

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 23 JANUARY 2006**

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

Officers in attendance:- J Bosworth, D Burrige, W Cockerell, V Harvey, J
Mitchell, P O'Dell, M Perry, R Pridham and L Scott.

Also present:- Councillor F R Freeman

E38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K R Artus, E Tealby-
Watson and A C Yarwood.

Members sent their congratulations to Councillor Tealby-Watson on the birth
of her baby daughter.

Councillors Abrahams, Cant, C M Dean, Hughes, Pedder, Thawley and
Wattebot declared prejudicial interests as members who sat on the
management board of community halls committees and therefore would be
unable to make a decision relating to village halls in the Capital Budget.

Councillors Cheetham and Down declared prejudicial interests as residents of
the district who have their septic tanks emptied by the council.

Councillor Flack declared a non prejudicial interest as a Councillor for Essex
County Council.

Councillor Cant declared a non prejudicial interest as Uttlesford District
Councils representative on Dunmow Day Centre.

Councillor C Dean declared a non prejudicial interest as a representative of
Stansted Day Centre and Stansted Free Church.

RESOLVED to defer discussion on agenda item 12 to an adjourned
meeting prior to the next full Council meeting on 15th February after
special dispensation had been sought from the Standards Committee

E39 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2006 were agreed and signed by the Chairman, subject to the deletion of Great Dunmow in minute E32 – Car Parking, part 2 (parking charges).

E40 **MATTERS ARISING**

(i) **E20 – Christmas and New Year Refuse**

The edition of Uttlesford Life sent out prior to Christmas issued residents with a waste collection calendar for the next six months. However Members felt the writing was too small and the Director of Operations agreed this would be reviewed at the next Waste Project Meeting.

(ii) **Highways and Transportation Street Lighting Policy and Practice**

A response had been received from Essex County Council which indicated there was no decision that Uttlesford District Council could challenge.

E41 **CAR PARK MACHINES AND PAYMENT METHODS**

The Civil Enforcement Manager presented the Committee with a report detailing the recommendation from the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement Task Group.

Twenty Eight new parking machines were sought for implementation in the districts car parks. 16 would be converted to allow Smart Cards usage as well as coins. The machines would be brought in two phases, starting in April of this year with full installation by the end of April next year. The cost of a coin only machine was £2,500 and the cost of Smart Card machines was £3,500. However each machine would be fitted with GPIS, so that an update of how much money stored in each machine could be recorded. This held an additional cost of £9 per month per machine.

Smart Cards would be issued by the Council upon application and could be topped up using a phone or the internet. These could be used in any of the districts car parks, but not anywhere else.

Members felt that housing two machines in smaller car parks was unnecessary and proposed to reduce the number in the White Street and Angel Lane/Chequers Lane car parks in Great Dunmow.

Members debated if the proposed number of machines at Fairycroft car park was too many. The Civil Enforcement Manager informed the committee that

this car was the best earner in the district and that the proposed seven machines, of which three would take Smart Cards, was a desirable number.

As the concept of Smart Cards was new Members agreed that the cards would need to be heavily advertised.

RESOLVED that the Environment Committee agree the recommendations of the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement Task Group that

- 1 The existing Metric Pay and Display machines in the Council's car parks are replaced with Cale Briparc Pay and Display machines over a 3 year rolling replacement programme.
- 2 Each car park has 1 or more Pay and Display machines with a "Park Smart" facility to allow parking payment to be made with a Smartcard.
- 3 Officers further investigate the provision of mobile phone parking and report back to this committee on the practical and financial implications.
- 4 That all sites are looked at and that only one Smart Card machine be placed in Angel Lane, Great Dunmow and only one Smart Card machine be placed in Checkers Lane, Great Dunmow.
- 5 Two machines be removed from the budget.

