

**ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL
OFFICES HIGH STREET GREAT DUNMOW at 7.30 pm on 11 JUNE 2002**

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

Also present at the Chairman's invitation:- Councillors R J Copping,
M A Gayler and Mrs J E Menell.

Officers in attendance:- Mrs M Cox, J Mitchell and B D Perkins

Also in attendance: P Hardy – Essex County Council.

ET1 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Before the start of the meeting, Mrs Penny Hubbard from Littlebury presented a petition concerning speeding through the village of Littlebury. She asked that it be passed on to the County Council. She also made a statement, a summary of which is attached to these Minutes.

ET2 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A R Thawley.

ET3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2002 and of the special meeting held on 10 April 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of an apology from Councillor R C Smith for the meeting on 19 March.

ET4 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute ET35 (i) Greater Cambridge Partnership

It was confirmed that a meeting of the Partnership was to be held on 20 June 2002.

(ii) Minute ET35 (ii) Consultation paper – Towards a National Ambient Noise Strategy

The Director of Community Services agreed to check whether a copy of the comments had been circulated to Members.

(iii) Minute ET36 - Audley End Station to Saffron Walden proposed cycleway

Mr Hardy confirmed that he intended to report progress on this matter to the Committee at its September meeting.

(iv) Minute ET37 Locally Determined Budget Programme 2001/02 - 2004/05

Members would shortly be receiving a report on the progress of the local schemes.

ET5

SPEED POLICY REVIEW

The Committee was advised that Essex County Council was currently updating its Speed Reduction Policy, which had last been reviewed in 1997. Since then, national policy had changed and there was a different emphasis on the issue of speeding. As part of the consultation of the policy the views of the Uttlesford Members were being sought. The report set out officers' responses to the questions and asked Members to make any further comments. The policy, once drafted, would be subject to a programme of consultation with both County Members and the Members and officers of all districts and partnering organisations. Members were asked to bear in mind, in suggesting additional speed reduction measures, the cost, and the need for support from the Police for enforcement.

Councillor Mrs Cheetham questioned the appropriateness of the criteria for the siting of safety cameras. At present these could only be used in locations where there had been a specific number of injury/accidents. Members felt cameras should be placed in locations where speeding was a problem and suggested making representations to the Government for a change in policy.

Councillor Mrs Menell drew the Committee's attention to the new "flashing speed signs" and a pilot scheme that was being trialed in the North Herts District. Three villages were to share a sign and the costs would be divided between the County, District and Parish Councils. Mr Hardy agreed that these signs appeared to be effective in reducing speed but did not yet have DTLR approval. He confirmed that the County Officers were aware of these signs and would be looking at their future use in the County. He agreed to find out details of the North Herts scheme. Councillor Gayler added that the former Highways Sub-Committee had been effective when it had decided to concentrate its resources on one project and he suggested that the Council should see these flashing signs as its priority. He also thought that the County should actively pursue the introduction of a fourth tier to facilitate "home zones", "quiet lanes" and leisure use in association with public rights of way.

A number of Members were concerned at the safety of the Four Ashes, Takeley junction, and asked for traffic light compliance cameras. Mr Hardy said that this site did not meet the criteria for such cameras. Members asked the County to look again at possible measures at this site.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the comments on the speed policy set out in the report be forwarded to Essex County Council with the following additional points
 - (i) The County be asked to pursue the provision of flashing speed signs.
 - (ii) There should be greater use of speed cameras throughout the district.
 - (iii) The issue regarding a fourth tier to facilitate “home zones”, “quiet lanes” and leisure use in association with public rights of way should be positively pursued.
 - (iv) The County be urged to consider variable speed limits outside schools.
- 2 To ask County Officers to look at the possibility of traffic light compliance cameras at the Four Ashes junction, Takeley.
- 3 To make representations to the Secretary of State concerning the criteria for the location of safety cameras, which at present could only be located where there is an accident problem.

ET6

NOTICE OF MOTION EASTERN SECTOR GREAT DUNMOW

The following motion proposed by Councillor M A Gayler had been referred from the meeting of the Council on 23 April 2002.

“(i) Council’s agreement in principle to the sale of land at White Street Car Park Great Dunmow, to enable development of the “Eastern Sector “ be rescinded.

(ii) Negotiations be commenced with Essex County Council for the transfer of land at White Street Car Park to the County Council as a site for the building of a new library, in exchange for land at Haslers Lane which should then be earmarked for the provision of affordable rented housing.

(iii) Provision be made in the capital programme for the reprovision of car parking spaces should any be lost as a consequence of (ii) above”.

The Head of Planning and Building Surveying advised Members of the progress since the matter had last been discussed. He explained the position on a current application to develop part of the Eastern Sector, and the more recent developments with the inclusion of the Dunmow Inn into the proposal. Officers considered these to be encouraging, as the likely new application would overcome some of the deficiencies of the current application. If received and approved it would achieve all the requirements of the aims of the Eastern Sector Policy. Officers considered that no action should be taken until the anticipated application had been determined.

