

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 11 MARCH 2003

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

Also present: Councillor R P Chambers.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillors Mrs C A Bayley,
M A Hibbs, M A Gayler, R J O'Neill and R B Tyler.

Officers in attendance: Mrs M Cox, P Hunt, Mrs S McLagan, J Mitchell,
B D Perkins and R M Secker.

Also in attendance: P Hardy – Essex County Council.

ET63

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Michael Solomon and Mr McGowan spoke about the Supplementary Planning Guidance for existing small areas of development within Priors Green, Takeley/Little Canfield. They were concerned that the wording of the SPG document might prevent redevelopment of island sites if the development of the main proposal site did not go ahead.

ET64

APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C A Cant and R C Smith.

Councillors Mrs J F Cheetham, Mrs C D Down, Mrs E J Godwin, Mrs E Tealby-Watson and A R Thawley declared non-prejudicial interests in any items associated with Stansted Airport, as members of SSE.

Councillor Thawley declared a non-prejudicial interest in the Chesterford Park Research Master Plan as he was a scientist and might at some stage be employed at the Research Park.

ET65

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2003 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments.

- i) Minutes ET50 and ET51, Speed Limits at Little and Great Chesterford - There should be an additional resolution that "the Committee write to the Chief Constable asking for clarification of his policy and criteria on considering various speed limits".

- ii) Minute E50 Speed Limit Great Chesterford– in the second paragraph – Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson had referred to “accidents”, not fatalities, and the 50 mph speed limit should be from Saffron Walden to “Stumps Cross” rather than Springwell as stated in the Minute.

ET66

BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute ET 50 - Proposed 40 mph Speed Limit – Little Chesterford.

In answer to a question from Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson, the Committee was informed that the Chief Constable and the Essex County Council Cabinet Member had been advised of the Committee’s decision to overturn the objection from the Chief Constable.

(ii) Minute ET51 Proposed 50 mph Speed Limit – Great Chesterford

The Committee hoped that a response would soon be received from the Chief Constable to clarify the criteria for allowing certain speed restrictions. The Cabinet Member at the County Council had agreed to the speed limit on the B184 but not the 250 metres leading up to Park Road. The Committee asked that officers contact the new Cabinet Member at the County Council asking for this decision to be reconsidered. Councillor Thawley pointed out that the County Council was currently reviewing its speed limit policy.

(iii) Minute ET62 – Consultation on Home Loss Payments under the Land Compensation Act 1973

The response from the Government was circulated to the Committee.

ET67

FLOODING AT BRIDGE STREET SAFFRON WALDEN

At the meeting of the Committee in September 2002 it had been resolved to take no further practical action on flood defence at Bridge End. The matter had been referred back for further consideration by the Scrutiny 2 Committee and at this Committee’s next meeting in November it had been resolved that a meeting be held with residents and all other interested parties to consider current and proposed works and what other works might need to be carried out. At that meeting it was agreed to commission a company to undertake dynamic modelling on a revision of one of the proposals put forward in the original report. This was to provide an overflow weir which would allow the Slade, the tributary passing under the town, to discharge into the watercourse through Audrey End estate, the lower channel, at times of high flow. It was hoped that the revised scheme would provide a comparable reduction in levels but at a reduced cost.

The modelling had also been extended to investigate the effect of the lowering of the Bridge Street culvert. The results of the report had been received and had been passed to the County Council for further investigation.

Councillor O'Neill welcomed the report and the agreement by Essex County Council to further investigate the enlargement of the Bridge End culvert. He thanked officers for the work undertaken on this project. He was pleased that the commissioned report showed the value of further works and hoped that the Committee would agree to carry out the works to the lower channel. Councillor Hibbs agreed that this work should be undertaken. It would be of significant benefit to residents as well as protecting the Council's car park at Swan Meadow. Other Members commented that there were other places in the district that suffered flooding problems. It was agreed that officers would update the progress report on flooding sites in the district.

