

**ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES HIGH STREET GREAT DUNMOW AT 7.30 PM ON 10 SEPTEMBER 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 and A R Thawley.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillor Mrs J E Menell.

Officers in attendance:- Mrs M Cox, P Dickson, N Harris, Mrs S McLagan,  
J Mitchell and B D Perkins.

Also in attendance:- P Hardy – Essex County Council

**ET11 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Mrs McDonald, from Wendens Ambo Parish Council made a statement about the proposed Audley End Station to Saffron Walden cycle way. A copy of the statement is attached to these Minutes.

**ET12 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Thawley declared a non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 5, Speed Tables Outside Felsted Primary School, as he was a Governor of the School.

Councillors Mrs Cheetham and Mrs Dean declared non-prejudicial interests in Agenda item 14, Stansted Airport Advisory Panel, as they were members of NWEHPA.

**ET13 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**ET14 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute ET5 - Speed Policy Review**

Councillor Smith asked if there had been any progress with obtaining traffic light compliance cameras for The Four Ashes, Takeley junction. Mr Hardy replied that the timing of the lights had been altered slightly to allow more time for cars turning towards the airport. However, the junction did not meet the criteria for compliance cameras. All Members felt that this was a particularly dangerous junction and agreed with Councillor Smith that filter lights should be installed. Councillor Mrs Cant commented that the funds for installing the lights at the Barkers Tank junction would be better used to improve this existing junction. The Committee asked Mr Hardy to look again at possible measures at this junction.

Councillor Mrs Menell mentioned the “flashing speed signs” and hoped that the first pilot scheme would apply to Littlebury, Wendens Ambo and Little Chesterford. Mr Hardy said that the use of these signs had been included as an option in Essex County Council’s review of its speed policy.

ET15

### **AUDLEY END STATION TO SAFFRON WALDEN PROPOSED CYCLEWAY**

Members received a report regarding the latest position in the development of a cycleway scheme between Audley End Station and Saffron Walden. The proposal for a cycleway had been in the County Council’s capital programme for 2001/02, but had been postponed whilst further consultation and detail of phase 2 was investigated. This phase of the scheme was the route between Saffron Walden High School and the crossing point on the B1383. The option of an off road route had not been considered as the budget available for the scheme (£150,000) was insufficient. In the proposed scheme, the cycleway would use the existing carriageway between the B1383 and the Saffron Walden High School. The Walden Road/Wenden Road would be made one way from Saffron Walden and a 40 mph speed limit would be imposed. The estimated cost of phase 2 was £45,000. The cost of phase 1 was £90,000, which included the changes required to the junctions on the B1383.

A survey had been conducted to try to find out the amount of use the proposed cycleway would have and whether the expenditure was justified. Councillor Mrs Menell attended the meeting to present the Wendens Ambo Parish Council’s views. They considered that this proposal would put lives at risk. The raised white lines were not sufficient to separate the cars from the cyclists. The proposed one-way system would increase traffic speed and the new junction would be difficult for large vehicles to negotiate. The Parish Council’s own survey had concluded that there was insufficient demand to justify expenditure on this scheme. It opposed phase 1 of the scheme and would support phase 2 only if there was an off road cycleway. The Parish Council would like to see the budget used to promoting cycling in the District in alternative ways. The provision of secure bike storage in prominent positions at the Station, the Council Offices and the Saffron Walden County High School might encourage greater cycle use. The Parish also felt that the most dangerous crossing point was the B1383 and the possibility of a pelican crossing opposite the Fighting Cocks Public House should be investigated.

Members considered that this proposal had been based on good intentions, but there was insufficient budget to provide a satisfactory scheme. Mr Hardy commented that if the scheme was not approved, the budget could be used for other “cycle related” schemes.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the current proposal for the cycleway between Saffron Walden and Audley End should not be pursued,
- 2 the allocated budget be used to provide secure cycle storage at the station and at other locations in the town, and

- 3 The Area Highways Manager be asked to investigate the possibility of providing a pelican crossing at the Fighting Cocks Public House on the B1383.

ET16

### **PROPOSED PREFORMED SPEED TABLES OUTSIDE FELSTED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Committee considered a proposal for two speed tables and a narrowing feature at the slip road outside the Felsted Primary School, as part of the Safer Journeys to School Initiative. The proposals were supported by the school, Chief Constable, District Councillor and Parish Council. One objection had been received and this was detailed in the report. It was hoped that the scheme would deter unauthorised road users from using the route as a cut through, and would act as a traffic-calming feature for those vehicles that required access to the school or properties adjacent to the slip road.

RESOLVED that, notwithstanding the objection received, arrangements be made to introduce the two speed tables as published and described in the report.

ET17

### **PROPOSED 40 MPH SPEED LIMIT ORDER – MARGARET RODING**

The Committee was informed that a speed reduction scheme had been prepared for Margaret Roding without a speed limit as part of the A1060 Accident Reduction Route Study. Following the introduction of a 40 mph speed limit for the A1060 at Boyton Cross in the Borough of Chelmsford, Margaret Roding Parish Council had written requesting the implementation of a similar limit for their village. A letter of objection had been received from the Chief Constable. He did not believe that the proposal met the County Council's Speed Reduction Policy as the area consisted of two very small areas of development separated by open countryside. Members considered that this location did warrant a 40 mph speed limit and were also aware that the current Speed Reduction Policy was being reviewed. Councillor Smith said it was absurd that the current policy would not allow for the introduction of a speed limit if the houses were only on one side of the road.

Councillor Mrs Cheetham advised the Committee that as from the end of September, the County Council's Development Control and Regulation Committee would be allowing statements from members of the public. It might be appropriate for a Member of this Committee to speak on this item.

RESOLVED that

- 1 notwithstanding the objections received, the process for the introduction of a speed limit be continued and that the Cabinet Member at the County Council responsible for highway and transportation issues be asked to approve the proposal outside the Speed Reduction Policy,
- 2 Subject to 1 above, the Development Control and Regulation Committee of the County Council be asked to overturn the Chief Constable's objection.

**ET18 PROPOSED 17 TONNE WEIGHT RESTRICTION – ASHDON VILLAGE**

Following a request from the Parish Council, a weight restriction through Ashdon village had been the subject of consultation through the latter part of 2001. Objections had been received from the Chief Constable and from Cambridgeshire County Council and the informal consultation had not therefore been undertaken. A heavy goods vehicles survey had been carried out and it had been found that a number of vehicles that would exceed the proposed limit would require access to load and unload and would therefore be exempt from the restriction. A more effective way of controlling the heavy goods vehicles through the village would be to install a second priority-working feature for Bartlow Road.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the proposed weight restriction detailed in the schedule be not introduced,
- 2 A second priority-working feature be installed for Bartlow Road.

**ET19 PROPOSED 7.5 TONNE WEIGHT RESTRICTION – MARKS HALL LANE MARGARET RODING**

Members were asked to consider an objection received in response to the informal consultation process for the introduction of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction for Marks Hall Lane, Margaret Roding. The lane was an unclassified road and was unsuitable to withstand large vehicles using the lane on a regular basis. There was an alternative route which would be via the A1060 Chelmsford Road and Ongar Road at the Four Wantz. The proposals were supported by the Parish Council and the Local District/ County Council Member. The Chief Constable had lodged an objection. He did not consider that the perceived problem warranted the introduction of a weight limit; it was an unnecessary restriction, which would not be self-enforcing and would have little overall benefit. The Committee considered that this weight restriction should be implemented to prevent large vehicles using this unclassified road. Councillor Smith raised concern at the number of objections that had generally been made by the Chief Constable.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Notwithstanding the objection received, arrangements be made to formally advertise the proposal,
- 2 The Area Manager be asked to submit a further report to the County Council Development Control and Regulation Committee recommending the implementation of the weight restriction.

**ET20 BUDGET UPDATE AND STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report detailing the list of priorities presented to Council on 16 July and inviting Members to make adjustments in the light of the latest budget projections for 2003/04. The overall position remained that

£6.888 million should continue to be used as the working target for budget purposes. An updated General Fund budget projection now indicated that net savings needed to meet this target had reduced from £305,000 to £127,000. However, Members had received a letter from the Leader of the Council, suggesting additional savings, with a target requirement of £70,000 for this Committee. This was because there were several uncertain issues which could have a significant impact on the Council's finances.

There were new procedures this year that meant that the Council had to consult with the public on its budget proposals before the November/December cycle of meetings. The Council's priorities and associated budget targets needed to be decided by the Council on 22 October 2002.

Members noted the Council's priorities and commented as follows:

- 1 There should be an emphasis on the significance of Council policy of resisting major airport expansion and proposals for major additional housing in the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor that could affect Uttlesford.
- 2 There should be emphasis on the importance of recycling initiatives.

When discussing the budget projections, Councillor Smith commented that there might be a limit to the amount of savings that could be made and deterioration in the level of service might result in a greater cost to the Council, as well as poorer services to customers. Councillor Mrs Cant referred to the proposal to increase car parking charges and commented that Government policy was forcing the Council to increase charges and to make savings to ensure that it maintained a sustainable budget. Members commented that when the public was consulted on the budget proposals, it should be pointed out that if the Council Tax was set very low, then it was possible that the level of service provided by the Council might reduce.

