

Committee: Environment & Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Proposed Waiting Restrictions – High Stile, Rosemary Lane, Star Lane, Great Dunmow
Author: Paul Hardy, Area Highways Manager
(01371) 872888

Summary

- 1 To consider the objections received in response to the formal publication of the proposed waiting restrictions for High Stile, Rosemary Lane and Star Lane Great Dunmow.

Background

- 2 The measures have been prepared in association with amendments to existing waiting restrictions for a number of sites in Great Dunmow. The review has been undertaken following concerns relating to road safety due to parked vehicles and traffic congestion at these sites.
- 3 The informal consultation process on the proposals was undertaken in August 2003. The proposals were formally advertised from 16 October to 7 November 2003.
- 4 The proposals are shown in Appendix A and are supported by the Chief Constable County Councillor and Town Council. Six objections have been received for High Stile and these are detailed in Appendix B. Four objections have been received for Rosemary Lane and these are detailed in Appendix C. There is one objection relating to the limited parking bay in Stortford Road and this is detailed in Appendix C. Finally, six objections have been received for Star Lane and these are detailed in Appendix D.
- 5 The estimated cost of implementing the road markings and signs for each area will be approximately £400 per site. The measures will be funded from the Locally Determined Budget.

Conclusions

- 6 **HIGH STILE:** Two previous waiting restriction proposals have been considered prior to the extension to St Mary's School being completed. Objections were received by residents' on both occasions and it was resolved

at Committee not to proceed with these proposals. Concerns are still being raised to the Town Council and the Area Highway Manager to the problems caused by parked vehicles mainly at school times. The proposals have been drafted to try and improve the access in and out of High Stile during this period. The proposed restrictions at the junction with Stortford Road are predominately a standard junction protection marking. The proposals have been extended on both sides by an additional 8am -6pm restriction to remove the parking that occurs at this point throughout the day causing congestion problems particularly at school times. The bend has been included to improve safety and to deter parking at a location that is a blind bend. Vehicles often have to overtake parked cars on the wrong side of the road at a location with no forward visibility.

- 7 **ROSEMARY LANE/ STORTFORD ROAD:** The Town Council have received a number of complaints relating to vehicles mounting the footway on the south-western side when vehicles travelling towards Stortford Road continue to overtake the parked vehicles outside the properties between numbers 2 and 6 Rosemary Lane, This in turn causes a hazard for pedestrians walking their children to and from school along south-western side of Rosemary Lane.

Previously, consultation with residents' on the south-western side of Rosemary Lane was undertaken to introduce a series of bollards on the footway adjacent to their properties to deter the vehicles from mounting the footway, however, the majority of residents' objected to this request. As a result the Town Council formally requested the introduction of waiting restrictions for this location. The main part of the proposals involves introducing a short one hour restriction at the start and end of the school day. Even with this short restriction there are properties with no alternative off-street parking during these periods.

In addition to the above, one objection was received to the time changes for the limited parking bay situated in Stortford Road. This is an additional request received from the Police to extend the waiting times for all the limited 'on street' parking bays within the town.

- 8 **STAR LANE:** An increasing number of complaints have been made to the Town Council from residents' regarding people parking all day within Star Lane.

The area is covered by an existing Prohibition of driving Order with an exemption for access only. Enforcement has been increased recently by the local Police regarding this Order and this has improved the situation, however, there are still areas within Star Lane that are considered narrow and if parking takes place in these areas it will cause an access problem particularly for emergency service vehicles.

Since the proposals have been formally advertised the Town Council has received and supports a request for residents' parking to be introduced, unfortunately at this time it is not possible to consider this request with these proposals as it is a function undertaken by the District Council. Although some properties do have 'off street' parking, the majority do not.

RECOMMENDED that

HIGH STILE: That notwithstanding the objections received, it is recommended that arrangements are made to introduce the waiting restrictions as published and described in the schedule at Appendix A in accordance with the County Council's Standard Order Making Procedure.

ROSEMARY LANE / STORTFORD ROAD:

- (i) that notwithstanding the objections received, it is recommended that arrangements are made to introduce the waiting restrictions in accordance with the County Council's Standard Order Making Procedure, however, the restrictions on the south –eastern side between numbers 2 and 6 Rosemary Lane are not introduced and that the Area Highway Manager investigates the introduction of a series of bollards on the footway opposite; between 'Pargetters' and 'Chaucer House' to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement and protecting pedestrians walking to school.
- (ii) that notwithstanding the objection received for the limited parking bay in Stortford Road, it is recommended that arrangements are made to introduce the waiting restrictions as published and described in the schedule at Appendix A in accordance with the County Council's Standard Order Making Procedure.

STAR LANE:

- (i) that notwithstanding the objections received, it is recommended that arrangements are made to introduce the waiting restrictions as published for the area between Rosemary Lane and the Doctor's Pond and the area between numbers 6 and 10 Star Lane on both sides only.
- (ii) That the location is reviewed once decriminalisation of parking is introduced in October 2004 with the view to introducing residents parking which has recently received support from the Town Council.

Local County Member
Mrs S Flack CC

Local District Members
Mr M A Gayler
Mr J P Murphy
Mr J Clarke
Mr R J Copping
Mr F E Silver

Background Papers: Correspondence on this matter is held at the Area Office, Great Dunmow.

OBJECTOR	GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS	AREA MANAGERS COMMENTS
<p>HIGH STILE OBJECTORS:</p> <p>Mr G M Strutt 4 High Fields Great Dunmow CM6 1EY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed no waiting at any time restriction at no. 2 and 4 High fields will prevent residents from parking at all times. Could consideration be given to amending the no waiting between 8am -6pm Monday to Friday at the times when the road is at its most congested? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The properties have driveways and spaces will be available either side of the restriction. Due to the severity of the bend and lack of visibility the restriction should be 'at any time'.
<p>Mr D Turner 10 High Stile Dunmow CM6 1EB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no doubt that the proposals will reduce the congestion at the junction with Stortford Road and on the bend with High Fields. The congestion will simply move further into High Stile/ High Fields. Sometimes parents park on both sides of High Stile causing gridlock for several minutes. This can result in vehicles mounting the pavement to continue on their journey. The only solution is to introduce no parking for the full length of High Stile and round into High Fields where the bus turns round. Should these restrictions be implemented will have to be properly policed, there are numerous cases in Dunmow where current restrictions are ignored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment noted. With the introduction of any restriction there is the potential to re-locate the problem elsewhere. The proposals should reduce this. This was considered last time but objected to by residents'. Once Decriminalisation of parking is introduced the frequency of enforcement will be a decision taken by the District Council.
<p>Mr R Burland Chair of Governor Dunmow St. Mary's School High Stile Great Dunmow CM6 1EB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme reflects closely the proposals made by the school before the recent school expansion. Could the no waiting area be extended to the school gates? A legally enforceable no waiting area would command more respect. Although the school welcomes and supports the proposed restrictions, concern has been raised that there could be an increase in traffic speeds in front of the school. Will it be possible to monitor the traffic speeds and consider speed reduction measures if necessary? In addition, some parents have suggested the introduction of a crossing near the school on High Stile as it is difficult to cross High Stile when it is busy, its suggested more children would walk to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposals would have to be re-advertised if they were extended. Some areas for stopping will be retained in High Stile; however speed surveys can be undertaken. Could not be considered as part of this review, a school crossing patrol would be more suitable.

OBJECTOR	GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS	AREA MANAGERS COMMENTS
<p>Mr A B Pruddick 6 High Stile Great Dunmow CM6 1EB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme will lead to the relocation of the congestion further into Highfields, and will lead to an enforcement problem. The proposed restrictions will not make any difference. • Parents will be able to still drop off their children outside the school and turn round in High Stile/High Fields and they feel the restrictions do not apply to them. • Nothing is being considered to reduce the number of cars concerned with entering the estate. The vehicles that involve parents/pupils attending the school cause the congestion and hazardous conditions on the estate • What is needed is a through route whereby parents drive in one way and exit another or the school give up some land at the front for a lay-by. • There is of course a school bus when that arrives no parking restrictions in the world are going to solve that problem. • Residents' and their visitors will be affected and will have to park 200 - 300 yards from my house and if I choose to have a second car I will have to park in this area. I do not see why the restrictions need to be on a Saturday the problem is Monday to Friday. • Having 23 years police experience I know the police do not have the resources to enforce these restrictions twice a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the introduction of any restriction there is the potential to re-locate the problem elsewhere. The school have pursued a number of initiatives helped by a consultant to reduce car usage. • Once Decriminalisation of parking is introduced the frequency of enforcement will be a decision taken by the District Council. • The school have actively pursued a number of initiatives to reduce car usage. • Could not be considered as part of this review. • Access in and out of High Stile should be improved. • Agreed, the proposals tie in with other restrictions around the town so it would be less confusing. The majority of the areas are areas where you would want to discourage parking at any time. • The proposals are supported by the Chief Constable.

OBJECTOR	GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS	AREA MANAGERS COMMENTS
<p>Mr & Mrs R Steed Hatchlands 14 High Stile Great Dunmow CM6 1EB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problems only exist at peak school opening and pick up times & will still exist unless the proposals are policed during these times. • Residents' are already suffering due to traffic chaos at certain times; losing our visitor parking would be unpopular and discriminate against the residents. • The only solution is to remove the traffic out of High Stile via a different route; it would be preferable to leave the current road markings as they are at present with additional assistance and control afforded by the police/ traffic wardens. • Our suggestion is to re-route the traffic via the Fire Station with a traffic light control system in the event of an emergency call. • We also believe that there is a need for a zebra crossing or school crossing patrol in High Stile as it is difficult to cross at school times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once Decriminalisation of parking is introduced the frequency of enforcement will be a decision taken by the District Council. • The properties have driveways and spaces will still be available in High Stile. • Access in and out of High Stile should be improved. • Could not be considered as part of this review. • Could not be considered as part of this review, a school crossing patrol would be more suitable.
<p>Mr & Mrs R G Harrisson 2 High Fields Great Dunmow CM6 1ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is totally unfair to have 24-hour parking restrictions when the problem only occurs at school times for a period of half an hour in the morning and again in the afternoon. • We will not be able to park outside our property or our visitors. We do not have a drop kerb for entry into our property and have been parking in front of our house for the past 11 years without a problem. • Apart from the school traffic this is a quiet residential road with no parking problem. The implementation of double yellow lines outside our house will have a financial effect on the sale of our property and also on being able to sell the house due to the restrictions. • We fail to see the logic in there being a number of different 'no waiting' periods in the same road. • The problem goes back to the school and its expansion, which should have not been allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The properties have driveways and spaces will be available either side of the restriction. • Due to the severity of the bend and lack of visibility the restriction should be 'at any time'. • As above. • The proposals tie in with other restrictions around the town so would be less confusing. • Comment noted.

