

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 26 NOVEMBER 2002

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

Also present:- Councillors R P Chambers, Mrs S Flack, P G F Lewis,
Mrs J E Menell, D M Miller, R J O'Neill, A C Streeter,
R W L Stone and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- W Cockerell, R Harborough, B D Perkins and
M T Purkiss.

ET45 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs E J Godwin,
G W Powers and Mrs E Tealby-Watson.

ET46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors W F Bowker, Mrs J F Cheetham, Mrs C D Down, D M Jones,
P G F Lewis, Mrs J E Menell, A C Streeter, A R Thawley and P A Wilcock
declared their interests as members of SSE.

ET47 JUDICIAL REVIEW

Councillor Mrs Cheetham informed the meeting that in the High Court earlier
in the day, the Judge had agreed with complaints from Kent and Essex
County Councils that the consultation process being used by the Transport
Secretary was 'irrational and unfair' because it left out the possibility of
expansion at Gatwick. The Secretary of State now had 14 days to appeal
against the decision. The High Court action regarding the human rights issue
had been lost.

ET48 RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT

Councillor Streeter, the Chairman of the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel,
congratulated officers on preparing an excellent draft response to the
Government. He said that the Panel had given careful consideration over a
number of meetings to the recent Government consultation and other
Members of the Council had joined in the discussions. He said that since the
last meeting of the Panel an executive summary and a section regarding the
Government's consultation process had been added to the draft response.

Councillor Mrs Cheetham also thanked the officers for their hard work and
congratulated them on producing an excellent document. She also thanked

the members of the Panel for undertaking their work in such a constructive manner.

The Committee then considered the draft response in detail. The Director of Community Services said that the Executive Summary would be circulated widely. It was agreed that item (xii) of the summary would be included as part of item (xi) and item (xiii) would be renumbered accordingly.

Councillor Mrs Menell suggested that the Section on noise should include reference to the Munich studies and officers would obtain further information on this from the Primary Care Trust. It was also agreed that the importance of the Grade I listed Takeley church and other historic churches in the area needed to be highlighted in the response.

Councillor Stone said that the document should refer to the ambient noise levels in Uttlesford which would illustrate that the low level of background noise in the district would make increased aircraft noise far more noticeable and disturbing. Officers agreed to take some further readings in the district and to include this information in the report.

Following a suggestion by Councillor O'Neill, it was agreed to amend the wording of the first line of paragraph 94 and to make all references to Sir Graham Eyre consistent.

It was agreed that paragraph 84 would be amended by the addition of the words 'run-off from the extensive hard services on a greatly enlarged airport would require attenuation, because of the flood risk downstream to settlements such as Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet. Even with precautionary measures, water quality in the water courses running off the site is still likely to be affected significantly'.

In answer to questions from Members concerning Gatwick, the Director of Community Services confirmed that the Executive Summary, the body of the report and the final paragraphs dealt with this issue sufficiently. He also informed Members that the Council was still attempting to obtain further information from East Herts District Council concerning listed buildings and SSSIs. Councillor Jones suggested that details of the SSSIs and the National Nature Reserve should be added to the tables.

The Director of Community Services said that many letters expressing concern about the new runway proposals had been received by the Council and had been forwarded to the Secretary of State for Transport. Also, a number of letters addressed to the Secretary of State had been copied by individuals to the Council. He said that these letters had been helpful in formulating the Council's response and the individuals concerned would be sent a copy of the summary and their assistance would be acknowledged in a press release.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 the draft response, as amended at the meeting, should be this Council's response to the Government's consultation.
- 2 A summary report be prepared for wide public circulation.

RPG14 OPTIONS CONSULTATION

Members considered a detailed report recommending how the Council should respond to the East of England Local Government Conference (EELGC) on its consultation on options leading to the first regional planning guidance for the East of England.

The document suggested a 'spatial planning vision' for the region which was 'to develop a prosperous outward looking and more sustainable region, respecting its diversity, maintaining and enhancing its assets, and sustaining and improving the quality of life for people who live in, work in or visit the region'.

The next stage for the Council's formal involvement would be objecting to/supporting the deposit version next summer.

It was explained that the consultation document suggested that the following key principles should continue to underline the strategy;

- The spatial strategy must continue to be based on the four dimensions of sustainable development.
- It must continue to tackle social exclusion and deprivation.
- The environmental assets of the region must be respected.
- The spatial strategy should continue to work towards more sustainable patterns of development.
- It should continue to be based on increasing prosperity in all parts of the region, building on their local strengths in ways that protect and enhance the environment.

Members noted the particular problems in addressing the implications of the Government's proposed new airport policy for the next 30 years, when separate parallel consultations were taking place leading to policy decisions by the Government about the same time as the draft RPG 14 was due for submission to the Deputy Prime Minister. It was clear that the Government expected the EELGC to stick to the programme, not least because the RPG addressed many important issues beside airports. The Deputy Prime Minister also expected progress to be made by way of a positive response to his July 2002 statement on sustainable communities, housing and planning, in which he said he would work with regional and local partners in four areas in the south-east, including the London/Stansted/Cambridge sub-region, to establish where and at what scale significant housing growth could be achieved.

Councillor Mrs Cheetham said that, at a recent meeting, the Regional Planning Panel had determined a response to the SERAS report and had recommended that there should be no further runways at Stansted. She felt that this stance would help in responding to the RPG document.

The following amendments were agreed to the recommended response;
 Page 5 Paragraph 4 - delete 'or the new town approach'
 Page 6 Paragraph 4(iii) - cross reference to paragraph 12

Page 7 Paragraph 7 - add reference to the fact that development in the Stansted area would remove the current advantages of a regional airport in the countryside

Page 8 Paragraph 10 – Delete text and add “The Council is concerned that the market pressures leading to the development of new services focused on regional transport nodes may lead to a redirection of investment away from local services. These local services are valued and needed by the local community as much, if not more so, than strategic regional connections”.

Page 8 Paragraph 11 – Change the wording to read: “the Council does not support road user charging in urban areas under 100,000 population”.

Page 8 Paragraph 12 – Add to the second line the word ‘serious’ before the word ‘concern’

Page 9 Paragraph 15 - Delete the last line of the recommended response and emphasise that local housing needs have to be decided locally and that a general regional housing target is unhelpful

Page 9 Paragraph 16 - strengthen and include specific reference to rural Uttlesford.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the response submitted to the meeting and as amended be submitted to the East of England Local Government Conference,
- 2 representations be made to the EELGC that it should not assume any change to current Government airport policy or its specific implications for the East of England in preparing draft RPG14,
- 3 the Council’s response to the Department for Transport on the future of air transport consultation be sent to the EELGC.

ET45

SELECT COMMITTEES

The Director of Community Services reported that the Council had expressed an interest in the House of Commons Select Committee which would look at sustainable housing and development. Sir Alan Haselhurst MP had reported that the Council could make a further submission and officers would circulate the current submission for comment by Members of the Committee.

The Director of Community Services also reported that the Select Committee on Transport would be considering aviation and this would be another opportunity for the Council to make a submission.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.