RESOLVED that, to progress the 2003/04 budget making process, this Committee:-

- 1 note the list of priorities presented to Council on 16 July and summarised in Appendix BS08 with the addition of the following issues:-
  - (i) emphasising the significance of Council policy of resisting major airport expansion and proposals for major additional housing in the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor that could effect Uttlesford, and
  - (ii) emphasising the importance of recycling initiatives.
- 2 the proposals for an additional target saving of £70,000 put forward by the Leader of the Council be noted, but with concern, and

- 3 the budget projections at Appendix BS06 and BS07 be noted as the basis for developing draft budgets for the next cycle of meetings.

ET21

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS: RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION REFERRED BY COUNCILLOR MRS C A BAYLEY**

The Committee considered the following notice of motion which had been referred from the Council meeting on 16 July 2002:-

- (i) The Council views with concern the increasing number of telecommunications masts being applied for and given permission throughout the country.
- (ii) It notes that there is considerable concern over possible effects on health from the emissions from these devices. In certain areas, there appears to be a correlation between the occurrence of cancer and the proximity of such masts.
- (iii) Although no effects on health have been scientifically proven, great doubts are expressed by ordinary people.
- (iv) This Council calls upon the Government to change the regulations regarding the installation of telecommunications masts, in respect of their allowed proximity to residential properties and educational establishments, until such time as it has been proved beyond doubt that there are no risks to health from these.

A report had been prepared advising Members of current advice and practice relating to the health implications of new telecommunications development. The report concluded that the current process allowed for comments from the public to be made and taken into account, although the narrow range of grounds for refusal, gave little flexibility for other issues and concerns about health and safety to be properly addressed. If all masts were to be brought within the planning application process, then this would give a greater opportunity for these issues to be more fully debated. With the courts acknowledging that concerns about health were material considerations, planning guidance and legislation should be amended to provide greater direction on these issues.

Councillor Mrs Cant commented that more recent applications for telecommunication masts had not been in unacceptable locations. However the Committee agreed that planning guidance should be amended regarding the installation of telecommunication masts in close proximity to residential properties and educational establishments. This would ensure that there was a precautionary approach until there was clear evidence that there were no risks to health.

RESOLVED that the Motion be approved and officers make representations to the appropriate Government department.

## CLEANSING SERVICES CONTRACTS

The Committee received a report, which reviewed the position with the existing service contracts for refuse collection, street cleansing and vehicle maintenance. Under the Compulsory Competitive Tendering arrangements, activities had been awarded to the lowest satisfactory tenders, Ecovert Ltd for refuse collection and the Direct Service Organisation (DSO) for street cleansing and vehicle maintenance. These had been re-tendered in 1996 for an initial period of 6 years and 8 months with the option to extend for a further 3 years and 4 months. Notice had to be given 6 months prior to 31 March 2003 to ensure continuity of these services at existing contract costs and terms.

The performance of the contractors was reported. With regard to refuse collection, the service had performed consistently well. There were operational and financial advantages in extending this contract for the maximum period to July 2006. This timing would accord with the changes which might be required in 2006/07 with Essex County Council's proposals for waste management.

With regard to street cleansing, the DSO's performance had not always been acceptable, owing to significant staff resources being used on other work to generate external income. These problems were now being addressed, but it would be prudent to offer initially only a 12-month extension with any further extension dependant upon achieving the required performance improvement. The Vehicle Maintenance Contract had provided an excellent service over the years and had established an experienced team with particular knowledge of specialist local authority vehicles. However, as the nature of vehicles and the frequency of servicing was constantly changing, officers felt there should be a review of future needs before the contract could be extended to the maximum period.

Members of the Committee mentioned incidents when they had not been satisfied with the performance of the refuse and recycling services. They mentioned litter being dropped from the vehicles and the bins. Also, the recycling boxes were not always replaced in the same position. The Recycling Officer said that the service was monitored, but it would be helpful if Members could inform officers of any problems as soon as they occurred. Some Members suggested that it might be useful to have an informal meeting with the Head of Environmental Services prior to the next meeting of the Committee to discuss any problems with the service.

### RESOLVED that

- 1 the refuse collection contract with Ecovert Ltd be extended until July 2006,
- 2 the Street Cleansing Contract with the DSO be extended initially for 12 months to 31 March 2004 and be subject to a further review of performance, and
- 3 the Vehicle Maintenance Contract with the DSO be initially extended for 12 months to 31 March 2004, subject to completion of a review of service specifications with a view to extending the contract until July 2006.

ET23

**FLOOD DEFENCE**

The Committee was updated on progress on a number of initiatives to reduce the risk of future flooding that had been set in motion following the events of 2 October 2001. In relation to Bridge End, Saffron Walden, the report on the study of the catchment of the Madgate Slade had now been received. The report confirmed that the two main constrictions on the stream were the culverts between Bridge End Gardens and Bridge Street. The report gave details of three options for reducing the risk of flooding from the stream in the Bridge End area. One involved improved maintenance. Another involved a new link between two water courses at Swan Meadow at an estimated cost in excess of £50,000. Members were asked to decide whether the reduction in the risk would justify this expenditure. It was suggested the Council had a greater responsibility to reduce flooding from the gardens in which it had a direct interest. The Chairman reported a letter from Councillor M A Hibbs who supported the conclusions of the report. Members considered that the effect of the remedial works completed or in hand should be assessed first before further works were carried out.

In relation to other watercourses, the Council had taken action for those which it was directly responsible. All locations had been checked and cleared as necessary. Officers continued to react on a daily basis to requests for advice and assistance from members of the public.

Initiatives had been taken by other authorities and details of these were outlined in the report. It was concluded that the Council was making progress in bringing the watercourses, for which it was responsible, up to a good level of maintenance and continued to use its powers, where appropriate, to ensure that others carried out their duties.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the progress to date be noted,
- 2 at this stage, there should be no further practical works by the Council at Bridge End, Saffron Walden, but the situation should be kept under review.

ET24

**MASTER PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING AT SECTOR 3  
WOODLANDS PARK GREAT DUNMOW AND AMENDMENTS TO THE  
APPROVED MASTER PLAN FOR SECTORS 1 AND 2**

The Committee was asked to approve the Master Plan for the development of housing at Sector 3 Woodlands Park, Great Dunmow and also to amendments to the approved plans for Sectors 1 and 2.

The Master Plan for Sectors 1 and 2 had been approved in 1994. Amendments were now proposed to relocate the school to a site at the southern edge of the development adjacent to the A120. Amendments were also suggested to the provision of affordable housing and to the provision of public open space. Members commented that, ideally, the affordable housing should be more widely dispersed throughout the development. The



Committee was pleased to note that the school, in its new location, could be brought into use at an earlier date, possibly for September 2004.

The Committee then considered the proposed Master Plan for Sector 3. This would include a development of 400 dwellings, together with associated roads, landscaping and open space. Two outline applications had been submitted for 300 and 100 dwellings respectively. The proposals were in accordance with Local Plan Policy and Government's advice in terms of density, provision of affordable houses and open spaces.

Members considered the matters raised during the public consultation but noted that they generally related to detailed matters which would be more appropriately considered as part of the planning applications.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Master Plan for Sector 3 Woodlands Park be approved as a basis for considering planning applications and Section 106 Agreements relating to the detailed development of the site.
- 2 The amendments to the 1994 Master Plan be approved in relation to Sectors 1 and 2.

ET25

#### **STANSTED AIRPORT ADVISORY PANEL**

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel held on 15 July 2002 and considered the recommendation in relation to SA5, Night Flights Heathrow: Government Appeal. It had been recommended that no financial contribution be made to the consortium of local authorities opposing last year's ruling on night flights, but a letter of support be sent to the consortium.

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in Minute SA5 be approved.

ET26

#### **ROAD SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

At the meeting of the Council on 16 July 2002, the Chairman of the Saffron Walden Road Safety Advisory Committee had asked that Minutes of the meetings be considered at future meetings of this Committee. Members sympathised with this request, but commented that this would be contrary to the new Committee arrangements. However, Members did want to be informed of matters being considered by the Road Safety Advisory Committees and it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes be sent to Members of the Committee for information when the Environment and Transport agenda was circulated.

**ET27 WASTE STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as Members required the information before the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Thawley advised the Committee that the launch of the consultation on the Waste Strategy Document would be held on 4 and 8 October at the Haybridge Hotel, Ingatestone.

**ET28 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in paragraph 7 and 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

**ET29 STANSTED HEALTH/COMMUNITY FACILITY**

*Councillor Mrs Cheetham declared a prejudicial interest in this application and did not speak or vote. The Vice-Chairman took the chair for the consideration of this item. Councillor Mrs Cant declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item.*

The Council had received a request from the Uttlesford PCT to consider whether it would agree in principle to lease part of the Lower Street car park for the provision of a health/community facility. The housing development at Rochford Nurseries, Stansted Mountfitchet had provision for a health centre, but the Primary Care Trust felt that it would be more appropriate in a more central location. A number of sites had been looked at, and the most viable options appeared to be the site at Elms Farm and on the Council's car park at Lower Street. Feasibility studies of these sites were being carried out.

The Lower Street car park was a pay and display facility and its use had been steadily increasing. The proposed facility would require land at the car park, close to its entrance. To make up for the shortfall in parking spaces, use could be made of the tapering land at the far end of the site. However, the potential to extend the car park in the future would then be lost, and the Council did not own any other land in Stansted Mountfitchet for car parking provision.

A valuation of the land had been obtained from the District Valuer and the Committee was asked to consider whether it agreed to the principle of releasing the site and if so, on what terms.

Members considered this issue in detail and were of the view that the demand for car parking at Stansted was likely to increase. It was agreed that a town centre location was preferable for the health centre, but this was not considered to be the suitable site. There was also concern about the safety of the access road and the junction.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Committee was not prepared to release land at the Lower Street car park as to do so would:-
  - (i) undermine the long-term viability of the public car park.
  - (ii) reduce the present value of the public car park by moving it further from the Lower Street shops and making it less attractive to users, and
  - (iii) increase traffic on the access road and junction with Lower Street to the detriment of safety of pedestrians and motorists.
  
- 2 The potential of shared use of the Elms Farm site by Uttlesford District Council, the Primary Care Trust and Stansted Parish Council be investigated.

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm.

**STATEMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE –  
10 SEPTEMBER 2002**

**MRS MACDONALD – WENDENS AMBO PARISH COUNCIL**

Thank you for giving me two minutes of your time to put the case for Wendens Ambo Parish Council against the proposed cycle path Phases 1 & 2.

Having studied the Interim Report very carefully, Wendens Ambo Parish Council are appalled at the recommendation that the Wenden Road should be made one way to all traffic exiting Saffron Walden. This would cause the vast majority of motorists to turn right at the Fighting Cocks junction and then left onto Sparrows End Hill which, in its own right, a very dangerous junction. Extra traffic using this road would lead to more congestion and, as is so often the case, when traffic is at a standstill due to an accident, major or minor; Saffron Walden would become grid locked.

To use a raised white line on the Wenden Road to mark the cycle way is not deemed safe. It is stated in the Report that a 40 mph speed limit for vehicles is proposed. This would be unenforceable. There are only two mobile camera units in Uttlesford at present, and the police do not have the time or resources for constant speed checks on this road. The Parish Council is also concerned that young people would use this road as a racetrack.

Cyclists are on record as saying that they would not use Phase 1 of the cycleway if it were provided, and that it is an unnecessary waste of money. Phase 1 design puts cyclists in more danger than at present and if implemented, would mean destroying the aesthetic value of the village. Cyclists want to use the shortest possible route, and to be expected to use a crossing point 50 meters in the direction of Littlebury in order to cycle in the direction of Newport is something they would not do.

The postcard survey done on 16 July is severely flawed and the results suspect. It would appear from the survey that 250 cyclists per day are expected to use the cycleway, ie  $250 \times 7 = 1,750$  per week. The Essex Highway Authority have now revised the number to 108 per day, ie  $108 \times 7 = 756$  per week. The Parish Council cycle survey shows that the most cyclists in any one day was 28.

The £150,000 for cycling facilities does not have to be spent in Uttlesford to encourage cycling. This would include properly safe and secure cycle storage facilities, which are critical for encouraging the use of cycles. Uttlesford District Council in London Road has cycle racks tucked away around the back of the offices. These racks should be placed at the front of the building so that cyclists can feel safe when going to, or leaving their cycles, especially during the winter months. Racks in front would also deter theft and damage. Cycle racks at Saffron Walden County High are too far removed from the school to encourage children to cycle. Some cycle racks in Saffron Walden are in the wrong place and are of the wrong type.

There is no reason why cyclists should not be able to cycle both ways down a one-way street with designated cycle lanes being provided. Several streets in Saffron Walden could be converted with this money.

I am sure that you can appreciate that Wendens Ambo Parish Council is not anti cyclists. In fact, we have many enthusiastic cyclists in our village. If a cycle way from Saffron Walden is to be provided a properly designed and constructed, off road facility is a must. A small budget scheme, which endangers cyclists, pedestrians and motorists alike, should never be allowed.

To allow this proposed scheme to proceed will cause unnecessary gridlock in Saffron Walden and endanger lives, which is unnecessary.

Wendens Ambo Parish Council ask that this entire scheme does not proceed any further, and that the money be spent on the above suggestions.

Marion MacDonald  
Wendens Ambo Parish Council