OBJECTOR	GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS	AREA MANAGERS COMMENTS
<p>ROSEMARY LANE OBJECTORS:</p> <p>Mr R C Owen Rose Chalet Rosemary Lane Dunmow CM6 1DW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of the new A120 and the slip road from 'Tesco' to the B184 Little Easton would take all the traffic from Rosemary Lane. • The extended double yellow lines across 4 Rosemary Lane will greatly reduce the congestion to Stortford Road. • The parking of two or three cars the other side of the yellow lines is a must at all times as they act as a traffic calming feature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The comment is noted but does not apply in relation to this review. • Comment noted. • Comment noted; part of the restrictions will only apply for an hour in the morning and hour in the afternoon. There is a small area that has been excluded from the restrictions on the north-western side.
<p>Mrs H Hellier Luciann Rosemary Lane Great Dunmow CM6 1DW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I fear for the safety of the children walking to the schools in the area. Without the parked cars to curb their speed, I feel that there will be even more risk to their safety. • The speed of traffic past my house has worried me for sometime. Children seem to be oblivious to the dangers. • It is often very difficult to exit from my driveway with the traffic rushing past, if the speed of the vehicles is no longer inhibited by the presence of parked vehicles opposite. • In view of the safety of the pedestrians and the residents of Rosemary Lane it would seem to me that it would be far more beneficial to restrict the traffic in some way rather than the parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally residents objected to the introduction of bollards on the north-western footway. It would have meant that these restrictions would not have been proposed. • There is a speed reduction request in the LDB 2004/05 Budget for Rosemary Lane. • There is a small area that has been excluded from the restrictions on the north-western side. • Comment noted.

OBJECTOR	GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS	AREA MANAGERS COMMENTS
<p>Mrs M Neate Bumble 2 Rosemary Lane Great Dunmow CM6 1DW</p> <p>(Continued) Mrs M Neate Bumble 2 Rosemary Lane Great Dunmow CM6 1DW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have no alternative parking or garden that I can convert to a parking space. I am a senior citizen, living on my own and I use my car every day. • I moved to Bumble Cottage in June and for the last three months I have been very happy until I heard the disappointing news about these proposals and not being able to park outside my house any more. • My daughter visits frequently with her children (including a baby) and needs to park outside the house to unload. • I would never have moved to the house if I had known about the proposals. • I know the road is narrow and drivers must find the parked cars a problem but they do act as a traffic calming effect. The road is straight and given the chance, cars speed along the road including lorries. The pavements are very narrow and feel it could be very dangerous for pedestrians, such as school children walking to and from school. • Could I have some residents' parking outside my house? Alternatively, would it be possible to widen the road on the opposite side in order to provide residents' parking bays? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment noted. • Comment noted; part of the restrictions will only apply for an hour in the morning and hour in the afternoon. There is a small area that has been excluded from the restrictions on the north-western side. • The proposals outside the cottage would allow vehicles to stop for loading/ unloading purposes. • Comment noted. • The proposals have resulted due to existing safety concerns due to some vehicles mounting the footway opposite when south-westbound vehicles overtake the parked vehicles at this location. • It is not possible to consider this as part of this review.
<p>Mr D R Mason 4 Rosemary Lane Great Dunmow CM6 1DW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from the considerable inconvenience for my wife and I my main reason for concern is the safety of children walking to and from 3 different schools. • There are a lot of HGV's, coaches and private cars who use the lane as a 'rat run' and at speed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals have resulted due to existing safety concerns due to some vehicles mounting the footway opposite when south-westbound vehicles overtake the parked vehicles at this location. • There is a speed reduction request in the LDB 2004/05

OBJECTOR	GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS	AREA MANAGERS COMMENTS
<p>STORTFORD ROAD OBJECTOR:</p> <p>Mrs D Hunt 16 Stortford Road Great Dunmow CM6 1DG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am sure the Police would agree that our vehicles act as an affective traffic calming measure. • The new link road from the A120 via Woodlands Park to the B184 Thaxted Road would divert a large amount of traffic away from Rosemary Lane. • I would like to confirm that the Jubilee Store no longer exists and has been turned back into a residential property. I would like to request that the limited parking situated outside these residential properties are taken away or converted into a residential parking area. • Please could you look into the possibility of residential parking outside my house? 	<p>Budget for Rosemary Lane.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Constable supports the proposals. • The comment is noted but does not apply in relation to this review. <p>The request would require the support of the Town Council and it would not be possible to undertake this request under this review. The introduction of residential parking is undertaken by the District Council.</p>

OBJECTOR	GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS	AREA MANAGERS COMMENTS
<p>STAR LANE OBJECTORS:</p> <p>Mrs P Tomsett 7 Star Lane Great Dunmow CM6 1AY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed restrictions will have the affect of removing available parking for residents as the proposals will run past the Doctor's pond. • Some of the residents' do not have off street parking, added to which when visitors visit or workman it will be difficult for them to park or undertake work for us and transporting materials. • Could residents parking be introduced at the Rosemary Lane end of Star Lane? This would allow parking for residents' and visitors alike. It would also deter all day parking within Star Lane by people working in the town or shoppers who have public car parks open to them. • To further secure safety of pedestrians and discourage vehicles using the lane, could Star Lane be made a 'for access only' road? It is a popular pedestrian link for the town and this is likely to increase with the expansion of the town on its northern side. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area adjacent to the Doctor's pond will not be covered by the restrictions for parking purposes. • It will be possible to park within the restrictions for the purpose of loading and unloading. • It is not possible to include residents parking as part of this proposal as it is a District Council function, However it could be consider once Decriminalisation of Parking is introduced for the District. • There is currently a Prohibition of driving restriction in place for Star lane with an exemption for access only.

Committee: Environment & Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: Local Service Agreement for the Highway and Transport Service in Essex
Author: Jeremy Pine (01799) 510460

Summary

- 1 This report recommends that Members authorise officers to work with officers from Essex County Council to produce a Local Service Agreement (LSA) for the delivery of the Highway and Transport service within the District.

Background

- 2 At the last meeting of this Committee, the ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, Councillor Rodney Bass, spoke about the proposed LSA (Minute ET27). He circulated two documents, the outline LSA framework and the background analysis and supporting information. Councillor Bass asked for initial comments by the end of November, with the aim of introducing the new arrangements from April 2004.
- 3 A meeting with the other West Essex Area Forum authorities (Brentwood, Epping Forest and Harlow) was held on 17 November, following which there was a Members' workshop on 26 November. A letter was written to Councillor Bass on 5 December in which a number of general points were raised to which a response was requested. That response was received on 15 December. Officers have subsequently written back to Councillor Bass saying that, informally, there is a wish to work towards an LSA subject, of course, to Committee authorisation.

Consideration

- 4 The existing service delivery arrangements are a combination of County Council direct provision, agency arrangements with Boroughs/Districts and partnership contracts. These arrangements have been criticised in the past because of unnecessary bureaucracy and lack of consistency and accountability. Also, the public are often unsure who to contact and who is responsible for the service they require.

- 5 The new LSA would involve this Council entering into a partnership arrangement with ECC to deliver a seamless service under the name of the Essex Highways Partnership. The LSA would set out the services to be covered and those that would be provided by the County Council and those by the District Council, with differing levels of involvement being possible. The LSA would be structured around a split of the road network into County Routes and Local Roads, the District Council generally having more influence over the latter. Financing would come from a single pool of money allocated by the County Council, based on road length. The LSA would have implications for the organisation of County/District/Borough staff.
- 6 Officers have prepared a table summarising the degree of involvement that this Council could have via the new draft LSA in the provision of services on Local Roads and County Routes. A copy of that table is attached to this report. Some services are specifically excluded from the LSA and are so mentioned in the table. Others where the table is blank can be interpreted as having no Borough/District involvement. In respect of the terminology used in this table, the following clarification has been offered by ECC:

Special maintenance of footways/carriageways: Preplanned maintenance works of a largish scale including resurfacing, overlay reconstruction and surface dressing.

Local control of local winter maintenance: The delegation of control of operations (as now) to the area offices/Boroughs/Districts when it snows, or is about to snow because it is not possible to control from the centre due to widely varying conditions across the county.

Asset charges infrastructure: The cost of the notional value of the highway asset.

NRSWA: New Roads and Street Works Act. The Highway Authority has an obligation to co-ordinate works by utilities in the highway and has powers to inspect and fine in they are in breach of their legal obligations.

- 7 A number of matters relating to the draft LSA have been raised with ECC following the presentation to the last meeting of this Committee. Those that are likely to be of most concern to Members are set out below, under appropriate headings in alphabetical order:

Development Control

Although this Council does not have an agency agreement it has, for a while, operated an informal agreement with the Area Office over which applications for planning permission are referred to it for consultation. ECC considers that this informal agreement works reasonably satisfactorily, but is open to suggestion for improvements. Officers do not consider that the LSA should fundamentally change these consultation arrangements. Dialogue with ECC over the wording of Section 106 and 278 Agreements would continue. The District would continue to have an input into the Local Transport Plan, which ECC has a duty to produce.

Extent of Local Autonomy

Boroughs/Districts would have local autonomy over Local Roads by taking decisions and setting priorities over those elements included within the LSA. A caveat would be that ECC targets and standards would have to be

observed, and it is likely that there would be jointly agreed targets and parameters within the wording of the LSA. On County Routes, ECC would consider any bid from a Borough/District to operate a service that it feels it would be best placed to deliver. "Significant" schemes would require the approval of the ECC Cabinet Member, these being defined as schemes involving a supplementary capital or revenue allocation.

Funding

ECC has made it clear that it is the funder and must retain sovereignty over its budget decisions. Boroughs/Districts could continue to lobby for increased funding, and this may help to ensure a higher level of funding from the overall County budget. The funding formula would be kept under regular review, and the basic maintenance funding to each Borough/District would reflect the County Route/Local Road split. Special maintenance funding would continue to be assessed via a bidding process and needs assessment.

Passenger Transport

There is no intention under the LSA to devolve decisions on subsidy to Boroughs/Districts, who could continue to make representations or contributions should they wish. To the extent that the background document contradicts this, ECC has confirmed that it is wrong.

Split between County Routes and Local Roads

From the plan provided by ECC, County Routes would be all trunk roads and strategic routes, main distributors, secondary distributors and links. This would include all "A" and "B" roads and the vast majority of links between villages. Local Roads would be the roads within towns and villages that do not have a through traffic function, the more minor links and countryside "dead ends". The draft LSA indicates that the split would be between 60:40 or 40:60 in overall road length. ECC has confirmed that the split would be the subject of ongoing review and discussion. It may be that more Local Roads would need to be identified after discussion with Town and Parish Councils, as, for instance, the current proposed split could leave village high streets under ECC control, but all other village roads under District control. The logic of this may be difficult to argue.

Staffing

This Council does not employ any highway staff; nor would the LSA require it to do so. Service delivery is envisaged to eventually be via Centres of Excellence, i.e. expanded versions of the Area Office containing co-located staff from the County/Districts/Boroughs and contractors, which would co-ordinate the management and delivery of all services on all roads. At least in the short term, the West Area Office would remain in Great Dunmow and continue its existing service delivery role. ECC has confirmed that it would continue to provide free access to the appropriate level of expert advice to this Council in the longer term. It would be very difficult for this Council to sign up to an LSA that had direct resource implications for it.

It is highly likely that the public would continue to use County/Borough/District Councils as first points of contact, as well as the Area Office. The setting up of a seamless service under the Essex Highway Partnership would therefore require appropriate protocols, the training of frontline staff and the

development of compatible IT systems.

