

**Committee:** Environment and Transport  
**Date:** 2 March 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 4  
**Title:** Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England – progress report  
**Author:** Roger Harborough (01799) 510457

### **Summary**

- 1 This report updates Members of progress to date with the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG14).

### **Background**

- 2 The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) is responsible for preparing the draft RPG14 as the designated Regional Planning Body for the area comprising the six counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The Regional Assembly has a representative of each of the local authorities in the East of England and representatives of stakeholder groups, which include the sustainable development round table, business interests, environment interests, the health and voluntary sectors and the universities. Once the Assembly has finalised the draft plan, it hands it over to the Government Office (GO East). GO East organises formal public consultation on the draft plan. In the light of consultation responses GO East will arrange for a public examination of the key issues arising by an appointed expert panel. The examination takes the form of a structured discussion and testing of the proposals. The First Secretary of State considers the panel's report, every representation received and consults on any proposed changes. Having considered the response, he then issues RPG14 in its final form.
- 3 EERA consulted on "high level" options leading to RPG14 in September 2002. It has commissioned with others numerous studies intended to take the work forward, including the London Stansted Cambridge Study, the Harlow Options Study, the Stansted M11 Corridor Development Options Study, bottom up assessments of district level housing numbers from the six county groupings of authorities. There has been some wider stakeholder involvement within some of these studies. The Council has, indeed, urged local councils and other organisations within the Uttlesford area to express their views during last year as part of this study process.

## Recent Developments

- 4 On 19 January, a meeting took place between EERA representatives and Lord Rooker, Minister for Regeneration and Regional Development in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to explore whether the scale of housing provision in the emerging RPG14 was acceptable to the Government, and to press the Region's case for infrastructure funding to support growth. The overriding issue in the Government's response was that the scale of housing growth is too low. It is seeking another 900 homes a year in the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor outside London, (13,400 between 2001 and 2016, 18,000 between 2001 and 2021). The Government has subsequently announced the extension of the Corridor to include Peterborough and Stevenage. This late intervention by the Minister is most unsatisfactory.
- 5 At its meeting on 5 February, EERA resolved to "approve" the content of draft RPG14 as it currently stands, and to commit itself to submit proposals by September 2004 for the additional 18,000 homes in the extended London Stansted Cambridge Peterborough growth area, subject to a satisfactory regional result on the region's infrastructure needs in the Government's 2004 Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 6 RPG14 sets out a spatial strategy that is wide ranging in its scope, but inevitably it is the housing provision that has attracted most interest. The strategy approved so far for the purposes of consultation in the Autumn includes a district level housing distribution requiring new sites to be identified (in excess of existing capacity and commitments) for over 19,000 homes in Harlow/ Epping Forest), 2,000 homes at Bishop's Stortford in East Hertfordshire and 2,650 homes in Uttlesford (mostly in the Great Dunmow area).
- 7 The draft spatial strategy 'approved' to date by EERA provides for the development of Stansted up to the capacity of maximum use of the existing single runway and addresses the urbanisation and transport impacts. The studies to accommodate the additional 18,000 dwellings will address the urbanisation and transport effects of two runways at Stansted.

## Next Steps

- 8 In December, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned an overarching study of the extended Corridor looking at alternative development options and their infrastructure implications, which is due to report by April. It is understood there will now be some stakeholder involvement in this study. It is important to note that this study has been commissioned by Government, which will ultimately approve the regional plan, rather than the responsible body for preparing the plan, namely EERA.
- 9 EERA's commitment to carrying out additional study work to accommodate a further 18,000 dwellings in the Corridor is expected to involve:
  - extending work already under way on Hertfordshire and Peterborough to identify and investigate sustainable locations for major growth,
  - commissioning a further study of the Harlow/ A120 areas to audit the conclusions of the Harlow Options Study and the Stansted/ M11 Study

and receive recommendations from the study the Government has independently commissioned of the extended corridor mentioned in paragraph 7 above.

- 10 The ten local authorities in the Essex and Hertfordshire parts of the corridor have set up a Member working party with officer support to provide coordinated advice to the authorities.
- 11 In the modified RPG timetable, EERA approves submission of amended RPG at the end of September. Consultation on the draft is launched in October and runs to 21 January 2005 with a public examination arranged for later in 2005. The final RPG is expected to be published in 2006.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the current situation in relation to the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance and supports active involvement in the ongoing studies to protect the quality of life in Uttlesford

Background Papers: Papers for EERA meeting 5 February 2004

**Committee:** Environment & Transport  
**Date:** 2 March 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 5  
**Title:** Saffron Walden Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme  
**Authors:** Jeremy Pine (01799) 510460  
Sarah Nicholas (01799) 510454

### **Summary**

- 1 Following the report to Members on the 4 November 2003 a meeting of District and Town Councillors, Members of Uttlesford Access Group, Saffron Walden Initiative, and County Highway and District Planning Officers was held on 19 February.
- 2 This report sets out the conclusions of that meeting and recommends a way forward.

