

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES GREAT DUNMOW at 7.30 pm on 22 JANUARY 2002

Present:- Councillor Mrs J F Cheetham – Chairman.
Councillors W F Bowker, Mrs C A Cant, Mrs C D Down,
Mrs E J Godwin, D M Jones, R C Smith, Mrs E Tealby-Watson,
A R Thawley and P A Wilcock.

Also present:- Councillor R P Chambers.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillor R J Copping.

Officers in attendance:- J B Dickson, R Harborough, Mrs S McLagan,
B D Perkins, M T Purkiss and R M Secker.

ET26 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2001 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

ET27 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute ET20(ii) – Locally Determined Budget Programme

It was noted that a report on the Locally Determined Budget Programme would be submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 19 March 2002.

(ii) Minute ET20(iii) – Local Transport Plan Programme

Councillor Bowker reported that he and Councillor Mrs Godwin had attended the meeting on 3 December concerning the London to Ipswich corridor. He said that this was a well organised and useful meeting and he had prepared a full report for circulation to Members. A summary had been included in the Members' Bulletin.

(iii) ET20(iv) – Future Parking Arrangements in Great Dunmow

In answer to a question from Councillor Copping, the Head of Community and Leisure Services reported that the issue of part-day season tickets was being investigated together with other issues.

(iv) Minute ET20(vi) – Greater Cambridge Partnership

The Director of Community Services reported that representatives of the Partnership had offered to meet a group of Members and officers on the relevance of the Partnership to Uttlesford.

RESOLVED that Councillors Mrs Cheetham, Mrs Tealby-Watson and Wilcock be appointed to attend this meeting.

(iv) Minute ET 22 – Kyoto Protocol on Global Warming

Councillor Wilcock said that he welcomed the decision at the last meeting to support the principles of the Kyoto agreement and, wherever possible, to use suppliers with the greenest credentials. He said that there might be occasions where there could be some cost in ascertaining and evaluating all the environmental considerations and he considered that these issues needed to be looked at closely. The Director of Community Services replied that the Council received advice from the County Council regarding the purchasing of fuel and was part of an Essex wide consortium. The issues raised by Councillor Wilcock would be taken into account. The Head of Environmental Services added that officers would be attending an all day green procurement event which had been organised by A-Z Supplies at Chelmsford.

(v) Minute ET25 – Essex County Council PSA Bid Document to Government

The Director of Community Services confirmed that a report on this matter would be considered at the Council meeting on 12 February 2002.

ET28

LONDON TO SOUTH MIDLANDS MULTI-MODAL STUDY

Members were reminded that the London to South Midlands Multi-Modal Study covered a zone from the London – Rugby West Coast main line in the west to the A14 in the north, the M11 in the east and the M25 in the south. It therefore included Uttlesford. The consultant team had prepared the following three strategies:-

Option A – increasing capacity. The main road proposals locally were

- Widen the M11 to dual four lane between the M25 and A14
- New east-west route between the M11 at Stansted and the M1 near Luton
- Improvement of other east west routes: A505 Duxford to Luton including full dualling and Hitchin bypass; A414 Harlow to M11 including a northern bypass of Harlow and a new junction with the M11 at Sheering

The main rail proposals locally were:

- Local improvements to West Anglia line to increase capacity.

Option B – Prioritising investment in Public Transport. The main rail proposals locally were:

- Local improvements to West Anglia line (as Option A).

The main road proposals locally were:

- M11 widening north of Junction 8 to dual three lane motorway with the whole length of the M11 incorporating a dedicated lane for bus and high occupancy vehicles
- Improved east west routes (as Option A).

Option C – Restraining demand. The main road proposals included:

- M11 - rationalisation of junctions in the Cambridge area with possible closure of some bus and freight gates at all M11 junctions with access charges (varying by time of day and location) for private users;
- Fiscal and charging measures to dampen demand for travel including road user charging within all urban areas of 25,000 population.
- Modest east west road improvements, primarily for safety reasons.

The Council was asked to indicate, in principle, which measures must be included in a fourth, balanced option.

