

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 19 JANUARY 2010 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor S Barker – Chairman.
Councillors K R Artus, H J Asker, C A Cant, R H Chamberlain, J F Cheetham, C M Dean, C D Down, E J Hicks, S J Howell, R D Sherer and A C Yarwood.

Also present: Councillors A Dean, A J Ketteridge, D J Morson, A D Walters and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance: D Burrige (Director of Operations), T Cowper (Principal Accountant), M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough (Director of Development), A Knight (Principal Accountant), S Joyce (Chief Finance Officer), M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive) and R Pridham (Head of Street Services).

E34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E J Godwin, C C Smith and A M Wattebot.

Members declared the following personal interests:-

Councillor Barker as a member of Essex County Council and the EERA Housing Panel.

Councillors Asker and Ketteridge as members of Saffron Walden Town Council.

Councillor C Dean as a member of SSE.

Councillor Cheetham as the Council's representative on the EERA Housing Panel.

Councillor Cant as Chairman of the Save Boxted Wood Committee.

E35 STATEMENT BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

In relation to item 6 on the agenda, facilities at Saffron Green, statements were made by Alan Johnston and Mike Eldred. A summary of their comments is attached to these minutes.

E36 AMENITIES AT SAFFRON GREEN

The Committee noted that a petition had been received from residents in the locality who were frustrated by the delay in adopting the public areas at Saffron Green. These included a multi use games area, changing facilities, car park and a senior football pitch and were to be provided under a section 106 agreement by Countryside Properties.

Whilst most of the facilities were in an acceptable condition, the football pitch surface was not yet fit for purpose. Before transfer the developer was required to provide a sum of money to the District Council for specialist contractors to construct the pitch to the required specification in place of him providing it in ready to play condition. Discussions had taken place with Countryside and quotations had been obtained. It was now suggested that the S106 Agreement be amended to allow an early transfer of the land in exchange for sufficient funds being made available for the necessary works. Saffron Walden Town Council was keen to take on early responsibility for the facilities and manage the construction of the pitch. Following the transfer of the funds it was suggested that dry side facilities be immediately transferred to the Town Council.

It was understood that Countryside had recently sought further quotations from specialist companies and seemed willing to move forward with this proposal. The Chairman asked for officers to actively pursue this solution with Countryside and to keep the residents informed of progress.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Progress to this point be noted
- 2 it be recommended to the Development Control Committee that the S106 agreement is amended to allow an early transfer of the land for provision of a football pitch in exchange for sufficient funds being awarded by Countryside to enable Saffron Walden Town Council to construct a quality pitch.
- 3 upon transfer for above, immediate, acceptable condition transfer of the MUGA, changing facilities and car park be expedited direct to Saffron Walden Town Council for it to develop the football pitch and take responsibility for all those facilities in perpetuity.
- 4 the commuted sum for these amenities is transferred to Saffron Walden Town Council.

E37

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2009 and the extraordinary meeting held on 24 November 2009 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

E38

BUSINESS ARISING

- i) **Minute E24 (ii) – Local Development Framework**

Officers were asked to consider a process to communicate with parish councils about council consultations.

iii) Minute E28 – Consultation of the East of England Plan

Councillor Cheetham reported that she would be attending a seminar on the East of England Plan on behalf of the Council and would report back any information to the next meeting of the Committee.

E39 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

The Chairman gave a brief update on items, as follows.

In relation to the parking partnership there had been a shortage of Civil Enforcement Officers, which had affected income levels for a short period.

The transfer of the amenities to the Saffron Walden Town Council had taken place, whilst the transfer of Bridge End Gardens was imminent.

The Waste Management Advisory Board that had been responsible for bringing about the IAA and the PFI bid had completed most of its work and was now changing its focus to more of a monitoring role. It was noted that Rochford District, having introduced a green waste collection, now topped the districts in Essex with a recycling rate of 70%.

E40 LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT

The Director of Development presented his report as Lead Officer, updating the Committee on the LDF Core Strategy, Rural Masterplanning fund and outsourcing carbon management of the Council's estate.

In relation to the LDF consultation, Councillor C Dean expressed concern that members had not seen the Comparative Sustainability Assessment even though it seemed to be central to the consultation. In particular, it appeared to recommend option 4 as the preferred option even though the Council had not yet discussed the merits of this option in the light of the technical studies that had now been completed. Other members replied that this was a technical piece of work prepared by officers that had no member input. The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the points raised in the Comparative Sustainability Assessment and other technical reports, and the Council would then form its view once the replies had been evaluated.

It was reported that the LDF working group had met on several occasions and had agreed the content of the consultation leaflet. District members, parish councils and the libraries would receive a copy of the full consultation document and summaries of the recent technical studies. The Area Forum meetings had now been confirmed for 2 and 4 March and it was suggested

that the Chairman of the Committee and Leader of the Council should be available on the top table to assist with answering any questions.

It was confirmed that the Transport Assessment summary would be available by the end of the week.

E41 CAR PARKING ORDERS

It was reported that there had been recent incidents where caravans and motor caravans had been parked in the council's car parks and camped in over night. There were no provisions within the existing parking order to prevent any vehicle parking overnight free of charge and despite investigation there did not appear to be any other appropriate mechanism for dealing with this.

RESOLVED that members authorise officers to take the necessary steps toward amending the car parking orders to prohibit the parking of camper vans and vehicles towing caravans between the hours of 6pm and 8am 7 days a week.