### **Background**

- 3 The purpose of the meeting was to discuss two specific issues highlighted in the results of questionnaires of local residents and businesses undertaken in early 2003.

- (a) A parking problem for Blue Badge holders (people with disabilities) within the Controlled Zone, as reserved parking bays are only available in King Street, which is not accessible after the road is closed on market days.
  - (b) High level of feeling that loading/unloading times within the allocated bays within the Controlled Zone should not be restricted.
- 4 It was recognised however that these concerns fed into wider issues of enforcement and pedestrianisation, and these issues were also discussed at the meeting, which was held on 19 February 2004.

### **Summary of discussion**

- 5 It was recognised that there was limited capacity within the area for additional parking for people with disabilities, especially with the market day street closures. However, it was agreed that there might be scope to form additional blue badge bays in front of the library, in Market Row and at the “four corners” of the existing waiting bays in Market Place. These additional bays would give a useful spread of bays around the Controlled Zone, which would be in the interests of their users. Looking beyond the Controlled Zone, 4 of the 29 spaces at the Rose and Crown Car Park are reserved for Blue Badge holders. These are managed effectively and well used. The potential of dedicating more bays to Blue Badge holders solely on market and other days was discussed, but it was felt that this could increase conflict with other users of the Car Park, as the layout is quite restricted and tight. It was considered that there would be merit in dedicating the Rose and Crown Car Park solely to Blue Badge holders on market days. This would result in some loss of revenue for the Council, but it could be relatively easy to enforce (subject to resources).
- 6 The problems with the availability of loading and unloading bays could be eased with stricter enforcement of the regulations to free up the bays for legitimate users. It was hoped that this would occur when the Council is responsible for enforcing the regulations after decriminalisation. It was also clear that the public did not understand the scope of the existing restrictions, and there was an opportunity to give them greater publicity before decriminalisation. For instance, many did not appear to know that the loading bays were available to cars outside the hours of 10.00am to 5.00pm.
- 7 Action P7.3 of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan requires the exploration of the use of innovative approaches to urban design and traffic engineering such as Shared Space Zones in existing urban centres. It was considered that there was a general congestion problem in Market Place caused partly by motorists driving round hunting for a parking place. Whilst there was a legitimate need for space for loading and unloading and for Blue Badge parking within the Controlled Zone, other motorists did not actually need to be there at all. It was felt that, in the longer term, there would be merit in looking at the possibility of the pedestrianisation or semi-pedestrianisation of King Street and Market Place. Pedestrianisation could bring about other

opportunities for the town, such as street cafes or street theatre, enhancing its value as a tourist attraction and as a place to live and work. A feasibility study was required, which would include research the experiences of other similar towns with pedestrianisation schemes.

## RECOMMENDED

- (i) That the technical feasibility of forming additional Blue Badge bays within the Controlled Zone as detailed in this report be investigated by Essex County Council.
- (ii) That this Council considers whether to dedicate the Rose and Crown Car Park to Blue Badge holders on market days.
- (iii) That this Council publicises the existing restrictions prior to decriminalisation, and that upon the introduction of decriminalisation that the controlled parking zone is enforced.
- (iv) That the Saffron Walden Town Centre Traffic Management Working Group be convened to consider feasibility options for pedestrianisation / semi-pedestrianisation of King Street and Market Place.
- (v) That further reports on items (i) and (ii) above be made to this Committee at its next meeting.

Background Papers: Report and minutes of Agenda Item 10 to Environment & Transport Committee 4 November 2003.

**Committee:** ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE  
**Date:** 2 March 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 6  
**Title:** ESSEX WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS  
**Author:** Richard Secker (01799) 510580

### Summary

- 1 This report advises Members of the progress of Essex County Council towards a long term waste disposal contract(s) and the potential involvement of the District Council as collection authority.

### Background

- 2 As Members will be aware, Essex County Council is progressing new long term waste disposal contracts which will replace their reliance on landfill and

meet all the proposed EU standards. Through the Essex Waste Management Board the districts and unitaries are working with the County Council to ensure that future arrangements achieve maximum mutual benefit and promote recycling and waste reduction.