RESOLVED that

- 1 subject to the necessary consents and approvals, an acceptable tender being obtained and seeking other funding sources, the construction of the lower channel link be undertaken.
- 2 Essex County Council be requested to fully investigate the enlargement of the Bridge Street culvert.

ET68

DISTRICT OF UTTLESFORD ON STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER 2003

At the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 June 2001, members had resolved to introduce on street charging within the Residents' Parking Scheme. An order had now been prepared in accordance with this resolution. It provided for certain zones which were currently subject to the Parking Places Order to be made available for visitor parking on a pay and display basis. The Order had been published and 17 letters of objection had been received. The letters were attached and the report categorised into five main types of objection. Members were asked to decide whether or not to confirm the Order as drafted.

Councillor Tyler, who had been one of the Chairmen of the Parking Working Group said this was a difficult issue and passions often ran high. He was disappointed that the scheme was not self-financing at the moment. He said that the Residents' Parking Scheme had been detrimental to the vitality of the town centre and hoped that this Order would go some way to redress the balance. Other Members commented on the years of discussion and negotiation that had preceded the making of this Order and felt that the time had come to implement this scheme. The Committee was aware of the very real concerns of the residents and asked that the scheme be carefully monitored in terms of its take up, revenue and the degree of inconvenience caused to residents by being unable to park near to their homes. Councillor Bowker thought the proposal to be unfair and said that he would vote against. Councillor Hibbs said there were many conflicting interests and it would be very difficult to satisfy all parties.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the draft Order be approved.

- 2 a detailed monitoring report be submitted to the Committee in nine months time.

ET70

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

The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) had been prepared for the small areas of development within the larger allocation of Priors Green, Takeley/Little Canfield. Members had approved the SPG for public consultation at the meeting of this Committee on 14 January 2003. The six-week consultation period had ended on 3 March 2002 and the report set out the responses received and officers' comments. Members queried whether the 'Laurels' site could continue for business use development, if for some reason the Countryside site development did not go ahead. The Committee was informed that the merits of the island sites would be assessed individually if the Countryside development did not go ahead.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the SPG, as amended, in accordance with Appendix B be adopted as supplementary guidance in relation to Takeley/Little Canfield Local Policy 3 – Priors Green in the revised Deposit Local Plan on the understanding that this Guidance would not unreasonably prevent the appropriate development of island sites.
- 2 appropriate amendments to be put to the Inspector at the Local Plan Inquiry.

ET71

LOCALLY DETERMINED BUDGET PROGRAMME 2002/03 – 2005/06

The Committee was advised of the schemes recommended for implementation as part of the Locally Determined Programme for 2005/06. The Area Manager had now prepared an updated three-year rolling programme and an additional year, including 2005/06.

The budget allocation for 2002/03 was £164,000. This was likely to be similar in subsequent years and the programme had been developed on this basis. Members were advised that the footway element of the programme had not yet been prepared for the additional year. There were problems with the footway schemes relating to land acquisition and in some cases engineering issues. The footway programme would be reassessed and reported back at a later stage. The Committee discussed the proposed programme and Councillor Clifford thanked the Area Highway Manager for the three schemes which had recently been implemented in Stansted.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the additional year's programme for 2005/06 be approved.

- 2 a further report be made to the Committee regarding the footway element of the programme.

ET72

ESSEX DISABLED PEOPLES ASSOCIATION TRAVEL VOUCHER SCHEME

The Committee was informed that the Essex Disabled Peoples Association (EDPA) had, for the past three years been running a travel voucher scheme funded by the Lottery. The current lottery funding would cease in October 2003 and the EDPA were in the process of applying for a continuation grant over three years but it required an element of match funding. The Council had been approached for a grant of £600 in 2003/04, £1,200 in 2004/05 and £1,800 in 2005/06. The Scheme enabled people on low incomes with a severe mobility problem and without use of a car, to travel as and when they wanted to. Travel vouchers to the value of £300 were used instead of money to pay for a journey when travelling with registered wheelchair acceptable transport. The scheme was managed by the EDPA. The scheme operated countywide and there were currently six recipients for the service in Uttlesford.