- 8 Members will need to decide upon the protocol for highway decision-making under the LSA that the Council should adopt. It is not considered that it would be practical for this Committee to become involved in detail, but it could set the overall priority for the allocation of funding within the Local Road service areas contained in the LSA. It is likely that an LSA would increase the aspirations of Town and Parish Councils to put forward works for funding, which would then need evaluating on a needs basis and prioritising within the framework set by this Council. Officers do not have either the resources or the expertise to do this, and the Council would remain reliant upon the Area Office.

Conclusion

- 9 Officers consider that there would be merit in a new partnership approach to highway service delivery and that, in principle, Members should support the negotiation, production and agreeing of an LSA. It is important that the LSA results in more local accountability managed within available resources, whilst allowing ECC to continue to make consistent decisions on highway and transport matters that have more than District wide significance.

RECOMMENDED that Members authorise officers to work with officers from Essex County Council to produce a Local Service Agreement for the delivery of the Highway and Transport service within the District.

Background Papers: Draft LSA framework and background analysis and supporting information documents.

Committee: Environment & Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 6
Title: Uttlesford Cycle Network Plan – Progress update
Author: Jeremy Pine (01799) 510460

Summary

- 1 This report, which is for Members' information, has been prepared at the request of this Committee and the Uttlesford Transport Forum. The report sets out the progress to date on the implementation of the Uttlesford Cycle Network Plan and the current programming of works contained in the Plan. To set the Plan in context, the report also looks in broader terms at other current District-wide cycling initiatives that are underway.

Background

- 2 The Uttlesford Cycle Network Plan was produced in response to Britain's National Cycle Strategy, which was launched in 1996 with the aim of doubling cycle use by 2002 and then again by 2012, primarily at the expense of car travel. The Plan was prepared in 1999 by Essex County Council in conjunction with this Council, and provides an overview of proposed cycleway and cycle facility provision within the District.
- 3 The Plan is an evolving document, which can be amended as new opportunities arise and/or changed circumstances dictate. The Plan does not include priorities or costing of the proposals contained within it, as these are subject to budget availability, as is subsequent phased implementation. However, all of the proposals within the Plan are considered to be either valuable in their own right or as part of a wider cycle network. All the proposals have been the subject of an initial survey for feasibility, but there may well be other factors preventing implementation, such as land ownership, and some proposals may be dependent upon other traffic control measures.
- 4 The Essex Local Transport Plan 2000-05 promotes cycling via its five Integrated Transport Themes, and Policy T6 of the Essex & Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan identifies cycling as a key part of a sustainable transport strategy, especially for shorter distance trips. The Structure Plan policy promotes the provision of a safe and convenient network of cycle routes linking homes, workplaces, community facilities and transport interchanges, also the provision of secure cycle parking at centres of

attraction. The promotion of cycling is also a theme in the emerging Uttlesford Local Plan, and features strongly in the Quality Of Life Corporate Plan (QOLCP).

- 5 A main aim of the Cycle Network Plan is to reduce car usage within towns. As a result, it identifies a number of possible routes and improvements within and around Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow (known in the Plan as *Urban Cycle Network Candidates*), including a link from Saffron Walden to Audley End Station, which would link into the National Cycle Network (NCN) that is being formulated by Sustrans, part of which is a route from Bishops Stortford to Cambridge. Sustrans is a registered national charity that works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects. Allied to this, the Local Access Working Group of the Stansted Area Transport Forum (at which Sustrans is represented) is working on creating a network of cycleways within and around the Airport for use by employees, local residents and visitors, and which would also link to the NCN. Since 2000, a cycleway from Bury Lodge Lane alongside Long Border Road to FLS Aerospace and eastwards to the terminal within the airport boundary has been opened.
- 6 The work currently being looked at by Sustrans, in partnership with others, includes the following, which are all subject to feasibility and funding:
 - i. Linking the airport to Bishops Stortford, which is a current priority, and to the Flitch Way and Molehill Green
 - ii. Upgrading the Flitch Way for all-weather use and appropriate cycle routeings through Dunmow, tying in with new development and post A120 works
 - iii. Appropriate on and/or off-road links around Saffron Walden, including the signing of a minor road route from Molehill Green.

Progress on the Proposals in the Uttlesford Cycle Network Plan

- 7 The proposal for a cycleway between Audley End Station and Saffron Walden originally formed part of the County Council's capital programme for 2001/2. This was postponed because of lack of consultation and concerns from Members and local residents about the design detailing of Phase 2 from Saffron Walden High School to the crossing point on the B1383. As a result, this Committee resolved on 10 September 2002 that the proposal should not be pursued and the allocated budget be used to provide secure cycle storage at the station and at other locations in the town. £20,000 has been retained for this purpose, to be spent by the end of 2002/3 at Audley End Station, Saffron Walden County High School and the UDC offices. The rest of the money was returned to the County Council's Central Capital Fund and reallocated to cycling projects elsewhere in the County.
- 8 At the last meeting of the Uttlesford Transport Forum on 14 October 2003, Essex County Council confirmed that the Audley End – Saffron Walden proposals had been formally abandoned and that any alternative proposals would be treated afresh as a new request for funding. The Forum was

informed that the view of some UDC Members was still that highway improvement works were required between Audley End Station and the main road, where there was a 100m stretch with no footway. The Forum resolved that the County Council draw up, cost and report back on a suitable draft scheme. The provision of a cycleway between Audley End and Saffron Walden is one of the aims of the QOLCP.

- 9 The County Council has allocated funding in 2003/4 for the construction of a new cycleway from Tesco to Great Dunmow Town Centre, terminating at New Street via Highfields, High Stile and Stortford Road. Design work has been undertaken, but the scheme has been deferred for a year pending further work to design in the new Primary School (which would be located on part of the old Carr, Day and Martin site immediately east of Tesco) and for which outline planning permission was granted in September 2003. There is also some uncertainty over how the new cycleway would relate to any future development on the remaining part of the site not currently required for the new school.
- 10 The County Council has allocated funding in 2004/5 for the construction of a new cycleway from Mill Lane in Great Dunmow, crossing the Chelmer Valley to Windmill Close/Riverside, south of Church End. This is still on target, and will allow cyclists to get to the town centre by a shorter, safer route than via Braintree Road and the High Street. 13 houses have recently been erected on land between Windmill Close and Riverside, the layout being amended to take into account the future provision of the cycleway.
- 11 A meeting has been arranged with engineers from Sustrans on 26 January 2004. If Members have any points that they would like raised at that meeting, please would they let the author know in advance.

FOR INFORMATION

Background Papers: Documents referred to in the report.

Committee: Environment and Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: Planning Services Best Value Review
Author: John Mitchell (01799) 510450

Summary

1. Scrutiny 2 Committee approved the Best Value Review Improvement Plan for Planning Services on 3rd December 2003. The remainder of this report is presented to that Committee.
2. The Improvement Plan for Planning Services is presented. There are five Critical Success Areas (CSA's): Focussing on what matters to local people, assuring the quality of development, enhancing customer care, reducing delay in development control and reinforcing management systems to assure quality. There are 10 Action Statements to support the CSA's, each of which sets out outcome measures, action measures, the relative importance of each initiative, timeframes for each and resources where known. The most important action statement is improving development control systems: without robust, simple and clearly-understood systems in place none of the other improvements can be introduced effectively. At the same time the Policy context needs to be progressed and to be "owned" by all stakeholders, including Members, while customer care needs to be advanced in the context of the Council's overall and evolving approach.
3. There are 35 outcome measures in total, and 153 action measures. All are SMART and cross referenced, where appropriate, to the draft Quality of Life Corporate Plan. The Improvement Plan has been costed to a fairly detailed level, including costs that are usually hidden, such as the costs of holding workshops and focus groups. The total costs of all the improvements, if implemented, would be in the region of £156,000: this includes the costs of market supplements for some staff and the recruitment of new staff if agreed in the longer term. Not all these measures will be necessary in the short term: indeed many of the key improvements that the Plan identifies can be made at little or no cost, but there will be training and development costs to ensure that new initiatives can be implemented effectively. Many improvements are already being implemented and these are highlighted in the SIP.

Background

- 4 The Planning Services Best Value review was postponed from last year. Consultants were appointed using Planning Delivery Grant: thus it is hoped to have used the Grant to secure a stable framework for sustained improvement in the future.
- 5 The Member Team comprises Cllrs Tealby Watson (chair), Clarke, Rowe and Godwin. There was also an Officer Team comprising representatives of all aspects of the service.
- 6 The SIP was drawn up following a thorough audit of the service under the headings of the four “C”s – Challenge, Compare, Consult, Compete. Some of these overlap: for example the Member workshops were both challenge and consult events while the experimental use of external consultants for handling planning applications can be considered as challenge and compete issues. Throughout the process reference was made to the Business Excellence Model and the Balanced Scorecard. Both of these are tools to enable progress in key areas to be assessed over time. The SIP is not an immediate remedy for all the problems faced by the Service but rather has to be read as a document that sets in train measures to improve the service over time.
- 7 An interim inspection of the Service by the Audit Commission took place on 4th October 2003. This included interviews with the Member team, the consultants, the Head of Service and some staff. At the time of the survey the review process was concentrating on the DC procedure, and the inspection was critical of its apparent reliance on this, and stressed the need to consider the rest of the service and to be more outwardly focussed. The outcomes have been addressed in the SIP.

Challenge

- 8 The service was challenged internally on the basis of why it is provided, for whom and whether it, or some elements, could be carried out externally. One of the key outcomes of the Member workshop was making the planning process more accessible to, and able to be influenced by, Members – consequently it was considered that outsourcing the whole service would not be compatible with this requirement. Certain elements of the service can be outsourced however without detriment to this requirement. Planning consultants, for example, have been used for appeals in the past, but the SIP involves an experimental use of planning consultants to undertake planning applications, so that the effects may be measured in terms of cost, quality and time.
- 9 All planning staff, the acting Chief Executive, relevant Directors, Heads of Service and some Members were interviewed individually and in confidence by the Consultants. A painstaking and detailed review of all the processes within the service – DC, Forward Planning, Enforcement and Appeals was undertaken. All staff were involved in the critique of the processes and in identifying solutions to problems, of which there are many and complex.

- 10 The service was challenged externally through member and parish workshops, as well as a telephone survey of other customers. The outcomes of the member and parish workshops are appended, with cross references to the improvement plan to show how issues have been taken forward.

Compare

- 11 The service was compared with that offered by authorities in the top quartile and visits made to some local authorities to investigate their processes and procedures. In general the service compares well in terms of forward planning and accessibility but less well in terms of DC performance and systems. The SIP sets out measures to ensure that UDC is in the top quartile within three years, and can sustain its position.

Consult

- 12 Consultation measures included the Member and Parish workshops, telephone surveys of other customers and a questionnaire survey of customers that is still ongoing and will be complete by March 2004. The outcomes are incorporated into the SIP, which also proposes further and structured consultation measures, the outcomes of which will require adjustments to the SIP as it evolves over time.

Compete

- 13 The use of planning consultants for some appeals and to handle some planning applications is being implemented experimentally, with a view to assessing the outcome in terms of cost quality and time. Temporary agency staff have been employed but their costs per hour equate to those of the Head of Service. Initial results suggest that in-house provision is invariably the best cost option but recruitment difficulties mean that external staff are likely to be necessary if even basic levels of service are to be maintained. The Council pays relatively poorly in comparison with other nearby local authorities and a proposal for market supplements as a retention and recruitment measure is being put forward. Consultants have also been employed to verify some aspects of individual planning applications on an ad-hoc basis, for example highway advice and noise issues.

The Service Improvement Plan

- 14 The Improvement Plan is appended. There are five Critical Success Areas (CSA's): Focussing on what matters to local people, assuring the quality of development, enhancing customer care, reducing delay in development control and reinforcing management systems to assure quality. There are 10 Action Statements to support the CSA's, each of which sets out: outcome measures, action measures, the relative importance of each initiative, timeframes for each and resources where known. The most important Action Statement is improving development control systems: without robust, simple and clearly-understood systems in place none of the other improvements can be introduced effectively. At the same time the Policy context needs to be progressed and to be "owned" by all stakeholders, including Members, while

customer care needs to be advanced in the context of the Council's overall and evolving approach.

- 15 There are 35 outcome measures in total, and 153 action measures. All are SMART and cross referenced, where appropriate, to the draft Quality of Life Corporate Plan. The Improvement Plan has been costed to a fairly detailed level, including costs that are usually hidden, such as the costs of holding workshops and focus groups. The total costs of all the improvements, if implemented, would be in the region of £156,000: this includes the costs of market supplements for some staff and the recruitment of new staff if agreed in the longer term. Not all these measures will be necessary in the short term: indeed many of the key improvements that the Plan identifies can be made at little or no cost, but there will be training and development costs to ensure that new initiatives can be implemented effectively.

The key actions are:

- To prepare new Local development Framework in line with Regional Spatial Strategy and the evolving Quality of Life Corporate Plan
- To move beyond consultation to a responsive dialogue that exchanges views regularly with those affected by planning decisions and ensure that this communication leads to real improvement in the service
- To take a more structured and strategic approach to identify broader objectives that might be secured through planning obligations for the achievement of wider community needs by securing planning obligations which link the overall needs of the area to individual developments rather than ad hoc infrastructure improvements
- To ensure that departmental & individuals' targets and objectives are linked to the corporate themes and objectives
- To appraise the value added to the built environment through development control
- To identify and apply the requirements for improved customer care
- To be rigorous in the streamlining of business processes emphasizing continuous improvement
- To move forward on electronic delivery of planning services
- To develop partnership approaches to address issues which are common to other councils and reinforce other partnership arrangements to tackle cross-cutting issues
- To benchmark against the best and ensure that comparisons lead to service improvements

- 16 Each of these Action Statements is accompanied by outcome measures and details of how these are to be achieved, including their importance and cost. Members should be aware that there is a significant cost element attached to increasing involvement and consultation.

- 17 The SIP shows that considerable improvements to the service can be achieved by a re-engineering of existing processes at no or little cost to the Council, but it is emphasised that there will be training costs. It also points the way to a first class service, but this cannot be achieved without investment. Some measures are immediate and some medium or longer term – some of the costlier measures do not have a high importance but

would be essential for a “Rolls Royce” service. Members have to decide what level of planning service is reasonably achievable in the context of resources and other corporate priorities.

Next Steps

- 18 The SIP needs to be tested by consultation with stakeholders. This will take the form of focus groups with critical friends, the relevant Committees, agents/applicants, internal customers, members and parish councils, coupled with the on-going questionnaire survey. Following consultation and any necessary amendments the SIP will be presented for approval.

RECOMMENDED

That the Service Improvement Plan be noted and approved.

Background Papers: Review documents and appendices.

Critical Success Area 1
Focusing On What Matters To Local People

Action Statement
1 Prepare new Local Development Framework in line with regional spatial strategy and the evolving Quality of Life Corporate Plan
Outcome Measures
1.1 Ensure that the new LDF maximises involvement in community planning processes and in the associated activities of the local strategic partnership
1.2 Ensure that sufficient emphasis is placed on directing the planning service to the achievement of wider council and community goals. Detail how the LDF plan should be prepared to react to emerging priorities in the community strategy and emerging regional policy

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
1.1.1 To interpret and implement together with DC the emerging planning legislation. Enactment is expected in spring/summer 2004.	A	Policy & DC Teams	2004/5	TBA
1.1.2 Keeping Members involved, via appropriate training, with ownership of the evolving process by workshops, through the Members' Bulletin and email shots	A	Policy Team	From Nov 2003	£1,250 per workshop
1.1.3 Keeping the Parish Councils involved and informed by means of quarterly Parish meetings and ad hoc visits on request	A	Policy team, HPBS	From Nov 2003	NA
1.2.1 Supporting and encouraging the preparation of Parish Plans and Village Appraisals	C	Policy Team	QOLCP Targets	NA
1.2.2 New LDF will be needed to accommodate new regional and airport policy and to meet QOLCP requirements	A	Policy Team	From mid 2004	TBA
1.2.3 Monitoring and review to feed in to process and ensure targets are being met	A	Policy team and partners	Ongoing	£3,000 pa
1.2.4 Conservation Area enhancement statements. Skills training may be necessary see 7.5.1	E	Policy Team and perhaps partners	2005	Use of PDG or partners

Critical Success Area 1
Focusing On What Matters To Local People

<p>Action Statement 2 Move beyond consultation to a responsive dialogue that exchanges views regularly with those affected by planning decisions and ensure that this communication leads to real improvement in the service</p>
<p>Outcome Measures 2.1 Re-establish the focus group / forum of agents originally set-up in 1998. 2.2 Parish Council liaison 2.3 Produce a customer charter that sets out clear service standards derived from those in the service plan 2.4 Produce a means of demonstrating annually how the outcomes of the above have been taken into account in reviewing the service</p>

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
2.1.1 Define clearly, frequency of meetings (say quarterly), specific objectives, prevalent issues on service performance, capturing of ideas, feedback into planning service delivery & to all participating parties	A/B	HPBS	Nov 2003	£1,250 per meeting
2.2.1 Set up Parish focus groups to meet quarterly	C	HPBS	Ongoing	NA
2.2.2 Investigate extension of the DC Committee "call in" powers to town and parish councils, to include training	B	HPBS	2005/6	£10K
2.3.1 Write Customer Code. Code to specify planning process, planning policy framework and planning application procedure	A	All and Communications Officer	2004/5 or as QOLCP	NA
2.4.1 Set up feedback, monitoring and review system. The review should include changes to procedure, changes to supplementary policy (and in the longer term LDF policy) and changes to practice	A	HPBS, Policy Team, DC Team	2004	NA

Critical Success Area 1
Focusing On What Matters To Local People

<p>Action Statement</p> <p>3 Take a more structured and strategic approach to identify broader objectives that might be secured through planning obligations for the achievement of wider community needs by securing planning obligations which link the overall needs of the area to individual developments rather than ad hoc infrastructure improvements</p>
<p>Outcome Measures</p> <p>3.1 Agree and publicise the objectives to be achieved through planning obligations, in line with community needs, so that the requirements are clear to developers and other parties</p> <p>3.2 Improve the quality of member involvement in the planning process by developing clear procedures to guide officers and members through the complex area of planning obligations, including guidance on costing mechanisms for deriving financial contributions. Include specific policies for planning obligations within development plans, particularly to deal with affordable housing and public open space. Include policies to guide agreements on health, cultural, social services facilities, school places, transport or public transport infrastructure. Ensure that developers of specific sites and types of development are aware of likely requests at the outset</p>

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
3.1.1 Produce leaflet to explain rationale behind s106 agreements, when they are required and what are the triggers	D	Policy team	31/3/04	NA
3.1.2 In the longer term, work through the Essex Planning Officers Association and the Development Control Forum to produce county wide SPG on the use of planning obligations that can be adapted to include each District Council's own requirements	A	HPBS and Policy & DC Teams	2005/6	NA
3.2.1 See 3.1.2 above. Set up means of ensuring that members can be involved in SPG requirements without appearing to be "selling" planning permissions. New s106 protocol to be drafted in short term to include UDC Members, Parish and Town Councils	A	HPBS and Policy & DC Teams	From Jan 2004	NA
3.2.2 Member training on content of S106 agreements	A	HPBS	2003/4	NA

Critical Success Area 2

Assuring the Quality of Development

(Reviewing the quality of decision making and its impact on the local environment)

Action Statement
4 Ensure that departmental & individuals' targets and objectives are linked to the corporate themes and objectives
Outcome Measures
4.1 Development in accordance with the Development Plan & record of number of departures (ideally nil)
4.2 Ensure the policies in the Local Development Plan Framework reflect the strategic aims of the Vision For Uttlesford
4.3 Keeping Members up to date with the content of planning policies

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
4.1.1 Review the existing Local Plan policies and assess them against the Council's strategic aims and reflect these in the LDPF	A	Policy Team	2004/5	NA
4.1.2 Prepare SPG and/or development briefs to support existing and amended policies (including S106s)	A	Policy Team	2004/5	£1000 pa
4.1.3 Ensure that the corporate strategic themes are put into planning context in the departmental induction	B	All	2004/5	NA
4.2.1 Ensure that the corporate strategic themes are reinforced through the appraisal system and are reflected in the individual's objectives	C	All	2004/5	NA
4.2.2 Identify training and development needs to deliver these objectives through a structured training plan	C	All	2004/5	£10,000
4.2.3 Develop appropriate forums to establish and maintain liaison with internal and external partners	C	All	2003/4	£5,000
4.2.4 Communicate the outputs of these forums to colleagues through structured briefing sessions	C	All	2003/4	NA
4.2.5 Establish appropriate quantifiable measures for these objectives	A	All	2003/4	NA
4.2.6 Establish a monitoring process (and or team) to ensure the objectives are being met	A	All	2003/4	NA
4.2.7 Continue to enhance and to encourage participation in the members tour of the district	-	Dept Mgt	2004/5	£1,500 per tour
4.3.1 Recommend to Council that there is comprehensive corporate member training and induction for new members	C	Member Team	2003	TBA

Critical Success Area 2

Assuring the Quality of Development

(Reviewing the quality of decision making and its impact on the local environment)

Action Statement
5 Appraising the value added to the built environment through development control
Outcome Measures
5.1 Provide a clear appraisal of the results delivered by the development plan
5.2 Improve the quality of development through effective enforcement and ensure an 80% resolution of complaints within 3 months
5.3 Use a range of approaches to measure the effectiveness of development control work. This should include using feedback from developers and consultees
5.4 Provide a regular, user-friendly appraisal of the impact of the development plan on local quality of life

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
5.1.1 Continue with annual Member tour of completed sites. Continue to enhance (through a structured approach and encouragement of participation of all members) the members tour of the district to enable them to review the quality of decision making	E	JGP	Ongoing	See 4.2.7
5.1.2 Possibly arrange visits to completed sites to follow from site visits on Committee Day with a workshop to follow	E	JGP/HPBS	01/06/04	£2,000
5.1.3 Research the types of amendments made in negotiations on planning applications to ensure that common themes are taken into account when preparing the SPG.	C	Policy team	From now. 2 per year	£7,500
5.1.4 Survey occupiers of recently completed developments to see how living under PPG3 or living in 'Live/Work' schemes conditions is working	E	DC	From 2005	£1,000
5.2.1 Continue to work in partnership with all partners (esp. Building Control, Environmental Services, Property Services, Engineering & Members) to strengthen enforcement	A	Existing	Ongoing	NA
5.2.2 .Formalise prioritisation of enforcement on the basis of the severity of the breach in relation to the development plan	B	HPBS	Ongoing	NA
5.2.3 Move to a proactive enforcement system to ensure compliance with approved plans. But further compliance monitoring eg operational conditions, landscaping conditions and s106 agreements etc will require a new resource	C	HPBS and enforcement team New post will be required. Partnership with ECC?	2006	C£25K pa staffing costs

5.2.4 Compile register of s106 agreements	B	New enforcement trainee	2004/5	NA
5.3.1 Set up focus groups for agents/applicants to meet quarterly	A	HPBS	Ongoing	£1,250 per meeting
5.3.2 Annual survey for one month of 10% of objectors by questionnaire with prepaid envelope	E	DC	April 2004 and annually thereafter	£2,500
5.3.3 Use citizens panel to get a public reaction to quality of development	E	As QOLCP	31/3/04	NA
5.1-5.4 Annual report via members bulletin, council newspaper and website	B	HPBS	From April 2004	NA
5.4.2 Feed into state of district debate	E	HPBS	As QOLCP	NA
5.4.3 Ensure Planning issues are included in any corporate residents surveys	E	HPBS	AS QOLCP	£TBA

**Critical Success Area 3
Enhancing Customer Care**

Action Statement
6 Identifying and applying the requirements for improved customer care
Outcome Measures
6.1 Reduce number of refused applications to 10% within one year by working with applicants to improve the quality of submissions
6.2 Achieve an improved awareness rating by the public
6.3 Establish and deliver targets for all aspects of the service that impact upon the end user (letters, emails, application speed, application progress)

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
6.1.1 Publicise and encourage members of the public to make use of the pre-application service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up appointment system and make sure room available Provide form for members of the public to complete in order that Officer can research site to be discussed Publicise the fact that Officer is available to see the public at CIC's by appointment 	A	DC	2005/6	TBC
6.1.2 Forecast the number of pre-application discussions and produce displays setting clear guidelines for the discussions having regard to the input provided Cllr Clarke and entitled "Planning Best Value Review" as it effects significant major developments	A	DC	2005/6	TBC
6.1.3 Set time frame for the discussions and publicise this. Allow only one pre-application discussion per proposal	A	DC	2005/6	TBC
6.1.4 Make clear what is expected from these discussions by producing an Information pack encouraging any agreements to be submitted with the application	A	DC/Comm. Officer	2005/6	£1K
6.1.5 Investigate and recommend any charging for discretionary functions	C	HBPS	2003/4	NA
6.1.6 Improve the leaflets displays (in accordance with any good ideas seen at other Authorities where applicable). Improve how these leaflets are displayed to help the public find easily the information they require. Produce new chart showing the process of a planning application (display this in a prominent position)	C	PID/Comm. Officer	2004/5	
6.2.1 Update leaflet with new standards. Publicise targets by leaflets and results on Web and Council newspaper.	E	P ID/Comm. Officer	2004/5	
6.2.2 Duty Officer available during specified hours and advertise this. Duty officer role to be extended to include responding to telephone calls requiring the views of a professional planning officer in conjunction with activity set out in 6.2.7	A	DC/PID. Officer	Ongoing	
6.2.3 Better publicity that members of the public can speak at meetings by advertising this on the Web and Council newspaper	E	CT/VW	2004/5	

6.2.4	Let the public know when the results of the meetings are available and post these results on the Web and in newspaper. Insert note on schedule giving this information.	D	CT/VW	Ongoing	NA
6.2.5	New codes in Ocella which will enable easier tracking of an application. Consider setting up screen which will enable easier tracking of an application for quick information on phone calls.	A	CT/IT	2004/5	£5K
6.2.6	Establish central point of contact for Members via new Clerical Assistant currently being recruited	A	HPBS	Jan 2004	NA
6.2.7	Investigate the possibility of the establishment of a customer care group, with appropriate software and support, to be the first point of contact within the planning service in consultation with staff, Personnel Services and Unison following implementation of re-engineered DC processes (see section7)	C	HPBS	2004/5	£5,000
6.3.1	More training for staff on Ocella	A	CT/IT	Feb 2004	£5,000
6.3.3	Establish an action plan for backlog removal	A	HPBS, Cllrs RC,AT, MG, T-W	Dec 2003 – Jan 2004	NA
6.3.4	Procedure and clarity so that all general mail and central email box is acknowledged in 5 days. Try to provide information on when a full reply can be expected. Monitor weekly	A	All	March 2004	NA
6.3.5	All letters or email acknowledged quickly in accordance with targets and monitor and address slippage. Advise when a full reply can be expected.	A	All	March 2004	NA
6.3.6	Set up new procedure and monitoring system for majors, minors & others (already discussed)	A	All	March 2004	NA
6.3.7	Prepare for periods of staff leave and workload peaks. Highlight problems immediately. Make sure workload is up to date before these periods occur. Bring in suitable temp staff to help. Plan in advance in liaison with Personnel	A	All	ongoing	TBA
6.3.8	Stable workforce at competitive market rates	A	HBPS and Council	Now	£48K pa from 1/4/04 inc on costs and 3% estimated pay increase. C£14 k up to 31/3/03
Complaints/Compliments					
6.3.9	New complaints/compliments procedure making clear a procedure for recording, responding to, and monitoring all complaints	B	All	March 2004	NA
6.3.10	Produce form for staff to complete when customer is dissatisfied/satisfied with our service.	B	All	ongoing	NA
6.3.11	Contacting complainant to make sure they are aware that complaint has been followed up	B	All	ongoing	NA
6.3.12	One person responsible for making sure complaints or problems are dealt with quickly	B	All	ongoing	NA

Standard letters	B	All	ongoing	NA
6.3.13 Produce Plain English letters/documents/leaflets				
Parish Councils	B	All	ongoing	NA
6.3.14 Provide Parish Councils with a supply of Planning leaflets and general information on points of contact within Planning services.				
6.3.15 Invite them to visit and provide training for use of the Planning Web site	B	All	ongoing	NA

Critical Success Area 4
Reducing delay in Development Control

Action Statement
7 Be rigorous in the streamlining of business processes emphasizing continuous improvement
Outcome Measures
7.1 Achieve top quartile performance within 3 years
7.2 Reduce Backlog of applications to 300 within 6 months and 200 within 12 months
7.3 Make the best possible use of delegated powers with 90% of decisions delegated to Officers within 1 year
7.4 Achieve government targets relating speed of determination of minor and other applications within 1 year and major applications within 2 years.
7.5 Evaluate the current use of professional, technical and administrative resources to ensure that priorities are addressed (specifically include management skills development.
7.6 Improved internal liaison

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
7.1.1 Establish rigorous process performance management systems by:-	A			
7.1.2 Implementing daily weekly and monthly performance review meeting structures.	A	HPBS/all	From DEC	
7.1.3 Establish KPI's and data gathering methodologies, to feed above	A	Dept Mgt	DEC	
7.1.4 Develop stakeholder skills in using the above.	A	HPBS	JAN	£10K
7.1.5 Establish formal prioritisation systems and related expectations / work content.	A	Dept Mgt	JAN	
7.1.6 Develop master schedule, implement monitor and fine tune.	A	HPBS	JAN/FEB	
7.1.7 Develop culture of continuous incremental improvement.	A	All	On-going	
7.2.1 Identify current backlog and establish priorities.	A	CT/T/Ls	DEC	
7.2.2 Set expectations / work content.	A	Dept Mgt	JAN	
7.2.3 Feed into master schedule.	A	Dept Mgt	JAN	
7.3.1 Establish and agree, the decision criteria to be applied to determine each application routing and methodology to be applied.	A	HPBS/DMs	DEC	
7.3.2 Provide improved guidance for members on both formal and informal levels.	A	HPBS/DM'S	ONGOING	
7.3.3 Establish review mechanism to determine ongoing amendments as necessary	A	HPBS/DM'S	ONGOING	
7.3.4 Review mechanisms advising members of delegated recommendations	A	HPBS/DMS	ONGOING	
7.4.1 Establish clear accountabilities for application processing. Keep numbers involved in processing individual applications to a minimum.	A	DM	ONGOING	
7.4.2 Ensure continuity of accountability for applications from pre application advice to decision notice.	A	HPBS/ALL	DEC	
7.4.3 Establish "trigger" dates to flag up potential slippages and monitor and manage back-logs	A	DM'S	DEC	

	via Ocella system.				
7.4.4	Ensure system compliance from all involved.	A	HPBS	DEC	
7.4.5	Ensure applications are validated and logged onto Ocella on day of receipt. If Application is incomplete or cannot be validated, return to originator.	A	CT/TL'S	DEC	
7.4.6	Control / eliminate, number of application in the system that are on hold.	A	CT/TL'S	ONGOING	
7.4.7	Use / develop cost of application screen to validate application and produce cashiers report. Once daily transfer of cash / cheques to cashiers.	A	CT&TL'S	ONGOING	
7.4.8	Establish formal linkages between D.C., pre application and planning policy functions.	A	JGP	JAN	
7.4.9	Clarify "clock" start dates and monitor via Ocella, age of applications against trigger dates.	A	CT/TL'S	DEC	
7.4.10	Establish clear point of contact to handle queries via Ocella.	A	TL'S	DEC	
7.4.11	Review and revise 'on duty' officer system in line with 6.2.2	E	DC	DEC	
7.4.12	Review all documentation to ensure capture of accurate information first time, along with rationalisation of all standard letters / communications	A	HBPS, CT, TL'S	JAN	
7.4.13	Establish standard form of handling emails and encourage usage	A	CT	DEC	
7.4.14	Prepare Procedures Manual & accountability for updating	A	HPBS	2005/6	
7.4.15	Identify changes required from Ocella	A	ALL	DEC	
7.4.16	Specify new requirements	A	ALL	ONGOING	
7.4.17	Meet and discuss requirements (costs, timeframes, accountabilities) with IT and then implement	A	ST/IT	JAN	
7.5.1	Establish succession - planning programme in line with corporate initiatives	A	HPBS	QOLCP	
7.5.2	Review current organisation structure. Clarify roles responsibilities and skills requirements	A	HPBS/ PERSONNEL	JAN	
7.5.3	Build skills requirements into master schedule.	A	HPBS	JAN	
7.5.4	Carry out individual skills analysis and gap analysis, including management skills requirements.	A	HPBS	JAN	
7.5.5	Link to appraisal systems and agree individual skills development programme	A	DM	JAN/FEB	
7.5.6	Structure / co-ordinate programmes	A	HPBS	ONGOING	
7.6.1	Identify methodology to capture changes to policy / guidelines legislation (Local Plan)	A	Policy Team	ONGOING	
7.6.2	Identify methodology to capture problems in DC caused by poor understanding	A	Policy Team	Ongoing	
7.6.3	Establish regular communication meeting between Policy and DC, including representatives of other departments as appropriate, identifying participants, agenda, timing etc	A	Policy Team	Ongoing	
7.6.4	Support implementation of the communication process to capture improvements	A	Policy Team	Ongoing	

Critical Success Area 5

Reinforcing Management Systems To Assure Quality

Action Statement
8 Moving forward on electronic delivery of planning services
Outcome Measures
8.1 Ensure that a realistic approach is in place to achieve the e-government target for planning services by 2005
8.2 Make the service accessible through a range of channels – including a user-friendly website
8.3 Ensure that ICT systems are delivering real performance benefits, through continuing investment in system development, maintenance and staff training

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
8.1.1 Form for comments on Web	C	CT	Jan	NA
8.1.2 GGP web based system (being bought)	D	IT/LF	2004/5	NA
8.1.3 GGP based NLPG system (being bought)	D	IT	2004/5	NA
8.1.4 Screens (2) available for public use at information desk (in discussions with IT)	B	CT/IT	2004	£1,000
8.1.5 Corporate improvements to Web site (new site should be up and running before Christmas)	B	IT	2004	NA
8.1.6 Planning application forms available on Web	B	CT/JP	ONGOING	NA
8.1.7 Better Web publicity in newspapers, Council newspaper and parish Councils	C	CT	04/05	NA
8.2.1 Clear guidance and training for staff on input to system	A	ALL	04/05	NA
8.2.2 Data (planning applications) on system from 74 – 48 checked and linked	C	PID	04/05	TBA
8.2.3 Stansted Airport applications plotted correctly	A	LF	05	£10,000
8.2.4 Improved CIC training on computer systems and coaching skills for staff to assist people to use the website	A	CT/IT	March 2005	£1,000

Critical Success Area 5

Reinforcing Management Systems To Assure Quality

<p>Action Statement</p> <p>9 Develop partnership approaches to address issues which are common to other councils and reinforce other partnership arrangements to tackle cross-cutting issues</p>
<p>Outcome Measures</p> <p>9.1 Develop partnerships with County Council and Environment Agency giving rise to quicker decisions on minor applications</p> <p>9.2 Sharing staff and resources with other Councils</p> <p>9.3 Continuing with existing partnerships e.g. Transport Forum, West Essex Partnership, Airport and other agencies, Essex Wildlife Trust, LA21, Uttlesford Futures, Uttlesford Access Group etc</p>

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
9.1.1 Arrange training with EA and CC	E	Team Leaders/JGP	Ongoing	£TBA
9.1.2 Identification of officer contact point and establishment of feedback process e.g. to Wednesday meetings of DC team	A	Team Leaders	March 2004	-
9.2.1 Approach CC to see if there may be staff for secondment	C	HBPS	Jan 2004	£TBA
9.3.1 Feedback from DC Forum to be disseminated to all DC staff	A	JGP	From now	-
9.3.2 Set up internal corporate liaison process to ensure that internal applications are acceptable and do not give rise to embarrassing refusals of permission of our own developments	A	HPBS and team leaders	2004	-
9.3.3 Explore partnership working with adjoining authorities	D	HBPS	2004/o5	TBA

Critical Success Area 5

Reinforcing Management Systems To Assure Quality

Action Statement
10 Benchmark against the best and ensure that comparisons lead to service improvements
Outcome Measures
10.1 Consistent performance in top quartile after 3 years re determination of planning applications in 8 weeks.
10.2 Rate of allowed appeals to be no higher than the national average
10.3 Have an up to date development plan/local development framework.

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
10.1.1 Match skill and resources to anticipated workloads.	A	DMs	From Nov 2003	
10.1.2 Use benchmarking via the Development Control, Admin and Policy Forums.	D	JGP/CT/RH	From Nov 2003	
10.1.3 Organise Member to Member meetings with other Councils.	A	IO	2004	£2,000
10.1.4 Implement and continually review the Improvement Plan by reporting twice yearly to the Scrutiny Committee and through retention of the Member Best Value Group	A+	All	From Nov 2003	
10.1.5 Use of consultants to manage workload peaks. Consider use of "pooled" consultants with other Councils.	C	HPBS	From Nov 2003	£30K
10.1.6 Structured training on ICT systems from system providers who know the packages in detail. Market test different suppliers from a user perspective.	C	IT/CT	From Nov 2003	
10.1.7 Visits to other benchmarking Councils.	B	HPBS/DMs	2004/5	
10.2.1. Monitor performance of development plan/local development framework against recent Government advice. Use Supplementary Planning Guidance when required.	B	RH/JGP/SN/MJ	From Nov 2003	
10.2.2 Check reasons for allowed appeals.	E	JGP/TL'S	From Nov 2003	
10.2.3 Disseminate relevant information on new Government Guidance to Officers and Members (10.3 initiatives the same as 10.2)	A	JGP	From Nov 2003	

Committee: Environment and Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: REFUSE AND RECYCLING – BEST VALUE REVIEW
Author: Richard Secker (01799) 510580

Reference Group Members:

Councillors: V Pedder (Chairman), E Abrahams and S Flack
Officers: D Burridge, E Hodge, R Pridham, V Rogacs and R Secker
Critical Friends: T Bragg – Maldon District Council
D Maidman – Verdant plc

Summary

- 1 This report provides Members with the details of the Best Value Review that has been carried out of Refuse Collection and Recycling services. It has the final improvement plan attached as agreed by the Member Reference Group (MRG) and the Scrutiny Committee and recommends that the Environment and Transport Committee accepts the improvement plan.

Scope of the Review

- 2 The review considered whether the following services, namely household and commercial refuse collections, recycling banks and kerbside recycling collections
 - Meet national and local standards, and remain a community priority
 - Meet customer expectations
 - Could be more effectively and efficiently provided

The aim is to show what is currently being achieved and how any improvements can be made in future.

Brief Description of the Services

- 3 Refuse Collection
 - weekly collection of refuse from all households mainly kerbside by residents choice
 - assisted back door collection for elderly and disabled residents
 - free collections of bulky household waste
 - weekend village CA scheme for mixed wastes
 - garden waste via prepaid sacks collected with normal refuse
 - trade refuse service to commercial users using various containers or prepaid sacks for small premises

Recycling

- weekly kerbside collection of dry recyclables, alternately black (paper and magazines) and green boxes (cans, plastic, cardboard and textiles)
- 51 recycling sites with static containers for glass, cans, papers, plastics, textiles and books depending on specific site potential
- weekend supervised green waste containers in towns/villages with materials taken for on farm composting
- trade recycling currently is limited to separated cardboard

Finance Summary

- 4 The following table sets out the direct estimated costs and incomes for 2003/04 for these services:

Refuse Collection:	Gross cost	£1,380,750
	Income	£489,000
	Net cost	£891,670
Recycling Services:	Gross cost	£539,190
	Income	£252,290
	Nett cost	£286,900
Total Cost		£1,178,570
Annual Cost per Household		£40.38

At this stage the compete requirement has been demonstrated twice in the provision of these services by competitive tendering in 1990 and 1996. It is anticipated that a further exercise will be undertaken for 2006 when waste management changes across Essex are planned and necessary for all authorities.

Waste Hierarchy

- 5 There is a well established and internationally recognised hierarchy which seeks to actively prevent waste production and then only finally to dispose of waste to landfill if there is no other option. The order of preference is therefore:-

Reduce
Reuse
Recycle
Recover Energy
Landfill Disposal

Taking these issues in the above order

Reduce

- 6 Currently Uttlesford residents statistically produce more waste per household than any other Essex area and is in the top quartile nationally. Although this can be explained partially by the relative affluence of the area, there are a number of other issues which the MRG identified. As can be seen from the description of services above, Uttlesford provides a wide and comprehensive

range of services to householders, often without any separate charge. This provision has two major drivers, first the desire to protect the environment and character of the district by preventing or minimising fly tipping and general abandonment of waste in the countryside. Secondly, this district has the worst coverage by accessible civic amenity sites (ECC criteria is for all residents to be within a 6 mile radius) with there being only the Saffron Walden site. All other Essex districts have 2 or 3 sites with smaller areas. This under provision has for the last 20 years been partly met by the Uttlesford weekend container service. The new CA site proposed for Dunmow in 2005 will deal with the under provision and allow the various services which collect mixed waste to in future only handle separated materials which are recyclable. Other waste generating activities and styles of service such as kerbside green waste collection and the use of domestic wheeled bins have not been introduced because of their waste generating potential and greatly increased costs.

Reuse

- 7 In an area such as Uttlesford, the ability to find local outlets for items such as clothing and household goods is limited. Currently the Salvation Army have textile banks, Oxfam book banks and recently a group has been established to refurbish some items of furniture.

Recycle

- 8 The services mentioned above provide a comprehensive range of collect and bring services for approximately 90% of the Uttlesford area with participation rates of approximately 70%. The range of materials involved is still limited by the re-processors' and manufacturers' capacity to handle the products and the quantity and quality required for economic viability. A transfer station in the Harlow area is anticipated in 2004 and ultimately a local MRF is planned.

Recover Energy

- 9 Essex County Council and the Essex districts and unitaries have agreed that incineration will not be a process employed to handle municipal waste. However, a process known as anaerobic digestion will provide the disposal process and produce further recyclable (metals, glass and plastics), a compost material and a combustion gas to generate electrical power. The utilisation of this process will provide for the treatment of kitchen wastes which the En-Trust funded trail would otherwise have covered by expansion to the whole district. This will mean the saving of the planned future revenue costs that would have resulted had the vehicle kitchen waste collections continued.

Landfill Disposal

- 10 This is the least favoured and acceptable means of disposal and European legislation is now reducing the amounts of waste involved and requiring pre-treatment before deposit. Similarly with the reduction of sites available and landfill tax increases planned this would not continue to be a cheap option.

The Review Process

- 11 The review has followed the standard Best Value process of compare, consult, challenge and compete. The MRG met on a regular basis as programmed as did the supporting officer group.

a) Compare

The services provided for the full range of customers were compared with other Essex authorities and the Daventry group. The performance of Uttlesford is extremely good from having the lowest ratio of missed collections, giving 52 collections each year, free bulky waste collections and end of life vehicle removal to the widest range of materials collected for recycling and the actual recycling performance (20% for 2003/4). The comparison of costs was not pursued given the variation in services provided and the demographics of each authority. However, an independent study a number of years ago established that the costs were 50% higher for servicing rural communities compared to urban area.

b) Consult/Challenge

These two requirements were taken together and because of poor response levels and attendances at events previously, a comprehensive survey form was issued to over 2000 trade customers and householders. Some 750 forms were returned (37% response) and the data compared. In essence the provision of a single collection day with all materials available kerbside (special arrangements would continue for elderly and disabled residents) was clearly acceptable. Also, the continuation of free bulky collections and village CA services until better permanent CA facilities are developed was a general expectation. Front line staff from the Contractor, the Direct Service Organisation and the Services Officer team were also interviewed by some of the Best Value Officer Group. All survey forms etc., are available for viewing by arrangement.

c) Compete

The value for money and market testing which are often difficult parts of most reviews were not considered by the MRG as an issue as compulsory competitive tendering had been undertaken in both 1990 and 1996 and resulted in the present service providers. There was also the expectation of future tendering in 2006.

Answers To Fundamental Questions

- 12 The Terms of Reference required the Best Value Review process to answer a number of fundamental questions. Having completed the review the MRG can answer these as follows:

No	Question	Response
1	Does the Council have a statutory duty to provide the Services?	<p>Refuse collection has long been a statutory service for domestic and trade customers with specific charges made for the latter.</p> <p>Initially, recycling undertaken by local authorities was discretionary with an obligation only to produce a Recycling Plan. Since 2001 statutory targets have been in place and a new Act will soon require a kerbside service collecting at least two materials.</p>
2	Are the services meeting current required standards?	<p>In respect of refuse collection, the missed bin rate is amongst the lowest in UK at 12 per 100,000 collections. The civic amenity service provided by Essex CC does not give adequate coverage to the south of the district. This lack of facilities is planned to be addressed in 2005.</p> <p>Recycling levels are expected to be 20%+ in 2004 and the extra civic amenity site will allow changes to add approximately 5% to that figure.</p>
3	What contractual arrangements are appropriate to meet future requirements?	<p>Current arrangements go through to 2006 by which time a single pass operation can be in place. In this way dry recyclables and residual waste are collected at the same time using a single twin body vehicle.</p> <p>At that time competitive tendering with the Essex CC and in other districts can be undertaken if considered advantageous.</p>

Answers To The Specific Questions

- 13 The Terms of Reference required the Best Value Review process to also answer a number of specific questions. Having completed the review the MRG can answer these as follows:

No.	Question	Response
1	Are the present standards appropriate to meet customer requirements?	<p>An extensive customer survey showed that for refuse collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 92% of householders were satisfied - 90% of trade customers were satisfied - 96% of customers were satisfied with their contact with the Admin team <p>Similarly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 90% were satisfied with the recycling collections - 75% were satisfied with the recycling centres - 68% were satisfied with special collections <p>The positioning of a CA site in the south of Uttlesford will allow the recycling centres and special collection arrangements to be enhanced and refocused to improve performance</p>
2	What improvements and/or changes will be necessary to meet national and local targets	<p>The provision by Essex County Council of a transfer station in the Harlow area and a CA site in Dunmow add approximately 8% to the recycling performance by enabling waste reduction measures to be introduced and refocusing some services. This will achieve initial statutory and PSA targets. Ultimately the use of anaerobic digestion as the disposal method for residual wastes will produce further recyclables and energy to achieve all individual and pooled targets.</p>
3	How can the charges be implemented in the most cost effective way	<p>The progressive introduction of split body vehicles by 2006 will enable the merging of all kerbside recycling and residual waste services.</p>

No.	Question	Response
4	Can the development of partnerships assist in the delivery of any service improvements or future performance targets	The emerging joint working with other districts and/or a partnership with the current contractor will give economy of scale and access to new facilities.
5	Can the existing refuse collection and kerbside recycling service be merged into a single contract and collection system	Yes by 2006 – see 3 and 4 above.
6	How can information on services and collection variations be more effectively commercialised to all customers	<p>Some initial progress has been made by, each week, only collecting one type of dry recyclables, i.e. either black or green boxes. Only one calendar is needed for each collection day from 2004.</p> <p>Ultimately the single collection day for residual waste and dry recyclables will further simplify the information provided to the public via the internet, council newspaper, advertisements, direct leafleting and village newsletters/magazines.</p>

- 14 As a result of the Review Process, the MRG is now in a position to propose an Improvement Plan, which sets out a number of actions to be taken to continue the improvement, development and integration of the refuse collection and recycling services.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee approve the Refuse Collection and Recycling Services Best Value Review Improvement Plan.

Background Papers: Best Value Review

BEST VALUE REVIEW REFUSE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING SERVICES

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT PLAN

AIM 1 TO DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS TO ASSIST IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS.

How	What is involved	Improvement expected	Timetable	Finance/Resource Implications
(i) Work with Essex CC and all districts and unitary authorities	Develop long term waste disposal and recycling contracts. Agree to the pooling of statutory and PSA targets.	Increased recycling, non-incineration waste disposal solutions and able to meet EU targets.	On-going through to 2008	Unknown at present
(ii) Joint working and procurement within the West Essex Area	Agree facilities and arrangements which would allow earlier progress in recycling and waste minimisation	Increased recycling performances, meet individual targets and potentially reduce overall costs	ECC transfer station in 2004/05	Subject to DEFRA funding UDC savings on MRF fees.
(iii) Consider possible joint public/private partnership for future contracts.	Arrangements involving the DSO and Verdant or another contractor in post 2006 working.	Improved use of staff and management resources potentially involving two or more local authorities	2005/06	Reduced management costs

AIM 2 MERGE THE EXISTING REFUSE COLLECTION AND KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICES INTO A SINGLE CONTRACT.

How	What is involved	Improvement expected	Timetable	Finance/Resource Implications
(i) Develop and prepare a specification for a single combined service	Prepare tender documentation for revised service to comply with EU Procurement.	Improved services for less cost.	Start preparation April 2005	Mainly from within existing resources

(ii)	Ensure that the vehicles are appropriate and available.	Continue the progressive replacement of existing vehicles with twin body RCVs	Simplified refuse collection and recycling service.	On-going to 2006.	Already within capital programme
(iii)	Introduce a universal kerbside system for residual and recycled waste streams	Plan and publicise the revised collection day by information to each household. Some change is inevitable to almost all areas.	All households will then receive a kerbside collection of recyclables.	Implement in August 2006.	Existing resources

AIM 3 IMPLEMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES TO MEET NATIONAL AND LOCAL TARGETS.

How	What is involved	Improvement expected	Timetable	Finance/Resource Implications	
(i)	Investigate effective waste reduction initiatives	Examine all elements of the waste stream. Target trade and street sweeping waste particularly.	Reduces the total waste and household waste streams thereby improving recycling performance.	2004	Existing resources
(ii)	Increase the range of materials collected for recycling and reuse	Increase partnership working and projects with other West Essex authorities and charities	Increase recycling performance and encourage re-use of household items	2004	None
(iii)	Encourage the formation of a business waste forum	Organising an initial meeting and later providing technical and secretarial support	Reduces waste disposal pressures and improves business profitability	2004	Initial start up costs less £1000

AIM 4 IMPLEMENT THE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES IN MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WAY.

How	What is involved	Improvement expected	Timetable	Finance/Resource Implications
(i) Work with Essex CC to provide a CA site in Dunmow	Encourage earliest provision of the CA site or part of the joint development also involving a new UDC depot.	Reduced demand for weekend container and special collection services. Increased recycling performance of approximately 5%	2004/05	ECC project
(ii) Redirect the current weekend bring services from mixed to recyclable collections.	Implementing a manned container service for green waste, timber and metals.	Reduces waste stream and increases the recycling performance by approximately 3%	2004/05	Increased costs offset by recycling credits
(iii) The use of a single vehicle and collection day.	Revised schedules and publicity	Simplified and more cost effective service	2006	Reduced management costs

AIM 5 TO PROVIDE SERVICES WHICH ARE APPROPRIATE AND MEET CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS

How	What is involved	Improvement expected	Timetable	Finance/Resource Implications
(i) Extend the range of containers available for hire	Include the smaller sizes of wheeled trade bins in the options available	Increased customer base, improved on site storage, increased trade income	2004/05	Part of normal annual costs.

(ii) Extend the range of materials collected for recycling from trade premises	Visit customers completing survey forms indicating that 50% of their waste could be recycled.	Reduce waste disposal problems, generate income from sale of materials.	2004/05	Existing resources.
(iii) Survey customers annually.	Send out survey form each year with the Duty of Care documents.	Service more responsive to customers needs and changing circumstances.	Annually	None.

AIM 6 COMMUNICATE INFORMATION ON SERVICES AND COLLECTION VARIATIONS MORE EFFECTIVELY TO ALL CUSTOMERS

How	What is involved	Improvement expected	Timetable	Finance/Resource Implications
(i) Simplified service arrangements	Single weekly collection day for all materials	Reduces number of recycling calendars produced from 10 to 5 versions	2005/06	Small cost reduction
(ii) Notification of all changes for Bank Holidays in a single notice	Distribute information sheet with recycling calendar in December each year.	Improved information for all customers	2005/06	None
(iii) Arrange for all boxes of the same colour (ie Green or black) to be in the same week.	Introduce change over during the Christmas period in 2003	Improved information available to the public	2003	None
(iv) Information on the internet of all collections.	Change information progressively as new systems are implemented.	Improved access to current information.	On-going	Existing resources

Committee: Environment & Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: KITCHEN WASTE RECYCLING TRIAL
Author: Richard Secker (01799) 510580

Summary

- 1 This report advises Members of the situation with the kitchen waste recycling trial and recommends termination at the end of March 2004.

Background

- 2 As reported to the last meeting of this Committee the En-Trust funded trial to separate and compost kitchen and green waste completes the twelve month minimum period on 31 March 2004. Since its commencement the trial has faced major practical and financial difficulties which were mainly the result of the national foot and mouth crisis.
- 3 In essence the anticipated processing arrangements which were expected to be available were not in place and the interim facilities were withdrawn later resulting in greatly increased processing costs.
- 4 However, since the bid for the En-Trust funding was prepared over two years ago much has changed. Both in the long term disposal arrangements being proposed by Essex County Council (ECC) and this Council's plans for increasing recycling.
- 5 The waste disposal process, which the ECC will introduce to replace their reliance on landfill, will be anaerobic digestion which will produce a biogas for energy generation and a soil substitute/compost material. This process would also use a 'front-end' screening system to recover glass, metals, plastics etc. Therefore, using this technology it would be unnecessary to remove kitchen and garden wastes earlier during the collection service arrangements used by the district councils at extra cost.
- 6 Members will note in the Best Value Review of Refuse Collection and Recycling Services improvement plan that separate kitchen waste collections are not being proposed, mainly because of the information above. Apart from the obvious financial savings this will also permit the single pass collection of residual waste and recyclables using the twin bodied vehicles being introduced into the collection fleet.

Financial

- 7 The exceptional costs being absorbed this year to complete the trial period will make the total trial expenditure £83k and even if improved arrangements were to be available next year, expenditure would still be some £43k.
- 8 At this time, no budget provision has been made for continuation in 2004/05 and it would now seem sensible to end the trial on 31 March 2004. Clearly the information to all the participants in the trial areas needs to be carefully prepared to demonstrate the value of the data obtained, the source of the trial funding and the future proposals which will similarly deal with this significant element of the residual waste stream.

Conclusions

- 9 It is now considered unnecessary to promote the separate collection of kitchen waste etc given the disposal processes available in a few years and the disproportionate costs which the district would incur. Obviously there is some concern at losing approximately 200 tonnes of materials towards our recycling targets. However, with the success of the recent partnership bids to DEFRA which will give £250k funding to reach a 25.6% target for 2005/06 Uttlesford would seem well placed for the future. Particularly with the extra civic amenity site at Dunmow and anaerobic digestion/transfer stations all part of the new ECC infrastructure.

RECOMMENDED that the kitchen waste trial scheme be terminated on the 31 March 2004.

