

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES HIGH STREET GREAT DUNMOW at 7.30 pm on 14 JANUARY 2003

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, R C Smith
Mrs E Tealby-Watson and A R Thawley.

Also present:- Councillor R P Chambers

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillor Mrs C A Bayley.

Officers in attendance:- Miss E Anderson, Miss K Chapman, J B Dickson,
Mrs S McLagan, J Mitchell, B D Perkins and R M Secker.

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

ET46 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Dr P H Fentem, Vice-Chairman of Great Chesterford Parish Council, spoke about the proposed 50 mph speed limit in Great Chesterford. He said his Council supported the extended area to which the new 50mph speed limit should apply and he expressed his concern about the number of vehicles travelling in excess of 70 miles per hour along the B184 at Great Chesterford.

ET47 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G W Powers.

Councillor R P Chambers declared a non-prejudicial interest as the Chairman of the Essex Police Authority.

ET48 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 26 November 2002, were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the amendment that Councillor Jones was not a member of SSE.

ET49 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute ET34 – Flood Defence referred from Scrutiny Committee 2 on 9 October 2002

Members were given an update on the progress of the flood defence situation within the Bridge End area. The Director of Community Services reported that a meeting had taken place with residents and relevant organisations to

discuss ways of improving flood defences. The meeting had been very useful and a further technical study had been commissioned, the results of which were awaited. Officers had been vigilant during periods of recent heavy rain. Debris in the streams had been a contributing factor to impeding the flow of water and a number of trees were to be removed to enhance water flow. A further report would be given to this Committee at its meeting in March 2003.

(ii) ET33(ii) – Telecommunications

Councillor Clifford expressed how strongly he objected to this mast.

(iii) ET33(iii) – Stansted Health/Community Facility

Councillor Clifford expressed his concern over this issue and informed Members that the PCT had four years in which to achieve this project. Two years had already passed and the facility had not yet been built.

ET50

PROPOSED 40 MPH SPEED LIMIT – LITTLE CHESTERFORD

Councillor Chambers declared an interest as a member of Essex County Council.

Mr Hardy outlined a proposed 40 mph speed limit order for the B184 Walden Road in Little Chesterford. A roundabout to be built by a private developer on this stretch of road had been designed to make vehicles reduce their speed on approach. The stretch of road concerned met the criteria for a 40 mph speed limit. There had been one objection received in response to the informal publication from the Chief Constable of Essex Police. Planning permission for the roundabout had been granted by the Council and a 40 mph speed restriction was included in the legal agreement negotiated with the County Council.

Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson was in favour of the speed restriction as there had been many fatalities along this road. She would prefer to see a 50mph speed limit from Springwell to Stumps Cross as a total solution to the problem.

Councillor Chambers said he would pursue the matter further with the Chief Constable.

RESOLVED that

- 1 As the policy was clearly met, in this case the process be continued by the Area Manager to introduce the speed limit of 40 mph as set out in appendix A of the report.
- 2 The Chief Constable be informed of this decision.

ET51

PROPOSED 50 MPH SPEED LIMIT – GREAT CHESTERFORD

This proposal was for a 50 mph speed limit for the B184 Walden Road in Great Chesterford. One objection had been received from the Chief Constable of Essex Police. He would support the implementation of a 50 mph speed limit on the section of B184, which skirted the developed area of Great Chesterford. However, he had reservations about the extent of the proposed 50 mph speed limit, where for approximately 250 metres it was open countryside with no development on either side of the road up to and including the junction of Park Road.

Councillor Chambers reported that he would liaise with the Chief Constable, as with the 40 mph speed limit for Little Chesterford, and would ideally want to see a 50 mph speed limit from Springwell to Stumps Cross.

Councillor Mrs Cant felt that the speed restriction needed to begin before Park Road to enable drivers to slow down before reaching Jacksons Lane and generally all Members felt that it was important to include the section of road as shown in Appendix B (inset) of the report in the overall proposal for a 50 mph speed limit.

Councillor Thawley asked the Area Manager for an explanation as to why a 50 mph speed restriction was not already in place along this stretch of the B184 Walden Road. The Area Manager said that it did not meet the criteria to have a 50mph speed restriction at present, but informed Members of a new speed reduction strategy which was coming into force and would help extend the village envelope for speed restrictions. He suggested objecting to the Cabinet Member, Mr Williams, who was responsible for highway and transportation issues at ECC.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The Cabinet Member responsible for transportation at ECC be informed of the unanimous decision to introduce the 50 mph speed limit as set out in appendix A but including the area up to the Park Road junction (Appendix B, inset).
- 2 The Parish Council and Chief Constable be informed of this decision.

ET52

CAR PARK CHARGES

At the last meeting on 12 November 2002, it had been agreed that car park charges should, in principle, be increased and the Head of Community and Leisure should look into various permutations for car park tariffs. Members were presented with a report showing various options for car park charge increases. The Committee was looking to generate an extra £75,000 income from the car parks.

Councillor Mrs Bayley was strongly against Option D which included a 66% rise in charges for the first/short stay tariff, and thought that Option B, which would implement incremental tariff increases, ie 5p, 10p, 15p, would be better.

On the whole, Members were against charging for the Council offices car park on Saturdays as this would affect wedding parties and could encourage the public to park on the streets. Councillor Smith suggested that by reducing car park charges more people would be encouraged to come and use the facilities in Saffron Walden and this would increase retail turnover. Other Councillors thought that a small increase would be justified. Councillor Mrs Godwin said that free parking was not expected by the public and not an option in this day and age. Councillor Clifford put forward a proposal that Option A, ie that every tariff be increased by 10 pence, be implemented and Councillor Mrs Godwin seconded the proposal.

Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson preferred Option C, which in general increased the first tariff by 10 pence with others staying the same, combined with charging for parking at the Council Offices on Saturdays.

Councillor Thawley commented that it was sometimes hard to find car parking spaces in Uttlesford's car parks. He wanted to attract people to Saffron Walden and put forward Option C combined with paid parking at the Council offices on Saturdays but suggested wedding parties having tokens to enable them to park for free. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson. The amendment was then put to the vote and lost.

There was some discussion over the legality of parking on the Saffron Walden Common due to the Village Green Act. Officers reminded Members that this had been fully investigated.

RESOLVED that Option A, ie that every tariff be increased by 10 pence, be adopted.

ET53

BUDGETS AND SERVICE PLANS 2003/04

The Committee was presented with a report, which outlined draft revenue estimates for final consideration. The figures detailed in the report included savings and growth items approved at the previous meeting on 12 November 2002. The Committee was asked to reconsider these estimates including identifying further savings before their inclusion in the overall budget report to the Resources Committee on 23 January 2003.

Councillor Chambers congratulated the Committee on considering the target figure seriously and said that it had done well on the savings achieved. He noted that the possibility of income from sponsorship had been excluded from the budget but asked the Committee to continue to look for sponsorship opportunities.

Councillor Chambers suggested that the proposed increase of just over 100% in the resident parking charge in one year was too high and proposed an increase from £54 a year to £70 a year which would add £8,000 to the budget, but would, nevertheless, be a reduction of £8,000 from the amount approved at the last meeting. It was agreed that increased charges should be phased in over time to meet costs. He also noted that an extra £10,900 income would be generated from increased car parking charges.

Members were informed that there had been some abuse of the Residents Parking Scheme System. At present people carrying out work on houses in streets where the Residents Parking Scheme was in place were allowed to park free of charge on the street, but it had come to light that some had abused this. Members were asked to approve an additional clause that if persons were working on premises for more than one week then they would incur a parking charge. This was agreed.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Further changes to the draft revenue estimates be agreed as follows:
 - i. the budgeted income from the residents' parking scheme be reduced by £8,000;
 - ii. £10,900 extra income from the increase of car park tariff charges be added to the budget;
 - iii. £4,250 be added to the Elsenham Industrial Estate budget.
- 2 These proposals be recommended to the Resources Committee on 23 January 2003 for inclusion in the overall budget.

ET54

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 and 8 of part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

ET55

PLANNING SERVICES RESTRUCTURING

The Council had resolved at its October meeting that it was a priority to restructure Planning Services in order to improve the efficiency of the service. The Head of Planning and Building Surveying presented a report, which set out a new structure. Members asked Officers to pursue a number of matters.

RESOLVED that, subject to the views of the Development Control and Licensing Committee, the Committee recommends the Resources Committee to agree the structure which should be introduced on a phased basis.

ET56

GOLDS NURSERIES BUSINESS PARK - ELSENHAM

The Leisure (PFI) Project Manager presented a report updating Members about Golds Nurseries Business Park. It recommended an action plan for managing the business units and that an external agent be engaged to deal with the day to day management and letting of the industrial units.

Members asked if the lease could be surrendered earlier than 2010 and the Project Manager replied that the agent would be instructed to investigate whether this would be possible.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The action plan in relation to the Golds Nurseries Business Park be implemented.
- 2 An additional £4,250 be added to the 2003/04 industrial estate budget.

At this stage the public were readmitted to the meeting.

ET57

STREET CLEANSING BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Head of Environmental Services presented a report, which outlined the proposed improvement plan for street cleansing. Standards had been slipping in the last two or three years and the situation needed to be kept under control. Many service improvements had been made prior to the proposed draft improvement plan, which would help maintain and enhance a good quality service.