- 3 Currently for convenience and to encourage local joint working Essex has been divided into three areas with Uttlesford in the West area along with Harlow, Brentwood and Epping Forest. It may be that these areas are the subject of separate disposal contracts or there could be a re-ordering to link districts which have similar systems and aspirations.
- 4 In any event there will be a range of anaerobic digestion plants, materials recycling facilities (MRF's) and transfer stations provided with the major plants at the waste disposal locations across Essex identified in the Essex Waste Local Plan.
- 5 In West Essex Uttlesford and Harlow have co-operated previously and now anticipate sharing a transfer facility to handle the dry recyclables from our green box collections. This unit will be located in Harlow and funded by the Essex County Council via their successful DEFRA bid. The use of this facility will both improve our efficiency and reduce the operating costs. In the longer term Harlow's systems will be very similar to Uttlesford's as set out in the Best Value Improvement Plan with split body vehicles, single pass collections and recovery of the maximum range of dry recyclables.
- 6 Essex County Council, via the Waste Management Board and their Project Group, will soon require information from the districts and unitaries on the degree of co-operation and integration they can agree to work towards.
- 7 In the extremes a single twenty-five year contract could cover the whole of geographical Essex integrating all collection and disposal arrangements or alternatively each authority could remain totally separate as now. Currently the collection authorities with the most successful refuse and recycling services do not favour integration with the County contract, but rather the strategic provision of facilities such as MRF's and transfer stations for all types of waste.
- 8 The timetable which the Essex County Council Project Team is working towards is attached and is a development of that seen by Members last year. At this stage no commitments are required although at the June 2004 meeting some operational preferences will have to be indicated.

RECOMMENDED that the Project Team timetable is noted and a further report is made to the June meeting of this Committee.

Background Papers: Essex County Council report to the Essex Waste Management Board.

## PROJECT PROGRAMME TO AUTUMN 2004 – MEMBER DECISIONS

It is assumed that individual authorities will form a view in advance of each decision date.

<u>Decision on ...</u>	<u>Area &amp; Thames Gateway WDA Groups</u>	<u>WMAB</u>
1. Vertical and horizontal integration	March	
2. Realignment of areas (if necessary following decision 1)		April
3. Project Charter		April
4. Agree performance targets	April/May *	
5. Contract decisions ) i) Output vs directed ) ii) Traditional vs pyramid )	May/July *	
6. Communication Plan and Waste Awareness Strategy Phase 2 ) )		May
7. Government guidance on joint strategies ) )		
(Annual Conference and Meeting with Leaders & Chief Executives of each authority)		July
8. Infrastructure needs ) )		
9. Funding options ) )	Late Aug/Early Sept *	
10. Memorandum of Understanding )		
11. Draft strategy agreed		Sept
12. Strategy and targets confirmed – following which OBC will be prepared for submission to Defra (assuming PFI funding)		Nov

\* Delayed dates if areas have to be realigned at April WMAB

**Committee:** Environment & Transport  
**Date:** 2 March, 2004  
**Agenda Item No.** 7  
**Title:** Golds Nurseries – Progress Report  
**Author:** Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

### **Summary**

- 1 This Report updates the Committee on the current position at Golds Nurseries Business Park, Elsenham.

### **Background**

- 2 The Committee have requested a regular progress report on the current situation of the management and lettings of the units at Golds Nurseries Business Park.

### **Dilapidations**

- 3 Work on dilapidations is now complete.

### **Bid to the Essex Economic Partnership for CCTV and Re-Branding**

- 4 In December the Council submitted a bid to the Essex Economic Partnership (EEP) for funding from the Essex Capital Projects Fund for CCTV and re-branding. The bid was successful and the Council will receive a maximum capital grant of £12,000 or 50% of the total expenditure for the works, whichever is the lesser. The grant is subject to works being carried out in this financial year, with invoices submitted by 25 March 2004.
- 5 To ensure works are carried out in accordance with the EEP timetable an order has been placed with the Council's contractor to install the CCTV under emergency works. It should be noted that there will be an annual subscription charge of approximately £1,200 for broadband services required to transfer data from the cameras to a PC. There will also be an annual maintenance cost after the first year of approximately £300. These charges have emerged since the November Committee meeting.
- 6 The re-branding of the estate will be carried out by Royston Simpson Publicity. The site will be known as Golds Enterprise Zone and negotiations are currently taking place with this company to finalise requirements for the re-branding.



## **Lettings**

- 7 The Council has negotiated three further lettings which should complete within the next few weeks. This will bring the total to 10 occupied units out of a total of 18 units on the estate.

## **Legal Work**

- 8 Legal work associated with lettings is now being carried out by Chelmsford Borough Council through the Essex Authorities TISWAS system. There has been a delay completing the first letting. Most of this arose as a result of delays by the prospective tenant's solicitor. The legal process will continue to be monitored to ensure that leases are concluded within a commercial timetable.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the current situation.

Background Papers – Golds Nurseries files 1984 onwards.