Background Papers: None

Committee: Environment and Transport

Date: 13 January 2004

Agenda Item No: 10

Title: "Grants" - Economic Development Expenditure

Author: Roger Harborough (01799) 510457

Summary

- 1 This report invites the Committee to give further guidance on three budget review items: financial support for Uttlesford Enterprise, the Essex Economic Partnership and the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Background

- 2 As part of the review of the effectiveness of planning grants, at the meeting of the Committee on 4 November Members requested a further report on the justification for financial support in two areas of economic development activity.
- 3 Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the nature of the "grants" to economic development organisations. They are either sponsorship or subscriptions.

Uttlesford Enterprise

- 4 This service is provided by Business Development Services (North West Essex) Ltd. In recognition of the provision of the service the Council has provided accommodation and sponsored the company, along with private sector sponsors. Braintree District Council has provided in kind support for the company. Activity and outcome statistics for the six first month period in FY 2003/4 are as follows:

Uttlesford Enterprise service 1 April – 30 September 2003	Saffron Walden	Great Dunmow
Client counselling		
Pre Start	22	14
Established businesses	3	3
Follow up/ after care	23	7
Outcomes		
Known start ups	7	1

- 5 It is important to note, however, that Business Development Services North West Essex (BDS) has a £140,000 contract with Business Link for Essex (BLfE), an Essex Economic Partnership subsidiary company, to deliver business start up advice locally in Braintree and Uttlesford. BLfE's target for 2003/4 is to provide a business start up advice service to 4,000 companies or prospective companies across Essex. The Council's sponsorship, along with other sponsorship, enabled a local bid to deliver services to be mounted successfully. It also provides BDS with an alternative income stream to bidding for such publicly funded programmes. The Council is represented on the Company Board, currently by Cllr Copping. The Dunmow and District Chamber of Trade is also represented.
- 6 BDS has not yet secured a contract with BLfE for delivery of small business advice locally in 2004/5 but is confident that it will be successful. BLfE will ensure that there is appropriate service provision. It may use other companies to deliver, but its Delivery Plan for 2004/5 refers to developing on the work of the (existing) Start Up Business Consortia. In the longer term there may be a move to the local delivery of small business services being organised at a regional level through Regional Development Agencies rather than county area organisations like Business Links.
- 7 The Council's sponsorship of £5,000 for 2003/4 has not yet been paid, although this has now been formally requested by BDS. In the light of the above, Members are asked to confirm that this remains an appropriate use of the Council's funds. A short submission from BDS appended.

Essex Economic Partnership (EEP)

- 8 The EEP is a limited company with 55 partner members, including local authorities, chambers of commerce, tertiary education bodies and private sector organisations. Membership of the partnership is either as a Voting Member or Associate Member. Voting Members pay an annual subscription. The council is a Voting Member. The EEP is responsible for commissioning the Essex Economic Strategy, the Essex Innovation Network Strategy which provides a range of measures to support the growth of knowledge based firms, the development of a Cluster Strategy which supports business competitiveness networks within particular sectors, and the delivery of East of England Development Agency (EEDA)'s Rural Renaissance Strategy. It has three subsidiary companies: Business Link for Essex, ReMaDe Essex which aims to create stable and efficient markets for recycled products and projects in Essex, and Careers Essex.
- 9 A major review of the role of EEP is happening however. It is proposed to form a new Essex Development Agency, which will be a delivery vehicle for the range of strategic economic development initiatives. It will be funded by bidding for work from external parties such as EEDA. A new representative forum of economic development interests has been proposed: an Essex Prosperity Forum. This would be funded by subscriptions from member organisations.

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

- 10 This is a similar organisation to the EEP. Its area of interest overlaps Essex, particularly in the Saffron Walden area. The Council is a voting member of the partnership and has paid a subscription for the current and previous financial years. The partnership has contributed to the debate on the new regional plan for the East of England as well as delivered more specific projects like a prospectus of strategic business development opportunity sites including Chesterford Park.

Relationship to the draft Quality of Life Corporate Plan

- 11 The Corporate Plan includes actions to strengthen links with East of England Development Agency, Essex Economic Partnership and Greater Cambridge Partnership. EEDA currently delivers its initiatives through sub regional partnerships like EEP and GCP. EEP and GCP are identified as partners involved in a number of specific actions proposed to deliver an Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy.

RECOMMENDED that:

- i) Members confirm that sponsorship of £5,000 to BDS for 2003/4 be paid
- ii) Members give further guidance on these budget review items.

Background Papers:

Essex Economic Partnership Business Plan 2003/4

Business Link for Essex Delivery Plans for 2003/4 and 2004/5

Draft Quality of Life Corporate Plan

Committee: Environment & Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 11
Title: Review of On-Street Paid Parking on Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden
Author: Alex Stewart (01799) 510555

Summary

- 1 This report provides Members with details of introducing On-Street, paid parking in Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden. It recommends that 3 of the 9 parking spaces in Abbey Lane be dedicated to Residents Parking.

Background

- 2 At the meeting of Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 June 2001, members resolved the following:-
 - On street charging be introduced within the Residents' Parking Scheme
 - The charge be 30p per hour (subsequently changed on 1/4/03 to 40p per hour)
 - £21, 000 be allocated from capital monies for the purchase of Pay and display machines
 - Provision be made for parking from Monday to Friday from 09.00am to 05.00pm (subsequently amended to 10.00am to 03.00pm in respect of Castle Street)
 - The scheme be reviewed after 18 months
 - The implementation of the scheme be subject to statutory consultation
- 3 The introduction of the Scheme was somewhat protracted due to the lengthy consultation period that was required and the fact that a number of objections were received and required dealing with before formal implementation. The scheme became live in April 2003. A full 18 month review will be provided to Members in October 2004.

Abbey Lane Scheme

- 4 Since its inception, Officers have monitored both the amount of money that the scheme had generated and comments received from local residents. The table below provides details of income generated.

Name of Street	Number of Spaces Utilised for P&D	Amount of Income Generated £
East Street	12	135.25
Abbey Lane	9	826.75
Gold Street	7	661.55
Museum Street	5	370.85
Castle Street	16	331.70
TOTAL	49	2,326.10

- 5 This equates to 5,815 tickets being sold over a period of 8 months averaging a total of 121 parking tickets per week, which, in turn, averages to a total of 24 parking tickets per day.
- 6 The initial concerns expressed by residents have proved unfounded in all areas with the exception of Abbey Lane. Despite the fact that residents take priority over Pay and Display, it was considered, at the time, that there would be enough spaces in Abbey Lane to cope with the dual demand.
- 7 With regard to Abbey Lane, however, one local family is experiencing constant problems of not being able to park. The family concerned consists of two very young children that the Mother is unable to leave alone in the house. She is frequently forced to park in Swan Meadow as all the available spaces are being taken up by Pay and Display users during the day. This is borne out by the fact that Abbey Lane is generating approximately 1/3 of the income generated by the scheme.
- 8 The family consider that Abbey Lane is equi-distant to the Town Centre from Swan Meadow and have formally requested that Members resolve to revoke the Pay and Display Parking facility in Abbey Lane.
- 9 As this approach would affect the income that the Council receives an alternative means of dealing with this issue is to dedicate 3 of the 9 available parking spaces to Residents' Parking. Although income would be affected, it is unlikely to drop too severely due to the low number of tickets sold across the scheme. It would enable the family in question to have more security that a parking space might be available.

Conclusions

- 10 It is apparent that the Pay and Display facility is being used in Saffron Walden and is popular with local businesses and the public for a short stay visit. The scheme is being patrolled along with the local car parks and, whilst there is not the capacity to patrol all of the hours which the scheme is operational, the scheme does not appear to be abused.
- 11 The most practical way to deal with the request from the family in Abbey Lane is to dedicate 3 of the parking spaces to Residents Parking.

RECOMMENDED that 3 of the 9 parking spaces in Abbey Lane be dedicated to Residents' Parking only.

Background Papers: Letter from Local resident, On Street Parking Order (Various), Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee (June 2001) Environment & Transport Committee (March 2003).

Committee: Environment and Transport
Date: 13 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 14
Title: Performance Management System
Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510402

Summary

- 1 This report informs all Committees of the Council the progress with the introduction of a Performance Management System within Uttlesford. The report recommends the layout of the reporting mechanism and the process to resolve issues of under performance.
- 2 The report also recommends that performance monitoring be reported to Scrutiny Committees with Scrutiny Committees referring any issues to the appropriate Policy Committee.

Background

- 3 Corporate Management Team on the 11 July 2003 agreed the introduction of a Performance Management System and authorized the Performance Manager to meet with Service Heads to develop a robust range of Performance Indicators to measure both the corporate and service health of the authority. Once this process was completed a report outlining the range of performance measures was to go to all Committees of the Council seeking the views of Members on the robustness and reporting mechanism of the Performance Management system
- 4 A range of draft Performance Measures were developed with Heads of Service and a multi committee report did the rounds in September and October 2003. As a result of this exercise 68 Performance Measures were identified as forming the basis of the pilot performance management framework. Members asked for an additional performance indicator to measure homeliness and this have been added. In addition officers were asked to explore additional methods to measure access to services and customer care. The First Point of Contact Review Team is carrying out this exercise. Some concern was raised about a Traffic Lights Reporting Mechanism, as this would discriminate against people who are colour blind. To meet this concern colour coded Smiley Faces were added to the reporting mechanism.
- 5 To keep the reporting process simple it is recommended that the following mechanism is introduced:

Green for On Target to achieve agreed Performance Target – Smiley Face

Amber for up to 10% slippage from agreed Performance Target – Straight Face

Red for more than 10% from agreed Performance Target – Glum Face

- 6 Attached at Appendix A is a draft report for the Half Year with details of 03/04 performances delivered. The format of the reporting is:

Indicator Code – if it is a National Indicator or a Local Indicator

Basic Details of the Performance Measure

A 2002/03 Performance Outturn if the data exists

Target for 2003/04

Quarterly data for April to June and July to Sept 03

Daventry Benchmarking Group 2002/03 – 16 authorities broadly the same as Uttlesford DC. How Uttlesford was placed either Top/Medium/Lower in categories in 2002/03

Smiley Face/Straight or Glum Faces based on colour code –

Comments if required

- 7 The quarterly data will be reported to SMT and colleagues with Reds will outline a recovery package or a request to re-work the target. This information will be included in the quarterly reporting report to Scrutiny Committees. Scrutiny Committees will have the opportunity to refer comments on performance to the appropriate policy committee.

- 8 At the Half Year there were six Red Indicators out of 69. They are:

- Financial Penalties imposed by the Inland Revenue
- Percentage of debt outstanding at 90 days
- Average length of stay in Bed & Breakfast
- New tenants visits completed within 3 months
- Score against a checklist of environmental standards
- Percentage of valid planning applications determined within 5 weeks

These six indicators are all being re-examined to ensure that the data returns are accurate and that the performance targets are realistic. For example three of the indicators have a target of 100%, is this ambitious?

- 9 The Performance Management system will be piloted for the rest of 2003/04 with reports delivered to Scrutiny Committees in Jan/Feb and March 2004. The system will be fine tuned as required and the formal mechanism will commence from April 2004.

RECOMMENDED

The comments of all Committees are sought on the Range of Performance Measures, Performance Targets and use of a Traffic Light System

Note that the Performance Review Data will be reported to Scrutiny Committee(s).

Note that any Red Indicator will have a Rescue Recovery Package from the relevant manager incorporated into the report.