E42 WASTE PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

The Committee received the minutes of the Waste Strategy Project Team held on 7 January 2010.

Under minute WS31, the Committee was advised of the initial findings from the consultants commissioned by CUBEC (Colchester Uttlesford, Braintree Essex and Chelmsford) for working in partnership in regarding waste services. Uttlesford had been shown to be providing a good service with good value for money. Its greatest potential to improve service in collaboration with another authority was with Braintree DC due to its proximity and also as it offered a similar waste collection service.

Minute WS32 explored the possibility of sharing depot facilities with Braintree. The Braintree Depot had sufficient space in its existing yard for Uttlesford to operate and there were also disposal facilities nearby. The committee was asked to agree for officers to investigate a combined vehicle depot and vehicle maintenance facility with Braintree to replace the depot at Great Dunmow. The depot at Saffron Walden would be retained.

It was noted that funding for the strand of consultancy work looking specifically at the Braintree and Uttlesford joint depot options had been provided from Improvement East and it was hoped that there might be further funding available for a project manager to lead this initiative.

The Committee agreed that this was a sensible way forwarded. There was however ongoing concern at the delay in the provision of waste and

recycling facilities at Great Dunmow and officers were asked to pursue this with Essex County Council.

RESOLVED that

- 1 officers urgently pursue proposals for joint working and shared facilities with Braintree District Council.
- 2 a member/officer meeting be arranged with Braintree District Council to discuss such proposals further.
- 3 a further approach be made to Improvement East for the funding of a Project Manager.
- 4 ECC be asked to provide a timetable for the delivery of waste and recycling facilities in Great Dunmow.

E43 2009/10 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report that detailed the Committee's income and expenditure for the period April to November 2009. It also set out a forecast for the end of 2009/10 which currently showed an under spend of £126,000 and the report set out the main reasons for this. It was noted that capital spend was in line with the budget forecast but with the additional liability of £65,000 as the final contribution for development work at the White Street car park. Members were given clarification on a number of questions on the detailed figures

RESOLVED that the Committee approve the report.

E44 2010/11 FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee received the schedule of the proposed fees and charges for this Committee for 2010/11. It was noted that the proposed charge for heavy containers 12 cubic yds should be amended to £192.24.

RESOLVED that the 2010/11 fees and charges as set out in appendix A (with the amendment set out above) be approved.

E45 2010/11 GENERAL FUND BUDGET

The Chief Finance Officer gave details of the proposed revenue budget for the Committee for 2010/11.

Councillor Howell said that he appreciated that this was work in progress but the budget appeared to be flat lining for the year going forward. He questioned whether the budget was sufficiently flexible to survive a

significant cut in public spending that seemed likely to occur following the general election.

The Chief Finance Officer replied that a cut in Government spending was expected and a figure of 10% had been assumed in The Medium Term Financial Strategy. This had shown a widening gap between income and expenditure to £1.4m by 2014 but measures were being implemented to address this shortfall including initiatives in the Strategic Solutions. The Council had built up reserves which could be called upon while the changes were being implemented. An updated MTFs would be prepared in February. He added that the Finance and Administration Committee had given guidance for the preparation of the budget and had not recommended any cuts or significant expenditure increase.

Members were concerned about the cost to the Council of taking on community facilities at new developments such as Priors Green and Oakwood Park and asked for a review of the S106 process for any future developments in the district. Councillor C Dean asked for an explanation for the reduction in the energy efficiency budget and was advised that an email note would be circulated.

RESOLVED that the Committee approve the 2010/11 revenue budget as set out in appendix A to be forwarded to the Finance and Administration Committee and for determination at Full Council on 18 February 2010.

E44

2010/11 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee received details of the 2010/11 capital programme and the indicative programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15. It was noted that a significant expenditure on new vehicles was planned for 2014. In answer to a member question it was reported that most of the vehicles were owned by the Council apart from 16 waste vehicles that that been leased in 2006/07

RESOLVED that the Committee

- 1 approve the 2010/11 capital programme
- 2 note the indicative capital programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15

E45

NEW PARKING STANDARDS

The Committee received a report that set out details of new parking standards that were proposed to be adopted for Development Control purposes. Members were informed of the history of the adoption of the current standard, the current Government policy and the problems that had led to a review of the standards. The report compared the old and new standards and pointed out that the main change was that new residential standards were now based on a minimum criteria rather than a maximum.

The Committee welcomed the new standards which were more realistic and would help to prevent some of the parking problems that had occurred in the district over recent years.

RESOLVED that the Essex County Council's Parking Standards Design and Good Practice" September 2009 document be used as District Council approved planning guidance, superseding Appendix 1 of the 2005 Adopted Uttlesford Local Plan

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

STATEMENT BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Johnson – 1 Crabtrees, Saffron Walden

Mr Johnson from Crabtrees Saffron Walden said that the local residents were frustrated that they were still unable to use the promised facilities at this development. This had been part of the vision that the residents had brought into when they had purchased their properties. A number of the facilities had been completed as set out in the section 106 agreement, like the changing room and the 5 a side pitch but they had stood empty for the last 2 years. He called on the leadership of the District Council to break the impasse and produce a timetable to bring the facilities back into use.

Mike Eldret

Mr Eldret was a coach for the Saffron Walden ladies football team. He had been hoping to use these facilities for training, particularly the flood lit tennis courts that could be used during the winter months. He had also hoped to establish an academy but had been waiting to start this for the last 2 years.