Councillor Gayler agreed that the new application involving the Dunmow Inn was a significant improvement. However, there had been a number of “false

dawns” with this application and he remained cautious. He added that the Council’s contribution of land at this site should be conditional on all the requirements being included in the application. Councillor Copping said that the motion had been based on frustration at the lack of action at this site and asked for a time limit for this matter to return to the Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1 No action be taken over the motion until the revised planning application including the Dunmow Inn had been submitted and determined by the Development Control and Licensing Committee.
- 2 The matter be the subject of a further report consequent upon the decision of the Committee, or sooner if no application was submitted, but in any event no later than the meeting of the Environment and Transport Committee on 14 January 2003.
- 3 Uttlesford’s contribution of land would be conditional on the planning application including the following:-
 - the provision of a public library
 - the servicing and layout of the area reserved for car parking in Policy GD3 (the “gas board” land), with a net gain of 40 parking spaces
 - the provision of ten affordable dwellings
 - the pedestrianisation of the White Street Car park entrance
 - a new two way access by the Dunmow Inn

ET7

UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN DEPOSIT DRAFT

At the meeting on 10 April 2002, Members had considered the representations received on the Deposit Plan and approved a number of changes for the Revised Deposit Plan. Two items had been deferred for further consideration;

(i) Policy H1, in relation to the distribution of housing, proposed new policy H# relating to a housing reserve site at Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden and other local policies relating to or affecting the distribution of housing. (ii) Policy GD3 relating to White Street Car Park extension Great Dunmow and proposed policy GD# relating to the former Newton Works. The Committee was advised of suggested wordings for each policy and an explanatory text.

Members were concerned at the possibility of light industrial use for the Newton Works site where the new school was also expected to be located. Officers clarified that this use was to be office use and it was agreed that this be stated in the policy. Councillor Mrs Cant hoped that the school would benefit from this revised location in respect of the size of the playing fields.

Once the changes had been agreed a revised plan would be produced and would be the subject of a 6 week period of consultation which was expected

to take place in late summer/autumn. An inspector at a public local inquiry would consider all outstanding objections. It was thought that this would be held in spring 2003.

RESOLVED that the Local Plan Deposit Draft October 2001 be amended as agreed at the Special Environment and Transport Committee in April and set out in the schedule to the report. Additionally, the proposed policy GD# be amended to clarify the proposed employment at the site as B1 office use. Other minor changes to the text were also approved.

ET8

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PLANNING SERVICES

The Best Value Review of Planning Services has been agreed by Scrutiny 2 Committee at its meeting on 27 March. However this year the Planning Department were involved in a number of major projects, but more importantly there had also been significant and unforeseen staffing difficulties. Officers considered that current work needed to be prioritised and that the best use of resources would be to concentrate on the delivery of core services. It was suggested that the review should be given a low priority for the next 6 months while the staffing situation was resolved, or eased, and that the completion date be extended to July 2003.

RESOLVED that the completion date of the formal Best Value Review of Planning Services be extended from December 2002 to July 2003 and that the Scrutiny 2 and Development Control and Licensing Committees be advised accordingly.

ET9

FLOOD DEFENCE

Following the incidents of flooding on 21 October 2001, a motion had been passed at Full Council on 11 December requesting the examination of the Council's emergency response capability and for officers to produce a report on the threat from flooding in the district. This Committee subsequently resolved to fund from reserves any land drainage works to minimise flood risk for which the district had direct responsibility.

With regards to the emergency response capability, all town and parish councils had been invited to meetings with officers to discuss ways of improving response and certain measures had been put in place.

The Committee was then advised of the progress of the flood report. First there had been identification of the areas affected and categorising the reasons for flooding. Officers had also clarified the division of responsibility between the various agencies. The report then outlined the measures taken so far and the priorities and targets for action by the District Council. The most important aspect of the Council's role in reducing the risk of flooding was to ensure that the watercourses for which it was responsible were maintained to a high level. It should also work in conjunction with other authorities and agencies.

Members were encouraged by the progress on this matter. They requested that town and parish councils be kept informed and hoped that the report to the next meeting would include any proposed works and actions.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The progress made to date be noted.
- 2 A further report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 3 The Committee noted that the existing nominal land drainage budget was likely to be exceeded during this financial year.

ET10

BUSINESS FORUMS

Councillor R J Copping declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

Members were asked to consider how the Council could better engage with the local business community. The previous Chairman of the Council had initiated open meetings between the business community and group leaders to enhance understanding between local businesses and the Council. Meetings had been held in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted and Thaxted but attendance had been limited. Officers thought there were two options for future action. One would be to repeat the open meeting approach. The alternative would be for Members and indeed officers to take advantage of established business clubs and chambers of trade, to attend their meetings and to discuss issues of mutual interest or concern. Members considered this to be the most sensible option.

Councillor Copping mentioned that the Dunmow Town Strategy group had now prepared a comprehensive business strategy.

Councillor Gayler asked Members to report any actions arising from any meetings that they might attend.

RESOLVED that the Committee consider that the best way to engage with the local business community is to take advantage of established business clubs and Chambers of Trade, and ensure that they know that Members and officers would welcome an opportunity to attend their meetings to discuss issues of mutual interest or concern.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE – 11 JUNE 2002

Statement by Mrs Penny Hubbard from Littlebury village.

Mrs Hubbard submitted a petition to be passed to Councillor Ron Williams the portfolio holder for Highways at the County Council. Mrs Hubbard said that the 30 mph speed limit through the village of Littlebury was not being adhered to. The villagers felt that variable flashing signs would be the most effective measure but had been told that the County Council had insufficient budget for this. Also, physical measures were not possible as large lorries travelled through the village. The villagers would therefore welcome a greater number of speed checks and cameras. However, the Police had stated that resources would only be allocated to locations where there was a proven accident record. Mrs Hubbard cited incidents where lorries had hit buildings in the village and said that an accident was waiting to happen. The community policeman had been undertaking speed checks and the villagers were grateful, but what was needed was regular police checks, probably the use of the mobile cameras. She said that there were a number of disheartened and angry people in the village and asked for some positive action to be taken.