Councillor Mrs Cheetham considered this scheme to be worthwhile but pointed out that this Council could only commit to funding for the new financial year. Members felt that there must be more Uttlesford residents who could benefit from this scheme and asked for more details to enable them to publicise the scheme more widely. Councillor Jones asked for further information about the cost of administering the scheme as the figures appeared relatively high.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the scheme be supported, subject to a successful Lottery bid.
- 2 a contribution of £600 be made for 2003/04 out of existing budgets, with possible funding for future years to be considered as part of the normal budgetary process.
- 3 the Committee be provided with details of the scheme's operation and financing.
- 4 all Members to be made aware of the existence of the scheme to enable them to assist with publicity.

ET73

ESSEX AND SOUTHEND ON SEA REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

The Committee received a report recommending a response to Essex County Council and Southend on Sea Borough Council on their Shaping the Future of Essex and Southend Consultation. The report recommended that the authorities should be informed that if they decided to proceed with preparation of a deposit draft replacement structure plan, the spatial patterns of growth should protect the rural character of Uttlesford. Any economic activity induced

by Stansted Airport should be accommodated in regional centres and regenerated areas.

RESOLVED that the Joint Structure Plan authorities be advised that

- 1 if they decide to proceed with preparation of a Deposit Draft Replacement Structure Plan, the scale of new development should be very limited to protect the rural and historic character of Uttlesford.
- 2 no new runways at Stansted should be assumed.
- 3 any economic activity induced by Stansted Airport should be accommodated in regional centres and regeneration areas.
- 4 the spatial pattern of growth should be based on regional centres.
- 5 the spatial pattern of growth should seek to safeguard the function of the M11 in facilitating long-distant trips between regions and, as far as possible, avoid further growth in its use for more local trips.

ET74

LONDON TO SOUTH MIDLANDS MULT-MODAL STUDY

It was reported that the London to Midlands Multi-Modal Study had been set up by the Government to make recommendations for a long-term strategy to meet passenger and freight needs within an area based on the M1, A1 (M) and M11 corridors. Its terms of reference included a specific requirement to make recommendations on the problems of east/west travel and the lack of a strategic east/west road between the A14 and M25 and an east/west railway. The Council had expressed its views at various key stages in 2001 and 2002 to the consultant team conducting the study. The final recommendations of the study had now been received and the report before Members set out comments on this strategy.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the East of England Local Government Conference be advised that the Council was concerned that the West Anglian main line enhancements of the four tracks between Stansted and Tottenham Hale, and additional platform and track capacity at Cambridge and Ely were not included in the ten-year plan.
- 2 Members support M11 widening with the additional capacity being safeguarded for high occupancy vehicle/coach lanes.
- 3 The EELGC be advised that the implications for the wider road network of introducing road user charging needs to be considered. The Council is concerned as to the impact on what will already be a very busy A120, and other potential consequences within rural Uttlesford. Any such policy initiatives in relation to road charging would have to be the subject of detailed study to spell out the implications and be subject to wide public consultation.

- 4 the EELGC be advised that it should take the findings of the LSMMMS into account in opposing additional runways at Stansted Airport.

ET75

PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT

The Committee was advised that on 10 February 2003 the distribution of the Planning Delivery Grant (PDC) had been announced in the House of Commons. The Government was making an additional £350 million available to local authorities over the period 2003-2006. Uttlesford had been awarded a grant of £246,261 for 2003/04. This was a large amount compared to many other authorities and reflected the improved development control performance between June 2001 and June 2002. The Government had suggested a number of areas in which the money could be spent and the report commented on these. The report concluded with the priorities that officers considered at this stage would improve service delivery.

- the appointment of independent consultants to carry out the best value review of planning services
- bringing forward the appointment of new staff following the approved restructuring of planning services
- funding the appointment of temporary staff to reduce “pressure points” in workload
- improvements in IT
- staff and Member training
- outsourcing handling of planning appeals and consideration of outsourcing certain categories of planning applications
- technical and administrative support for the enforcement service.

The Committee agreed with these suggestions and particularly emphasised the importance of additional staff resources for the enforcement service. Members had some concern about the outsourcing of planning services and also the potential cost of independent consultants but were reassured that further reports would be presented to the Committee.

RECOMMENDED to the Resources Committee that officers prepare a costed improvement and development plan for implementing the priorities in paragraph 17 of the report to take maximum advantage of the grant resources available.

ET76

CHESTERFORD PARK RESEARCH STATION MASTER PLAN

The Committee was given details of the Master Plan for the Chesterford Research Park. This was formerly an agricultural research station which was now being developed for science-based enterprises. The Local Plan required the Master Plan to be subject to public consultation. This would include the relevant parish councils and local residents as well as the usual statutory consultees. There would also be a public exhibition at which staff would be available to answer questions. Councillor Mrs Tealby-Watson said that this

decision to submit the plan for public consultation did not necessarily indicate its approval. There were a number of problems, in particular the traffic impact, that would need further discussion. She undertook to ensure that the parish council would inform all residents about the public exhibition.

RESOLVED that the Master Plan for the Chesterford Park Research Station be sent for public consultation and the results be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee.

ET77 **BEST VALUE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The refuse and recycling services were to be subject to a Best Value Review and the terms of reference were set out in the report.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny Committee 2 be recommended to approve the terms of reference

ET78 **ESSEX WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee was advised of the progress made in producing a Waste Management Strategy for Essex. All authorities had now agreed a vision to recover and recycle 60% or more of household waste and to meet individual and any pooled statutory targets by the defined dates. A short term and long term timetable for implementing this Strategy had been agreed.

RESOLVED that the Council endorse the broad strategy as agreed by the WMAB to deliver the local and national targets for Uttlesford and Essex.

The Committee agreed to the consideration of the following item on the grounds of urgency as Members needed the information before the next meeting of the Committee.

ET79 **CAR BOOT SALES – THE COMMON CAR PARK SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Committee was informed that complaints had been received from members of the public who had been injured when car boot sales had been taking place on the Common car park. Despite charities being provided with stricter guidelines to marshal the moving vehicles, there had been incidences of further minor injuries. The number of bookings for car boot sales had decreased over the years. Against this background officers considered that on grounds of health and safety and to avoid the possibility of a protracted lawsuit, it would be prudent to stop further sales on the Common car park. Organisations who had booked the car park for boot sales had been written to explaining the problems and there had been no complaints received. There was no problem with the boot sales being held at the Swan Meadow car park. A request had formally been made to the Town Council to investigate the possibility of actual sales taking place on the Common.

RESOLVED that the decision taken by officers to suspend holding car boot sales on the Common car park be noted.

ET80

TRANSFER OF GRANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT TO COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as the matter had been referred from another committee and a decision was required.

The Community and Leisure Committee had at its meeting on 4 March 2003 considered a new grant scheme. In order to ensure efficient and effective administration of the new scheme Members considered that the above grants should be administered by one committee.

RESOLVED that the grant responsibility for Community Transport be transferred from the Environment and Transport Committee to the new Contributions Fund Scheme administered by Community and Leisure Committee.

ET81

BUS SERVICE BETWEEN STANSTED AIRPORT AND BRAINTREE

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item on the grounds of urgency as representations had to be made before the next meeting of the Committee.

Officers had received reports that the bus service between Stansted Airport and Braintree might be withdrawn. This was a well-used service particularly important for school children and airport employees. In order to safeguard the interests of the many users of this very important service it was

RESOLVED to write to Essex County Council stressing the need to maintain the service.

ET82

LAST MEETING

This was the last meeting of the Committee under the current Council. The Chairman thanked Members and officers for all their support during the last four years.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm.