

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES HIGH STREET GREAT DUNMOW at 7.30 pm on 12 NOVEMBER 2002

Present:- Councillor Mrs J F Cheetham – Chairman.
Councillors Mrs C A Cant, R A E Clifford, Mrs C D Down, Mrs E J Godwin, D M Jones, Mrs E Tealby-Watson and M L Foley.

Also present:- Councillors R J Copping, M A Gayler, P G F Lewis, D M Miller and R J O'Neill.

Officers in attendance:- Miss E Anderson, P Dickson, N Harris, P Hunt, Mrs S McLagan, J Mitchell, B D Perkins, R M Secker and E J Spencer.

Also in attendance:- P Hardy – Essex County Council.

ET30 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Mr C Goldie from the Bridge End Residents' Association made a statement about flood defence in Saffron Walden. A copy of the statement is attached to these Minutes.

ET31 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W F Bowker, G W Powers and R C Smith.

ET32 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record with the exception of the following two amendments:-

Minute ET11 – The copy of the statement made by Mrs McDonald of Wendens Ambo Parish Council, attached to the Minutes, was incorrectly copied from the original. The statement should have read “the £150,000 for cycling facilities does not have to be spent on a cycleway. The money could be spent in Uttlesford...”

Minute ET15 – The Parish Council did not say that the most dangerous crossing point was the B1383 and the possibility of a Pelican Crossing opposite the Fighting Cocks should be investigated. This was in fact suggested by Members of the Committee.

ET33

BUSINESS ARISING**(i) Minute ET14(i) – Speed Policy Review**

Councillor Jones reported that the traffic lights at the Four Ashes junction, Takeley, still let too few cars turn towards the Airport at any one time and asked Mr Hardy from Essex County Council if he would look into this situation again. In reply, the Committee was informed that squeezing more time out of the lights for one movement would hold up other movements. Mr Hardy also commented that Warish Hall Road would now remain closed until April 2003 as the bridge being built had not yet been finished. The Committee was also informed that the closures at Bangers Green would consist of 2 five-day closures. Councillor Mrs Cheetham commented that with the Warish Hall Road closure the light changes at the Four Ashes Takeley needed to be looked at.

(ii) ET21 – Telecommunications

Councillor Clifford agreed with this Minute and informed the Committee of a letter he had received from Orange on 24 October 2002 asking for pre application comments on an Orange based station in Stansted Mountfitchet.

(iii) ET29 – Stansted Health/Community Facility

Councillor Clifford expressed his disappointment at the option of a Health/Community Facility at the Lower Street car park, Stansted being ruled out. He believed that there was enough room in the car park for this facility and if the PCT had problems with other options, then this site should be revisited.

ET34

FLOOD DEFENCE – REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 ON 9 OCTOBER 2002

This matter had been considered at the Committee's last meeting when it had been decided that, at this stage, there should be no further practical works by the Council at Bridge End but the situation be kept under review. This decision had been called in and discussed by the Scrutiny Committee 2 at its meeting on 9 October 2002 when it was resolved that it be referred back to the Environment and Transport Committee for reconsideration.

Councillor O'Neill highlighted the problems caused by poor flood defence in the Bridge End area. People living in Bridge Street had a real problem in renewing their house insurance, residents could not solve the problems by themselves and therefore asked Uttlesford District Council to investigate the situation. He felt it would be simple to join the two Slades and wanted the Council to investigate this matter, or any additional maintenance and running costs, and then bring this information back before the Committee.

Councillor Miller also felt that the residents could not carry out the investigation without the help of the Council. He reported that where the two Slades met, water came together and ran into Bridge End and he suggested that this water could not be directed through Audley End Park as the existing Slade was much deeper than the proposed diversion through the

park. This option should be investigated and if it was not viable then move on to the next idea to eventually come up with a solution. The Engineering and Safety Officer commented that the proposed diversion through the park would require re-grading and engineering work would need to be carried out.

Members felt that the Council had an obligation to get those responsible to take action carrying out routine maintenance. Councillor Mrs Godwin suggested arranging a meeting of the Environment Agency, riparian owners, the Town Council, Essex County Council, Highways Authority, Residents of Bridge Street and local Members to get together and identify who was responsible for flood defences in specific areas, highlight work that needed carrying out, prepare cost plans and work on plans to improve the situation.

Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson asked if there were cost strategies for flood defence and commented that Councils which were forward thinking in resolving problems had ended up bearing the costs. Councillor Mrs Cheetham commented on the current budget arrangements. Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson also asked for clarity in relation to planning applications and engineering works outlining which applications were necessary for what types of work and who to approach regarding flooding.

RESOLVED that a meeting be arranged for organisations and riparian owners responsible for land in and around the Bridge End area.

ET35

PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS – FARMADINE GROVE SAFFRON WALDEN

The Committee considered proposed amendments to existing waiting restrictions for Farmadine Grove, Saffron Walden. Concerns had been raised with the local police about the danger of parked vehicles at the junction and the dangers for children crossing the junction on their way to the two schools situated along South Road. The local police had recorded 5 incidents since January relating to the junction and the residents of Farmadine Grove were in favour of the waiting restrictions. Members considered an objection to the proposal.

RESOLVED that notwithstanding the objection received, arrangements be made to introduce the no waiting at any time restriction and the length of the restriction be reduced by 5 metres on both sides to coincide with the 15 metre length restriction on South Road at the junction.

ET36

PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS – FOUR ACRES SAFFRON WALDEN

The Committee considered a proposal for waiting restrictions at Four Acres, Saffron Walden to ease traffic congestion and increase road safety, in particular for emergency vehicles requiring access in and out of Stanley Wilson Lodge. It had been noted by the Town Council that problems were occurring by vehicles parked at certain times of the day by commuters and parents. One objection had been received which was considered. The Area Manager from Essex County Council informed the Committee that Stanley

Wilson Lodge had just had a new car park and the proposed waiting restrictions would improve access.

RESOLVED that notwithstanding the objection received, arrangements be made to introduce the waiting restrictions as published and described in the schedule at appendix A to the report in accordance with the County Council's standard order making procedure.

ET37

PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS – HARVEY WAY SAFFRON WALDEN

The Committee considered a proposed waiting restriction for Harvey Way, Saffron Walden. The junction at Harvey Way, turning onto Ashdon Road, had been highlighted on several occasions by the Road Safety Committee at its meetings. A number of objections had been received from residents of Harvey Way, which Members considered.

RESOLVED that notwithstanding the objections received, arrangements be made to introduce the no waiting at any time restriction. However, in light of the injury/accident record and the comments received, the proposed restriction be reduced by 8 metres, bringing the total length of the restriction to 22 metres on the eastern side.

ET38

DRAFT BUDGETS 2003/04

The Principal Accountant asked the Committee to consider a report on the revised estimates of direct costs and income for 2002/03 and estimates for 2003/04 as a basis to prepare next year's service plans and figures in full. The Committee had a £70,000 savings target. The detailed figures were outlined in the report. The estimate for 2003/04 included variations in paragraph 13 of the report which were £14,000 in excess of the target of £70,000. Therefore, an additional overall saving of £84,000 was required. The Committee was asked specifically to consider matters relating to the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership, a contingency sum for regional planning public examination, sponsorship income and an officer position in the Building Surveyors' section.

Members expressed concern over the sum of £80,000 for sponsorship income. This figure seemed over optimistic and Members asked what a realistic sum would be. The Director of Community Services informed the Committee that to date only a sum of £300 a year from the transfer of the Close Gardens to the Town Council had been achieved as the only direct saving at present. Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson enquired if there were any business proposals to provide sponsorship. The Head of Environmental Services informed the Committee that it was hard to get sponsorship from businesses which would lead to on-going revenue savings in this area and commented that it was difficult to get sponsorship through offering advertising for businesses. The Head of Community and Leisure informed the Committee of the lack of interest in the grants to village stores scheme despite offers being made to all village shops in the District via a visit from the Community and Development Manager. The village stores did not have any schemes that

required grant funds. Therefore, none of this budget had been used. Members agreed to discontinue this scheme.

The Director of Community Services informed Members that depot rationalisation could result in some merger of the three existing depots at Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Newport.

Members agreed that membership of the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership was necessary. They also agreed to keep the bus token scheme in operation. Councillor Gayler informed Members of a similar transport scheme for disabled residents, which was about to be discontinued, so it was even more important to continue our scheme.

The Head of Community and Leisure reported that increasing the parking charges by 10p on tariffs right across the board would provide a possible additional income of £85,000. Members agreed that car parking tariffs in Uttlesford were currently reasonably priced in comparison to towns in surrounding districts so an increase could be justified. A number of options were discussed. Prices could be increased equally on tariffs right across the board or raised on a sliding scale. When considering the increase Members requested that convenient coinage be used. Members were advised that if tariffs were increased on a pro rata basis this would only provide approximately £75,000 additional income. Members agreed that Officers should seek to achieve a minimum of £75,000 additional income and present permutations of car park tariffs to the Committee at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that :

- 1 The Committee note that its target has not yet been met,
- 2 The possible savings set out in Appendix BS09 and the matters highlighted in paragraph 17 of the report be approved with consideration of the following items being taken into account:
 - (a) Possible savings in relation to depot rationalisation and increased car parking charges.
 - (b) Savings in relation to increased building control income, residents parking and cessation of the village shop scheme.
 - (c) Continuation of membership of the Greater Cambridge Partnership and a contingent sum for the public examination of the regional plan.
 - (d) The additional sponsorship sum of £80,000 not being accepted.
- 3 In light of these decisions, service plans for 2003/04 and full budgets be prepared by officers for consideration at the next cycle of meetings.

The Head of Environmental Services and the Services Manager presented a report, which outlined six broad options designed to meet various countrywide targets. Uttlesford District Council currently had a high recycling achievement level so the report examined the options with the emphasis on recycling. Whatever option the Committee chose would result in a change in funding required by this Authority to provide the appropriate collection systems in the local area.

Councillor Thawley proposed that the Council adopt option 1 which had very high levels of recycling and composting and did not rely on thermal treatment. However, this option did require a 2% achievement target for mechanical biological treatment (MBT), which did not include treating any recyclable material. The Head of Environmental Services informed the Committee that home composting could not be counted towards targets in the Strategy. Although a high number of residents were composting at home, this could only be included in the figures if it was collected and taken away by the Council to be recycled. Councillor Thawley also wanted to include the following in the strategy: provision of suitably scaled local in vessel composting, kerbside collection of organic waste unsuitable for garden composting and funding to extend kerbside collection to include glass and the remaining metals such as foil. Councillor Mrs Cant seconded the amendment and reiterated that thermal treatment should not be an option. Various detailed matters could be referred to in the letter setting out the Council's response.

The Services Manager pointed out that energy from waste incineration could be obtained and reliance on achieving 60% recycling was very risky and that opting for option 3 would give more flexibility. High recycling targets could still be aimed for, therefore, reducing the amount of thermal treatment. The Head of Environmental Services reported that Mersea Island could not reach a target over 60% recycling in such a close community, so it was not realistic that this target could be met in a district this size. He pointed out that option 3 strove for the highest levels of recycling and how a bid with a private group to give rewards for putting out minimal amounts of rubbish was being worked at. Charging to take away an excess of rubbish was not an option.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1 the principle of option 1 be put forward as this authority's preference, with emphasis on continuing to strive for recycling targets, adopted in the Essex Authorities Working Together Statement,
- 2 Attention be given to the need for local in vessel composting and bulking or sorting facilities to achieve recycling targets,
- 3 the need for a continuous countywide publicity campaign to achieve recycling targets be highlighted.

ET40 EASTERN SECTOR REDEVELOPMENT GREAT DUNMOW

The Head of Planning Services presented a report on the progress of the revised application which had received conditional approval at the last Development Control and Licensing Committee. There was also an outstanding motion in relation to the scheme that needed to be considered. Uttlesford's contribution of land was conditional on the planning application meeting certain requirements as laid out in the report.

The requirements previously identified by this Committee had been met.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1 The conditional permission and legal agreement meets the requirements for the release of the car park land.
- 2 In the light of the above there was no need to consider the motion.

ET41 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PLANNING SERVICES

The Head of Planning Services presented a report on the progress of the Best Value Review. The Planning Department was due to complete this review by July 2003. Due to an abnormally high workload for the planning service, staffing difficulties and the timing of the office move, there could still be a further delay in completing the Best Value Review.

RESOLVED that the completion date for the formal Best Value Review of Planning Services be extended beyond July 2003 but no later than October 2003 and that the Scrutiny Committee 2 and Development Control and Licensing Committees be advised accordingly.

ET42 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they included the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in paragraphs, 1, 7, 8 and 9 of part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

ET43 REQUEST FOR EARLY RETIREMENT THROUGH EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

A request for early retirement was received from an officer in Planning Services on the ground of efficiency of the service.

RESOLVED that the request be supported and forwarded to the next Resources meeting on 21 November 2002 for final approval.

ET44 STAFFING IN THE BUILDING SURVEYING SECTION

The Head of Building Surveying requested the Committee to create a new post of Clerical Assistant within the Building Surveying Section and that the current work based trainee be directly appointed to the post.

RESOLVED that the proposal that a Clerical Assistant post be established and the work based trainee be appointed to the post be supported and forwarded to the next Resources meeting on 21 November 2002 for final approval.

ET45 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**(i) Waste Consortium Meeting**

Councillor Thawley reported that in the past a number of members of the Environment and Transport Committee had regularly attended meetings of the Consortium of Essex Waste Collection Authorities but had now ceased to attend. It had now become necessary for Members to attend these meetings again and it was therefore

RESOLVED that Councillor Thawley and Councillor Jones be appointed to represent Uttlesford District Council at future meetings.

The meeting ended at 10.05 pm

**FLOOD DEFENCE IN SAFFRON WALDEN
STATEMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
12 NOVEMBER 2002
MR C W H GOLDIE FOR THE BRIDGE END RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
SAFFRON WALDEN**

Though I represent only those Saffron Walden residents who live in Bridge End, I want to emphasize that the damage of flooding affects other areas of the town as well, particularly those near the Southern Slade (also called the Town Slade). Flooding is a problem for the whole of this the largest town in the District, a problem that demands action. We were encouraged to learn recently that the Town Council has commissioned a hydrological survey of the Town Slade watercourse and we hope that the District and Town Councils will work together to find a solution to our problem. The Councils can achieve so much more than residents can as individuals or in groups such as our Residents' Association and we look to the District Council for leadership and action in protecting our town against flooding.

I will re-state the points I made to Scrutiny Committee 2 on 9 October and add some further comments to explain what we hope and trust the Council will do.

The Hannah Reed Report

We have explained why a hydrodynamic study should be commissioned to supplement the Hannah Reed report, which is based on steady-state modelling and is therefore only of marginal interest as it stands particularly as it contains no conclusions. Perhaps that is just as well, because any conclusions drawn from that very limited report would be likely to be misleading.

Improved maintenance of the watercourse of the Madgate (Northern) Slade

The Council undertook to clear the sections of the watercourse for which it is responsible and we have been given to understand that this was to be funded from the Council's Land Drainage budget. This work, which should include the clearance of all vegetation has not been done. It should be carried out as soon as possible and the Council should identify all the other riparian owners and ensure that they clear and keep clear their sections. Moreover, this is not a one-off task. We ask the Council to plan and budget for continuing maintenance of the watercourse.

Provision of a new link from the Southern (Town) Slade at Swan Meadow to an existing watercourse (the Lower Channel) through Audley End Estate

This proposal from the Hannah Reed report requires full investigation, starting with dialogue between the Council and Audley End Estate and then a feasibility study and costings.

Flood defences north of Bridge Street

A number of ideas and proposals have been put forward, including one that was reported to the Committee by the Officers at the Committee meeting on 10 September 2002, viz the provision of flood water storage on the open space southeast of Bridge End Gardens and on some open space to the northeast. As the Officers said, feasibility studies for these schemes could be carried out in-house, though some additional survey work would have to

be bought in. The Council should provide funds for feasibility studies for these schemes and arrange for those studies to be carried out as soon as possible.

Drainage of surface water

It is essential that the storm drains be kept clear of debris and other obstructions to the flow of water, but in addition urgent action should be taken to implement the proposal already made by Essex Highways to deal with surface water flowing down Windmill Hill and from the adjacent allotments into Bridge Street. The present situation is that water flowing down the hill and from the allotments not only exacerbates the river problem but, very often, causes flooding itself. The proposal is that a new drain should be created to carry that water away into the Slade on the south side of Bridge Street. That is a matter for Essex Highways to see to, but we are sure that the Council could be very influential in pressing Highways to carry out the work.

Urgent action is required. Scientific studies inform us that in the predicted climate change during our new century we can expect violent storms and floods to strike five times as frequently as during the last century. At a meeting on 29 November 2001, arranged by the Council for local residents for the purpose of discussing flooding and the prevention of flooding, Councillor Robert Chambers told us that the Council would do whatever was necessary to deal with the menace of flooding. We are appalled that nothing significant has yet been done and we urge the Council to take the lead in flood prevention and take action now. The initial work (the ongoing maintenance of the watercourse, the feasibility studies, the estimating of the costs of the various proposals and pressing Essex Highways to take action) will not involve large sums. When costings are available, a search for funds from the Government and other sources can begin, but meanwhile we urge the Council to press ahead with that initial work.