Councillor Smith mentioned that recently he had seen an increase in fly tipping and asked how Members and Officers could discourage this. The Head of Environmental Services commented that rubbish could be removed fairly quickly to discourage future fly tipping in the same area, and mentioned the fact that Uttlesford District Council removed cars and bulky items such as fridges and old furniture free of charge. Councillor Mrs Cant suggested advertising these services on the Council page. Councillor Thawley agreed that this was a good idea and that a note should also be sent to all Parish Clerks for their publications. The Head of Environmental Services agreed to do this.

In answer to a question from Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson, the Head of Environmental Services commented that prosecuting people for not clearing away their dogs' faeces was difficult as witnesses were needed and they were not always willing to attend court. He added that the Council would prosecute with enough evidence. Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson suggested education in schools regarding dog fouling in the form of a poster project.

RESOLVED that the Committee adopts the draft improvement plan for street cleansing services.

ET58

THE INTRODUCTION OF NOISE RELATED OPERATING RESTRICTIONS AT AIRPORTS

The Committee was presented with a report seeking its views on a Department for Transport (DfT) consultation document on the implementation of European Directive 2002/30/EC which, amongst other matters, enabled the banning of marginally compliant sub-sonic jets as part of aircraft noise

management. Officers had already made comments to the DfT in order to meet the consultation deadline. Members were asked either to endorse or amend the Officer comments.

RESOLVED that the following comments be forwarded to the DfT:

- i. The Secretary of State for Transport should be the competent authority for the designated London Airports including Stansted.
- ii. The Civil Aviation Authority, (excluding that part that deals with consultancy work) should deal with exemptions, appeals and enforcement matters.
- iii. A strict timetable for the assessment process should be included in the proposals.
- iv. Consultations should also take place directly with the appropriate local authority in addition to Consultative Committees.

ET59

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR EXISTING SMALL AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN PRIORS GREEN, TAKELEY/LITTLE CANFIELD

The Head of Planning and Building Surveying outlined a report on Supplementary Planning Guidance. There were a number of small islands of existing development within the Takeley/Little Canfield Local Policy 3 – Priors Green site and the report set out proposed supplementary planning guidance to ensure the proper development of the whole site.

RESOLVED that the supplementary planning guidance as set out in the report be approved for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks following which a further report would be presented to this Committee.

ET60

LONDON/IPSWICH MULTI MODAL STUDY (LOIS)

The Director of Community Services presented a report on the LOIS study, a strategy outlining transport developments within the area comprising the A12 corridor from the M25 (J28) to Ipswich and the A120 Stansted to Harwich corridor. This study outlined possible new public transport schemes, highway schemes and other measures, which could be put into place within this area.

Councillor Thawley commented on the absence of a rail link between Braintree and Stansted Airport and he also had concerns about the dualing of the A120 from Braintree to Marks Tey. He felt that bypasses might be more appropriate for this stretch of the A120.

Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson felt that tolling roads like the A12 would cause huge problems and felt that drivers would be inclined to avoid this road and take alternative routes, such as the A120, when exiting the M11.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The Council note the preferred strategy identified by the Consultants though it had concerns as to the implications of possible tolling of the A12 and the effect it would have on the A120/M11 and rural roads in Uttlesford.
- 2 Representations be made to the EELGC that it should take into account the LOIS study in opposing additional runways at Stansted Airport.

ET61

WINTER SERVICES

The Chairman considered this item to be urgent as an early response was required. Members were given leaflets from Essex County Council on winter services, which listed roads subject to precautionary salting. Councillor Smith had noticed that a number of roads used as school bus routes were not listed and it was therefore

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the Cabinet Member of Essex County Council to request gritting of roads used by school buses.

ET62

CONSULTATION ON HOME LOSS PAYMENTS UNDER THE LAND COMPENSATION ACT 1973

This item was passed for urgent consideration by the Chairman as the closing date for the consultation had already passed. Officers had written to the Government and were asking for Members' endorsement. The Government had issued a consultation on home loss payments relating to the unquantifiable losses, which were caused by the fact that persons had to vacate their homes at a time not of their choosing. None of the proposed options reflected house prices in this area.

Councillor Mrs Cheetham commented that in France the Government paid 15% over the market value of houses on home loss payments and thought that this Government should look at Europe when setting figures for the payments.

RESOLVED that the following comments be forwarded to the Government in response to the consultation on home loss payments:

- (i) Provision for payments should be up to at least £100,000
- (ii) Flat rate payments to tenants should be £10,000
- (iii) The system should recognise local housing markets
- (iv) Blight is already a problem in the Stansted area as a result of the recent Government consultation on Airports policy and an equitable compensation scheme has to take this into account.