

Committee: Environment Committee

Agenda Item

Date: 16 March 2010

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Title: **Lead Officer's Report**

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Summary

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- 1 This report updates Members on matters that are not included elsewhere on the agenda.

Street sweeping/ litter picking

- 2 The winter weather conditions have had an impact upon our services in this area. It has been necessary to abandon street cleansing and litter picking during periods when snow and ice covered the ground. The staff involved worked flexibly and dealt with gritting and snow clearance during these times. They are progressively catching up with the backlog, and are close to being up to date.

Football pitches and amenities at Saffron Green – progress update.

- 3 At the time of writing negotiations with Countryside Properties are close to completion and a verbal update will be available at the meeting. Countryside has had a quotation from its own contractor for the construction of a quality senior pitch in accordance with our specification. This contractor is prepared to work for Saffron Walden Town Council for the quoted figure. Once the sum is agreed and transferred then the legal transfer of ownership of all land and facilities involved can commence.
- 4 The Development Control Committee has agreed to a variation of the s106 agreement to permit the transfer of the land and a satisfactory sum for the works, in place of a completed football pitch.

East of England Plan Review

- 5 The Regional Planning Panel met on 26 February and in summary agreed: to commend the work so far completed on the Regional Plan Review to 2031 led by the Regional Assembly; and to recommend that the outlined spatial strategy be adopted as the preferred strategy of the Regional Assembly, as the Regional Planning Body.

- 6 The decision includes a formal note of the concerns of a number of local authorities about the employment forecasts and resulting job growth targets for the region contained in the draft Plan, and calls for these growth targets to be kept under continuous review, and refined if necessary, including a further review of commuting assumptions.
- 7 A note was also recorded of the concerns expressed about the conclusions of the water quality research and the Panel called for a properly resourced programme of detailed water cycle studies to be undertaken at local levels to determine what long term investments in water infrastructure are required to ensure that water quality and availability issues will not restrict the implementation of the planned levels of growth both within the Plan period and potential growth post 2031.
- 8 The Panel also reiterated the need for Government to support and assist with the funding of the provision of adequate infrastructure to support the levels of growth proposed in the Plan Review, and requests that further work be undertaken on strengthening the conditionality approach to planning and development set out in policy IMP1

LDF Core Strategy

- 5 A further round of consultation was launched as planned on 15 February. A constructive briefing session was held with town and parish councils at the Maltings, Great Dunmow on 22 February with an extensive opportunity for questions and answers. A joint workshop was held with the environment and economic skills and learning working groups of Uttlesford Futures on 3 March. The extraordinary Community Forum meetings on 2 and 4 March were reasonably well attended. The questionnaire enclosed with the resident's leaflet is proving effective with around 750 completed forms already returned by 2 March.

Rural Masterplanning fund

- 6 The bid for funding towards technical support for masterplanning has been partially successful. The bid sought: consultancy support to undertake masterplanning of sites within the areas of search identified in the current core strategy consultation at Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden; working with the Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to highlight design issues in relation to the development of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow which might inform the spatial form of growth plans; capacity building and embedding design quality in development control. The fund was substantially over subscribed with 78 planning authorities across the country submitting bids. DCLG has, however, made an award of £10,000 of resource to advance spatial thinking by the Council through design strategies for Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden. The Homes and Communities Agency and CABE are managing the

next stages of the project and we await them contacting us to set out the next steps.

Highways Locality Panel

- 7 The Leader of the Council has met with Norman Hume, the County Council portfolio holder for highways and transportation, with officers in attendance, to discuss the County Council's emerging proposals for a panel. This would enable local decisions on highway expenditure. Interest was expressed in the idea and a formal proposal is awaited.

Proposed Traffic Regulation Order Uttlesford car parks

- 6 Pending publication of a draft order to address various issues besides the situation at Swan Meadow Car Park Saffron Walden, direct action has been taken to remove one of the caravans. The occupier has also been served with a letter prior to action advising him that the Council will be seeking an injunction to secure the removal of his vehicles. An injunction will then be served.

Outsourcing of Carbon Management

- 7 The procurement process is underway. The period for response to the advertisement in the EU Official Journal has now closed and a number of expressions of interest have been received. Pre Qualification Questionnaires have been despatched to companies. These need to be returned by 16 March.