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement (DPE) Task Group into Parking Charges, Options for Car Park Payments Methods and a Parking Review.

Members were pleased with the report and thanked officers for their work.

Councillor Freeman, the Chairman of the DPE Task Group gave a presentation to Members outlining the group's findings. He started by saying that this was an opportunity to modernise the current systems and install cashless machines. From the consultation, it was evident that respondents did not want to see any increase in charges.

Of the possible parking charges recommendations, an increase in charges of 10 pence for on and off street parking would raise £80,000. This, however, would need the agreement of Essex County Council. There was also the option to increase season ticket costs and install a half hour parking tariff in Stansted.

The possible payment options were to continue with the current pay and display machines and upgrade those in need, establish a pay on foot method or a pay on exit, the latter two would need a barrier to be fitted and new machinery. The cost of one machine was approximately £45,000 to £50,000. The downside to this method was the secure housing of the machines and an attendant would also need to be on duty near the car parks in the event of machine or barrier faults. Smart cards were another option, as this would not require the user to need change.

Councillor C Dean proposed that this was not the right time to increase charges and that the charge to park for half an hour in Stansted be 20 pence.

Councillor Down suggested that half hour parking should be made more available within the District and proposed this be implemented in Great Dunmow. Councillor Murphy continued to suggest that a 2 hour tariff be implemented in Great Dunmow and that short stay car parking be kept readily available as many workers to the town would park all day in the car parks for a minimal fee. He also suggested that instead of Smart cards, payment by mobile phone should be investigated further.

Councillor Artus proposed there be no charge to park at the London Road offices in Saffron Walden as the cost of maintaining the machines was more than the revenue collected. He further suggested a formula for increasing charges be devised so this Committee would not need to continue to review this item.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

(Parking Charges)

- 1 Ask DPE Task Group to come up with more suggestions for machines and provide proper costings before tariffs are to be further looked at.
- 2 Introduce a ½ hour 20p tariff to Stansted Mountfitchet and Great Dunmow car parks only, and that the rest of the district be looked at for a ½ hour tariff at the next review.
- 3 Ask the DPE Task Group to look at a 2 hour tariff in Great Dunmow.
- 4 Along with the DPE Task Group think about the wider issue of sustainability and that the DPE Task Group be reinstated to look at parking and bus transportation and co-ordination.
- 5 No charge be made to park at the London Road offices on a Saturday
- 6 A formula be devised to calculate the cost of increasing charges.

(Options for Car Park Payment Methods)

- 1 No changes are made to the payment methods in any of the Council's car parks.
- 2 A three year rolling replacement programme of new Pay and Display machines with solar power be implemented
- 3 Operations Committee be asked to make provision in the Capital Programme of an additional £12,075 in 2006/7; £75,000 in 2007/08 and £33,125 in 2008/09 to cover the cost of the Pay and Display machine replacement programme which would include smart card and SMS technology.

(Parking Review):

- 1 Noted the policy decisions that had been made to date with regard to Parking Services for Uttlesford set out in Appendix C1 of the report
- 2 Confirmed the amendment to Policy 3.1 -“Criteria for considering Introduction of a Resident Parking Scheme (RPS)” whereby references to the Environment Committee are replaced with “the appropriate Area Panel”, and insertion of the caveat “subject to any decision that would have financial implications beyond the prescribed budget being referred to the Environment Committee.”
- 3 Noted the areas within the original scope of the review that would be reported on separately / as necessary as set out in Appendix C2 of the report.

- 4 Confirm the following policies, as detailed in Appendix C3 –
- 2.6 Continuation of Pay & Display
 - *No changes were made to the payment methods in any of the Council's car parks.*
 - *A 3-year rolling replacement programme of new Pay and Display machines with solar power be implemented.*
 - *Operations Committee be asked to make provision in the Capital Programme 2007/08 and 2008/09 for £30,000 p.a. to cover the cost of the Pay & Display machine replacement programme.*
 - *Officers further investigate the provision of mobile phone parking and other payment methods and report back to this committee on the practical and financial implications.*
 - 2.9 Station Car Parks
 - *Officers to liaise with relevant contacts as appropriate and necessary*
 - 2.10 Agreements with Waitrose, Boots, the Co-op and Stansted Parish Council for Car Parking services
 - *Officers to ensure that UDC met its obligations as set out in the Agreements with relevant parties.*
 - *Officers to ensure relevant parties are consulted as set out in Parking Policy 4 –Consultation*
 - 3.2 Fly Parking in the District
 - *Officers to work in conjunction with ECC and the relevant Parish Council to consider what schemes could be introduced to address the fly-parking problem. If appropriate, consultation to be carried out and, if required, the preferred scheme to be introduced for an 18 month trial period*
 - 3.6 Fees and Charges for On-Street Parking
 - *Every other year On-Street Parking Charges to be reviewed and consideration given to appropriate changes and to consider using income to promote bus use*
 - 6.3 Staffing Levels
 - *To ensure staffing levels were maintained at an optimum level, Officers to recruit in a timely and efficient manner*
 - 8.1 Land Purchase for Future Off-Street Car Park Provision
 - *Parking and Development Services officers to consider opportunities for land purchase /Section 106 agreements for the provision of Off-Street Car Parks as opportunities arise*
 - 8.4 M11 Expansion
 - *Officers of Development Services to consider whether there is adequate parking provision when plans for major developments were being looked at*
 - 8.5 Introduction of Park and Ride

- *Where an opportunity is identified to introduce a Park & Ride Scheme(s) officers present details to the relevant Area Panel and the Environment Committee for consideration*

8.6 Environmental Implications

- *Any new provision of parking facilities to undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment*

E33 **GOLDS ENTERPRISE ZONE**

Members noted the current position regarding lettings and empty units at Gold Enterprise Zone, up to 31 October 2006.

E34 **URBAN PLACE SUPPLEMENT**

The Committee considered a report advising members that the Urban Place Settlement was now out on consultation and sought their views.

The Executive Manager (Development Services) handed Members a copy of the public consultation document which outlined what was hoped to be achieved and how it was to be worked towards. It also showed designs of properties housing underground parking, sustainability and aesthetic character. Overall he said it was a good document for consultation.

Councillor Murphy also thought this was also a good document. However, he held concerns that a property developer could view the document as an understanding to create high density developments in market town centres. He thought initially there was no intention for this to apply to Uttlesford. However, he discovered that the author lived in Dunmow and she had indicated that this document would help prevent the poor appearance of new developments such as Woodlands Park. Councillor Murphy agreed there was a need to avoid unpleasant looking developments. What was relevant to market towns would have to be clearly pointed out and a separate version created solely for market towns. He said that English Heritage should be consulted on the appearance of new properties.

Members considered that underground parking and waste storage was excellent and the current building diversity should be maintained.

RESOLVED that Essex County Council be advised that the document be amended to make specific reference to its application in small rural towns and that the urban place supplement is supported for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document – subject to approval of any changes following consultation.

E35 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FRAMEWORK

A report to the Committee outlined that the First Revision to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) was brought into effect in July of this year. In order to ensure that the Core Strategy met the tests of soundness, additional work would be needed which would hold implications for the timetable and a revised LDS had been prepared. A revised timetable would also allow for the next stage of the evolving East of England Plan to be considered.

The Executive Manager (Development Services) said despite the timetable now being less hurried the Council's planning policies were still very robust.

Members endorsed the report and it was

RESOLVED that the Committee approve the revised LDS for submission to the Secretary of State.

E36 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FIELD OFFICER POST

A report was presented to the Committee explaining that the Rural Community Council of Essex was requesting that Uttlesford District Council fund 45% of the costs, which amounted to £16,074, pro-rata for 2007/08, for the Uttlesford Field Officer. The Executive Manager (Development Services) explained that so far four other councils had adopted this post.

The Field Officer for Uttlesford would provide support for local groups, including councils, at every stage of the community planning process. Should the Committee decide not to fund the post then it was likely that RCCE would no longer be able to fund a field officer for Uttlesford, full funding would mean the service would continue as at present.

Members considered that this post was fundamental to supporting local groups and should focus on encouraging sustainability.

RESOLVED that pro rata financial provision for the RCCE Field Officer for Uttlesford be made for 2007/8 from the Planning Delivery Grant.

E37 ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Councillor Thawley thanked the waste and recycling team for their work over the previous months as now the roll out was coming to an end. He would write to each member of the team on behalf of the Committee thanking them for their hard work.

The meeting ended at 10.10 pm.