Councillor Smith said that there should be a clear vision for the future, including a rail link in conjunction with the new A120 and a link between the M11 and the M1. Councillor Mrs Godwin felt that further consideration should be given to a rail link between Stansted and Braintree. Councillor Wilcock said that this study needed to be looked at in conjunction with the London to Ipswich study and more emphasis was required on public transport and rail facilities. He welcomed proposals for park and ride and dedicated bus lanes. Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson referred to the stretch of the A14 between the M11 and Huntingdon. She said that this stretch of road needed attention to reduce congestion and reduce accidents. She considered that a light rail and guided bus link between Cambridge and Huntingdon would assist in reducing local traffic.

RESOLVED that the following response be made to the strategy consultation.

Measures most relevant to Uttlesford:	Must <u>be</u> included in 4th Option	Must <u>not be</u> included in 4th Option
1. Widen M11 to dual 4 lanes M25 to A14	Not applicable	Yes
2. New route M11 Stansted to M1 Luton	Not applicable	Yes
3. Improve existing east west road corridors	Yes	Not applicable
4. West Anglia line local improvements	Yes (WARM enhancements)	Not applicable
5. Rail freight : transfer some to Felixstowe – Nuneaton line	Yes	Not applicable
6. East west rail: build link between Bedford and Sandy, improve the E - W connection to the north of Hitchin	Yes	Not applicable
7. Widen M11 north of J8 to dual three lane motorway standard	Yes	Not applicable
8. Dedicated lane for bus and high occupancy vehicles along whole of M11	Yes	Not applicable
9. Overcome existing rail bottlenecks	Yes	Not applicable
10. Road user charging varied by time and location in all urban areas over 25,000 population eg Bishop's Stortford, Cambridge and Harlow.	Yes- but only for urban areas over 100,000 population	Not applicable

11. Park and ride for all urban areas, free to local users	Yes	Not applicable
12. Reduce road capacity for private car users within urban areas.	Yes – in conjunction with 11 and only for urban areas over 100,000 population	Not applicable
13. Additional component 1	Stansted Airport 2 nd rail tunnel	Not applicable
14. Additional component 2 Rail access to Stansted from the east (new route)	Reduce local traffic on stretch of A14 from M11 to Huntingdon by provision of light rail and guided bus link from Cambridge to Huntingdon. How is this being considered if it is outside the scope of this study, LOIS or ORBIT?	

ET29

SEASON TICKETS FOR CAR PARKS

Members considered a report which suggested that season tickets should be offered to local residents in Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet who did not have appropriate available on or off-street parking.

Officers frequently received requests from residents in Saffron Walden who lived on a street that was not included in the residents parking scheme, had no off-street/on-street parking facilities and wished to purchase a season ticket to help alleviate their parking problems. It was noted that there were particular problems in Church Street, High Street and Hill Street. Similarly, some residents in Stansted Mountfitchet were experiencing parking problems. In view of these problems and bearing in mind that there was currently an underuse of season tickets in Saffron Walden and Stansted the Council could offer residents the option of a season ticket.

Councillor Jones reported that Councillor O'Neill had suggested that in Saffron Walden the season ticket price should be made available at the same rate as the resident parking scheme permit.

RESOLVED that

- 1 residents in Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet that do not have appropriate available parking be offered a season ticket on an appropriate car park, subject to availability,
- 2 the charges for season tickets at Saffron Walden be set at the same cost as the resident parking scheme permit (currently £54.00 and pro-rata at Stansted £28.00),
- 3 the issue of season tickets for residents be subject to availability and reviewed annually.

CONSULTATION PAPER – TOWARDS A NATIONAL AMBIENT NOISE STRATEGY

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had consulted the Council on proposals for developing a National Ambient Noise Strategy for England. The proposal was in three phases. The first phase aimed to establish information on the ambient noise climate in the country, identifying methods to assess the affects of noise including tranquillity and to identify techniques for improving or preserving the situation. The second phase would aim to evaluate and prioritise the alternatives identified in the first phase and the final phase would be for the Government to agree policies that would bring about a national ambient noise strategy.