E42 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS - BRIDGE END GARDENS RESTORATION PROJECT**

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had considered the Council's phase 2 application for the re-establishment of the walled garden and awarded the grant of £196,000. The HLF had already forwarded 50% of the grant to the Council, and the remaining would be received by June 2008.

Whilst work was being carried out the kitchen that backed onto the garden would be shut for no more than a few months.

All grants received from the HLF had now equated to around three quarters of a million pounds.

RESOLVED that the arrangements in relation to procurements as set out in the report be approved, subject to any further views being expressed by Heritage Lottery Fund.

E43 **LEAD OFFICERS REPORT**

The Director of Development had prepared a general report on information items and developments since the last meeting. Items included the restructuring and development in Government Environmental Policy and Consultations. A planning White Paper was due to in the Spring. A workshop on the East of England Plan would be held 5 February, prior to its consideration at Full Council.

Some Members requested that the workshop time be brought forward. The Director of Development agreed that if necessary he was happy to run two on that evening.

RESOLVED that members noted the report.

E44 **ENFORCEMENT WITHIN STREET SERVICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME**

The Director of Operations resented the Committee with a report advertising the need to establish a policy and strategy to deal with Enforcement of Environmental Crime. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 offered fixed penalties offences.

An education programme in Uttlesford Life had commenced to inform the community of offences that would receive a penalty.

On 20 February The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act training would be provided for staff involved in Street Service and it was hoped that a member champion from the Committee would attend.

Appended to the report was an outline of the Enforcement Policy. The Council would need to be proactive in advertising the penalties. Three District Monitoring Officers would be in place as operatives working on street cleaning.

This was also inline with the ban on smoking in public places due to be enforced in July. The Council would encourage businesses to protect the interest of their employees.

Members sought clarity on the nature of evidence that would be needed and were informed that the individual or vehicle would need to be identified. Further clarity was sought on appendix item two, point two, Vehicles. Non-taxed cars on private streets would be a matter for the DVLA. The council would face the issue of whether the vehicle was abandoned.

If a landowner had rubbish left on their land, this would still be a matter for the Environment Agency.

Members were in favour of keeping a cleaner district and enforcing The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

RESOLVED that

1. The enforcement policy attached to the report be approved.
1. That officers were required to bring forward a Street Services Strategy for consideration.
2. That a programme of public awareness of environmental crime be progressed.
3. That members nominated Councillor Flack to attend the training day.

E43 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08 TO 2009/10

The Director of Resources presented the committee with the Draft Capital Fund Programme, and asked members to draw particular attention to individual capital schemes. Recommendations in the report were subject to the approval of the Operations Committee, which would determine prioritisation accordingly. The report drew gave specific details on the Dunmow Depot and vehicle maintenance building, car park pay and display machines and vehicle replacement programme.

Members drew attention to the replacement of refuse vehicles and were informed that the older vehicles were used for weekend collection. Members would be sent an electronic copy of the complete list of vehicles and the Director of Resources informed the Committee that the return on charges stood at approximately £470,000.

Concern was held at the cost of the Shire Hill depot, which had doubled since the previous financial year. The Director of Operations would take advice and return to the committee with an answer.

RESOLVED that the committee recommend to the Operations Committee the proposed revised capital budget for 2006/07 together with the proposed capital budgets for each of 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10.

E44 GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2007/08

The Committee received a report which provided the basis for finalisation of the Committee's General Fund budget for 2007/08 subject to final considerations by the Operations Committee and Full Council. It contained full details of the base budget, prepared on the basis of current levels of service provision, a refined list of spending pressures previously considered, and proposals to achieve the budget reductions required following guidance issued by the Operations Committee.

The Committee was informed that this year the consultation on the budget had involved sending questionnaires to all Parish councils asking for comments on specific areas of spending. The results of this to date were reported.

The report also proposed the devolution of 5 of the committee budgets to Area Panels, although the detail of this was still to be worked out.

Councillor A Dean asked for clarity on Programme 4, Waste Management. The Director of Resources explained the Full Year Effect which was the figure was reached.

Members asked if there was a built in income from Essex County Council for offsetting the LATS fines. The Services Officer informed the Committee that Uttlesford had asked the County Council for a full recycling credit. Councillor A Dean added that it was a great accomplishment for Uttlesford to achieve 50% recycling rate and it was the best in the county. He found it deeply regrettable that this district was subsidising the rest of the county. Councillor Thawley said he would raise this matter with Recycling Board.

Members were keen to see another Recycling Officer in post, however the cost of this post would increase the cost of recycling per house hold by 68 pence. Councillor Cant suggested that the post be offered on a one year contract, possibly to a graduate.

RESOLVED that the committee approved and would submit to the Operations Committee:

- 1 The revised base budget for 2006/07 and draft base budget for 2007/08
- 2 The spending pressures put forward, including one-offs
- 3 The proposed savings identified in the report
- 4 A proposal of devolution of the Local Amenities and Saffron Walden Cemetery budgets to Area Panels
- 5 The principle of a one year contract for a second Waste and Recycling Officer.
- 6 A request to Essex County Council for LATS refunds.
- 7 the feedback from the consultees
- 8 Those items in the agenda item on Fees and Charges that were not included in the budget

E45 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Operations presented the committee with a report outlining that a review of fees and charges appropriate the committee was due for 2007/8. the charges included Septic Tank/Cesspool emptying and Trade Waste.

There had been an increase in the cost of providing these services, mainly in the cost of fuel and the disposal of waste that indicated that the charges should rise above the rate of inflation and 6% was deemed appropriate. For example the fees charged by Building Control would purchase fuel through the Essex Procurement Hub.

If implemented the fees and charges would ensure the cost of providing these services would be recovered and the charges were competitive within the market.

Members were pleased with the increase in recycling within the District and comprehended the need to increase some fees and charges.

RESOLVED that members approved the proposed fees and charges for 2007/8.5/6.

E47 GOLD ENTERPRISE ZONE, ELSENHAM

Members noted the current situation regarding the lettings and empty industrial units at the Gold Enterprise Zone, Elsenham up to 31 January 2007.

E48 DETAILED ASSESSMENTS OF AIR QUALITY

The Environmental Health Officer presented a report to the Committee on a Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Saffron Walden which concluded that annual average levels of Nitrogen Dioxide were above the National Objective in three 'hotspots'. The report provided details on the process of declaring an Air Quality Management Area or Areas. It also proposed that a Steering Group be established to take forward the Action plan with the aim of reducing Nitrogen Dioxide levels below the National Objective.

Councillor Cheetham suggested that instead of Steering Group being devised the work should be passed to the Saffron Walden Town Centre Management Working Group.

Councillor Cant suggested that encouraging parents to car share on the school run could cut the congestion on the town centre.

RESOLVED that

1. That (an) Air Quality Management Order(s) should be designated within the relevant area(s) identified under section 83(1) of the Environment Act 1995, by means of an official order.
2. Draft boundary(s) for the AQMA(s) should be detailed at this stage of the review and assessment process for wider consultation purposes.
3. Consultation on the formal boundary of the AQMA(s) should be carried out following the publication of the report.
4. The formal boundary of any AQMA(s) should be finalised and the formal AQMA order completed in April 2007.
5. The Saffron Walden Town Centre Management Group take forward the development and implementation of an air quality action plan in pursuit of the relevant air quality objectives and report back to this Committee.

E49 WASTE COLLECTION FROM COMMUNITY PREMISES

Due to the number of prejudicial interest members were unable to discuss the item.

RESOLVED that the item be adjourned to a meeting after special dispensation had been sought from the Standards Committee.

E50 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

The Chairman asked that that the Waste Project Teams remit be extended to include the Street Cleaning Service.

RESOLVED that the Waste Project Teams remit would be extended to include Street Cleansing Service, which would be reviewed in the coming months.

The meeting ended at 10.35.