

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 9 NOVEMBER 2010 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor S Barker – Chairman.
Councillors H J Asker, C A Cant, R H Chamberlain, J E Davey, C M Dean, E J Godwin, E J Hicks, S J Howell, A M Wattebot and A C Yarwood.

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer) and R Harborough (Director of Public Services).

E23 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Prior to the meeting a statement was made by Essex County Councillor Ray Gooding concerning the East Herts Core Strategy consultation. A summary of the statement is attached to these minutes.

E24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J F Cheetham, C D Down and C C Smith.

Councillor Barker declared a personal interest as a member of Essex County Council.

E25 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

E26 BUSINESS ARISING

i) Minute E17 (i) Saffron Green

This matter was no progress to be reported to this meeting.

ii) Minute E17 (iv) – Use of local authority business growth initiative funding

It was reported that £10,000 from the LABGI funds had been awarded to the Economic Development Group of the LSP towards promoting economic development in the district and a feasibility study of the wood pellet project.

iii) Minute E17 – car park lighting policy – Fairycroft Car Park

The estimates for the works to the lighting had been received and were within budget. Officers would now consult local members before the works commenced.

E27

EAST HERTS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY – ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

The Committee was advised that East Herts District Council was consulting on the Issues and Options for its core strategy. The report set out the main elements of the consultation and members' views were invited.

The strategy covered the period to 2031 and was programmed to be adopted in 2013. The document had been prepared prior to the Government's announcement so was based on policies in the East of England Plan and housing targets of between 7276 and 8876. The document included a range of development strategies to accommodate the growth, development options for the 5 main settlements and various proposals for how housing might be distributed and an approach to accommodate an extension to the north of Harlow.

The report set out those elements which affected Uttlesford, which mainly concerned proposals for the area around Bishop Stortford. Options 2 and 4 would involve development within Birchanger and Great Hallingbury parishes respectively. This would have an effect on Birchanger Wood and encroach into the green belt.

It was noted that East Herts DC was not ruling out a review of the green belt as it felt that it was unrealistic to present development strategy options which located development entirely outside the green belt. Uttlesford officers had a contrary view, and had commented that the use of the green belt was not necessary to accommodate growth in the East Herts Area and there were no exceptional circumstances to justify a review in this location.

Members expressed concern at the options relating to Uttlesford. Councillor Godwin said that proposals 2 and 4 went against a number of planning principles. The most important being the coalescence of communities, it was essential that a gap was maintained between the counties. The fact that this was also green belt land just compounded the situation. Birchanger Wood was a valuable asset and a natural boundary and the Council should not even enter into discussion about encroachment

It was confirmed that East Herts DC could not allocate development on land outside of its boundaries and any proposals would require negotiation with this council. It was acknowledged that in some situations there could be benefits in cross boundary development and officer's discussions with their opposite numbers should continue. However members could not support these particular options and asked that their opposition be recorded.

RESOLVED that

- 1 East Herts District Council be advised that this Council strongly objects to the inclusion of options in the East Herts Core Strategy for the future development of Bishops Stortford because they would involve development on land in Uttlesford which is currently within the Green Belt.

- 2 If East Herts DC decide to pursue options for development which involve development in Uttlesford this will be vigorously opposed by this Council as there are more appropriate locations within the East Herts District.

E28 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

The Chairman reported on the launch of the Essex County Council Retail Enterprise Fund. This was an initiative designed to support rural services in small towns and villages. Grants of up to £5,000 would be available to owners of shops, post offices and pubs in rural areas. Grants would also be available to community groups who wished to set up any of these services in their locality.

E29 LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT

The Director of Public Services presented his report as Lead Officer, updating the Committee on the setting up of the Local Highways Panel, information about textile recycling and further information on the recent White Paper on Local Growth.

E30 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR A WASTE DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT FOR ESSEX AND SOUTHEND ON SEA

The Committee was asked for its comments on the Waste Development Document to be included in the reply to the consultation. The document comprised the waste core strategy, development management policies and strategic site solutions for a period of 22 years. It would link closely with the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy which set out an approach for reducing, recycling, treating and disposing of municipal waste.

The report before members set out those areas that were relevant to Uttlesford, views were sought on the strategies that should be developed, how they should be implemented and where the major sites should be located.

The Chairman said that although the document was generic and not specific to Uttlesford the aim should be to obtain a network of facilities to enable waste to be disposed of locally. She was concerned that many of the proposals in the document were many years away and felt that other options for funding and development, possibly with the private sector, should be explored.

Councillor Cant said that she had been attending meetings about waste strategy for many years and little progress had been made, due in large part to the pace of change in the industry. She was disappointed that the recycling facility would not now be provided at Dunmow as there was no service for the people in the south of the district. She also warned against

establishing small local sites in an unstructured way as these could grow to become unsuitable for their location.

Councillor Howell declared a personal interest in this item as an employee of May Gurney. He said he was sympathetic to the need for a recycling centre in the south of the district and agreed that it should be added to the list of responses. However he pointed out that all such centres would have to be staffed, which had cost implications, and it was unrealistic for the facilities to be too local. He commented that in the provision of waste services it would be helpful to have more joined up working between the various tiers of local government.

RESOLVED that the comments below are endorsed by Members and submitted as this Council's response to the Issues and Options Consultation:

- 1) Future requirements should be based on the Local Waste Strategy, not the revoked RSS or the aborted RSS review.
- 2) The collocation of facilities should be sought where possible.
- 3) It is unlikely that there will be any new transport infrastructure that would affect optimum locations for waste facilities.
- 4) The spatial strategy for new waste facilities should be to provide major facilities by expansion and location at existing facilities, supported by smaller combined facilities (composting sites/ small in vessel composting/ anaerobic digestion plants/ waste transfer facilities)
- 5) Sites on industrial estates, re-use of brownfield sites in rural areas, redundant farm buildings or co-location with existing waste/ mineral working or existing landfill facilities would be appropriate for smaller supporting sites.
- 6) Smaller strategic sites should be identified and protected in rural areas like Uttlesford. These may be appropriate if their area is less than 3ha
- 7) Larger strategic sites should be close to major centres of population/ planned major growth.
- 8) A site should be identified for a Recycling Centre for Household Waste to serve the southern part of Uttlesford.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC**Essex County Councillor Ray Gooding – comments East Herts Core Strategy consultation**

Councillor Gooding represented one of the areas affected by the proposal in the consultation and also lived in Birchanger village. He considered it to be an ill conceived document. Two of the options would affect Uttlesford Option 4, development at Great Hallingbury would result in grid lock as the infrastructure was inadequate.

Option 2 – the proposals for Birchanger would have a detrimental effect on Birchanger wood and also green belt land.

These options would mean an incursion in to Uttlesford territory. There was a danger of the coalescence of Bishops Stortford, Birchanger and Stansted. The proposals were not sustainable and there would be a detrimental effect on the quality and ambiance of the area. He urged the committee to make representations against these proposals.