Members considered each section of the consultation paper together with the following suggested comments which had been made by officers:

Overall Approach

The five-year timetable envisaged is rather long, but the size of the task is considerable. The production of a “noise map” for England is to be welcomed, but authorities like Uttlesford with the experience of Stansted Airport noise contour maps know that “annoyance” and the disruption to rural tranquillity are not accurately reflected by the current methodology.

Local Neighbour Noise

The Government has recently announced that it has completed a review of Noise Act 1996 and will legislate to make it easier for authorities to utilise the night time noise provisions without the need to introduce a comprehensive night time call out service. The introduction of any additional powers may have resource implications for the Council.

Adverse Effects of Noise

Whether people are annoyed by noise is not just a function of the absolute level of noise, but also whether they feel it has been imposed unfairly, and whether adequate compensation has been offered. This is particularly true for transport related noise which frequently has no direct benefit to those affected. Levels of compensation are related to a nominal devaluation in property prices, rather than the degradation in quality of life.

The Consultation Paper includes a Council for the Protection of Rural England definition of a tranquil area based on distance to various sources such as major roads and airports. The proposed noise maps may provide a more accurate picture of where these areas are situated and a method of predicting the adverse effects of development proposals upon them. With Stansted Airport described “an airport in the countryside”; a working definition of tranquillity and a strategy to protect such areas will have a particular local significance.

Action Against Ambient Noise

The section on railway noise omits any reference to our current problems with whistle boards introduced on footpath crossings to improve safety standards. The section on aircraft noise acknowledges that future progress in reducing noise will be more difficult as no new technological breakthroughs in air frame or engine design are anticipated. It expects that operational methods such as continuous descent approach and the introduction of area precision navigation, known as RNAV, will bring about some improvement. There is no reference to the significant contribution from ground noise from engine testing and general airport activities to local ambient noise levels.

Collection of Information on the Noise Environment

The Government has already indicated that it will co-ordinate the initial round of mapping and is looking for views on subsequent rounds at five yearly intervals. It is envisaged that the maps will be produced by computer models and will be dependant on high quality input data, particularly road traffic statistics. This data is also required by district councils to carry out reviews and assessments of air quality where again, road traffic is the major contributor. Within Essex there is a countywide Air Quality Consortium which co-ordinates the approach of district councils and is currently looking at a joint approach to the second round of reviews. A similar approach could be adopted for the noise map. This would enable district councils to maintain control of the production of the noise maps and also benefit from economies of scale.

Analysis of Costs and Benefits

The over reliance on notional residential property values ignores the effects on schools, hospitals and recreational facilities. The effects on those with no direct interest in the capital cost of their living accommodation are also ignored.

Councillor Smith said that he welcomed the consultation paper which he considered would help improve monitoring in the future. Councillors Bowker and Wilcock considered that Railtrack should be urged to find more suitable alternatives to whistle boards. Councillor Mrs Cant said that more needed to be done to tackle noisy neighbour problems. Councillor Mrs Godwin said that attention must be given to engine testing and ground running noise at the airport. Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson also referred to the need for low noise road surface on the northern section of the M11.

Members noted that comments on this consultation paper had to be submitted to DEFRA by 15 March 2002 and were asked to notify the Head of Environmental Services of any further comments by the middle of February.

RESOLVED that the comments referred to above and any other comments referred to the Head of Environmental Services be submitted to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

BUDGET AND SERVICE PLANS 2002/03

The Director of Resources presented the Draft Revenue Estimates for final consideration by the Committee. The detailed figures now included savings approved at the meeting on 13 November 2001, internal charges and developments since that meeting.

The Director said that the figures were subject to final checks for consistency and accuracy and did not include any growth items or saving items, the implications of any new capital programme items or the impact on internal charges of any growth or savings. A full list of the Administration's savings proposals was considered. However, the overall Council budget was still £59,000 above the target and there would be a further loss of £25,000 from the payments made by Essex County Council under the Meals on Wheels contract. It was anticipated that a public inquiry would be held in late 2002/03 to deal with the Local Plan and the base budget included provision of £25,000 with the remaining cost, currently estimated at £95,000, to be met from reserves.

Councillor Chambers referred to the seriousness of the flooding in the district during October and said that the district council was working hard to co-ordinate work to alleviate problems. He said that where the district council had responsibility for carrying out work the cost should be met from reserves. He moved that the draft Revenue Estimates be recommended for inclusion in the overall budget report to Resources Committee, subject to the inclusion of a growth item of £12,190 in respect of the extension of the Bridge End Gardens Gardener/Environmental Taskforce Supervisor contract for one year. He said that he would put forward alternative arrangements to deal with the budget shortfalls at the meeting of the Resources Committee on 24 January 2002.

Councillor Copping declared an interest in this matter as a member of the Great Dunmow Town Council and the Dunmow Town Strategy Group.

He referred to the recent loss of a firm from Great Dunmow and urged that the Council should give greater attention to economic development. He also referred to the proposed large increase in the cost of car parking in Great Dunmow and asked Members to retain a charge of 20p for the first hour's parking. Councillor Smith supported this suggestion and moved accordingly.

Councillors Bowker and Mrs Cant both expressed concern at the suggested loss of national transport tokens and moved that this item be reinstated in the draft budget.

In answer to Members' questions, it was confirmed that a sum was still included in the budget to support the LA21 Group.

Councillor Thawley considered that savings could be achieved through the Best Value Review of planning and the Director of Community Services said that this issue needed to be looked at by the Reference Group as part of the review.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the draft revenue estimates be recommended for inclusion in the overall budget report to Resources Committee, subject to the following amendments:
 - (i) a growth item of £12,190 in respect of the extension of the Bridge End Gardens Gardener/Environmental Task Force Supervisor contract be approved for one year,
 - (ii) the item of £22,000 for provision of National Transport Tokens be reinstated in the draft budget
 - (iii) car park charges for Great Dunmow be as follows:

Up to 1 hour	20p
1 to 3 hours	60p
Up to 5 hours	£1.00
Up to 10 hours	£2.00

- 2 Any land drainage works to minimise flood risk for which the District Council has direct responsibility be funded out of reserves.

ET32

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Committee was advised that Essex County Council wished to establish a Community Transport Partnership Agreement to meet the objectives of its agreed and published road passenger transport policy. It was also seeking to develop a Community Transport Partnership to include this Council and the local community transport provider (Uttlesford Community Travel). The main principles of the Agreement were noted and Members were reminded that the Council had entered into a three year service level agreement with Uttlesford Community Transport for the provision of a hospital transport service. The County Council had suggested that if the Council were to agree to the principle of the partnership agreement, council officers could then discuss the detail of how the service level agreement could be incorporated.

Officers considered that this arrangement was satisfactory, subject to the county council agreeing that this Council's existing financial commitment is specifically towards the provision of hospital transport service, that the existing financial commitment is for financial years 2002/03, 2003/04 and subject to budgetary provision that any further financial commitment beyond 2003/04 is subject to the Council making resources available.

Councillor Smith said that whilst he supported the agreement, it was important to ensure that the County Council did not push more responsibility for these issues onto the District Council over a period of years. He also suggested that more publicity should be given to the hospital transport service.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the principle of a Community Transport Partnership be agreed, subject to Essex County Council's agreement to the caveats set out above, and
- 2 the Director of Community Services be authorised to execute the Community Transport Partnership Agreement in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, subject to satisfactory detailed arrangements.

ET33

PLANNING FOR RURAL PROSPERITY

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency as a decision was required before the next meeting of the Committee. The Principal Planning Officer asked that Members contact him if they wished to attend a conference organised by Go-East and other partners called Planning For Rural Prosperity which could be an opportunity to discuss sustainable rural communities. The conference would be held at County Hall on 5 February 2002.

RESOLVED that Members notify the Principal Planning Officer if they wish to attend

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm.