

**Committee:** ENVIRONMENT  
**Date:** 8 June 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 4  
**Title:** UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN – MODIFICATIONS  
**Author:** Melanie Jones (01799) 510461

### **Summary**

- 1 This report seeks Members' approval for the proposed modifications to the Uttlesford Local Plan.

### **Background**

- 2 The Local Plan Inquiry into objections to the Uttlesford Local Plan was held in May/June 2003. The Inspector's report was received in February this year. In his report the Inspector makes recommendations in response to the outstanding objections to the Deposit and Revised Deposit Plans.
- 3 On the basis of the Inspector's report a revised plan has been prepared which is attached to this report (Appendix 1 and 1A) These indicate the proposed modifications to the text and maps in the Revised Deposit Plan. Deletions are shown as a strike through and new text is highlighted. Also attached is a list of the Inspector's recommendations, which it is proposed that the Council does not intend to accept (Appendix 2). Once the modifications are approved the Council, in accordance with legislation, has to prepare three documents, which are then made available for public inspection and comment for a period of six weeks. It is proposed that this period should commence on 22 July 2004  
The three documents are:
  - A statement of the proposed modifications, which materially affect the content of the plan. Non-material changes and other consequential amendments are not included as modifications.
  - A statement of the Council's decisions in relation to each of the Inspector's recommendations.
  - A list of the Inspector's recommendations, which the Council does not intend to accept and the reasons for these decisions.
- 4 At the end of the six week consultation period Members will consider any objections and representations of support for the proposed modifications. Providing there are no material objections leading to a second inquiry the Plan can then be adopted early in 2005.

## **RECOMMENDED:**

That Council approves the proposed modifications to the Plan and authorises officers to prepare the statutory documents required for public consultation.

Background Papers: Inspector's Report and Addendum letter dated 7 April 2004

**Committee:** ENVIRONMENT

**Date:** 8 June 2004

**Agenda Item No:** 5

**Title:** Capacity for Improvement in Development Services and the use of Planning Delivery Grant

**Author:** John Mitchell (01799) 510450

### **Summary**

- 1 The Strategic Planning Member Reference Group was established at the Annual Council Meeting and held its first meeting, with the Chief Executive, the Director of Community Services and the relevant Executive Managers, on 19<sup>th</sup> May. Some of the strategic issues arising from that meeting are discussed in this report, but a further report will be put forward, probably as part of the budget setting process later this year. This report sets out proposed solutions to address issues of capacity of services within Development Services, particularly the Planning Service, to deliver day-to-day service requirements in the face of increasing workloads. These are both reactive (eg determining planning applications) and planned (eg new planning policy, known major infrastructure projects).
- 2 Failure to achieve basic statutory service delivery will mean that there is no capacity to take on the additional requirements arising from either the Quality of Life Corporate Plan or the proposed restructuring. It is concluded that resources are necessary now to support and develop the third tier and below. The report also set out how this year's Planning Delivery Grant of £219,000 can be used to help in the short term and to develop staff in the longer term.

### **Background**

- 3 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 the planning service underwent a substantial restructuring at the instruction of the previous Council resulting in the loss of a tier of management and a saving of some £80,000. The creation of the post of the

Head of Planning and Building Surveying (now Executive Manager, Development Services) in 2001 was justified as a replacement for the posts of the Heads of both Development Control and Policy and the restructuring took place against the assumption that there was a Director who would lead on the major strategic planning issues. Clearly that resource will no longer be available and the function will descend on the Executive Manager, Development Services (EMDS) and the Planning Policy Manager. The leadership and management skills of the Team Leaders in DC have developed rapidly and now to fulfil their potential they require support at senior level, as a minimum, as detailed in the report below. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager also requires support at senior level as detailed below to meet the known workload and to assist with the postholder's development. Until this support is available the EMDS's "hands on" role in DC and Policy will continue, to the detriment of the postholder's ability to contribute fully to corporate management.

- 4 Following the restructuring consultants were appointed to undertake, late last year, a Best Value review which identified some major areas of long standing poor service, and proposes practical, costed and measured methods of improvement over time. Considerable effort is required to make this work and the EMDS has a key role in this. Progress has stalled with regard to the reprocessing of Development Control following the unexpected retirement of a key member of staff, as well as the ramifications of the overall restructuring proposals, but is about to recommence. Implementation of all other elements continues however.

#### Development Control

- 5 In 2003-4 the planning service was under ODPM standards to improve performance on speed of handling major applications. The Service was thoroughly examined in January/February 2004 by consultants appointed by ODPM and is being monitored: indeed performance has worsened on handling major applications primarily because all such applications are determined by the Development Control Committee and most require s106 agreements, which are time-consuming. (In all other respects however it is improving significantly despite a reduction in staff and an increase in workload) One of the outcomes of that analysis was the lack of capacity in the department to deal with anticipated workloads – the ODPM's Consultants advise that the average caseload per officer should be 150 per annum. This is also a recommendation of the March 2004 LGA publication "Delivering Excellence in Planning". This recommended optimum caseload was not known at the time of the Best Value Review. The average caseload per Officer is over 300, and even at full establishment it would still be 254. Despite the use of consultants to handle basic planning applications this is not a sustainable level of performance and is giving rise to complaints from the public about delays and also to complaints from staff about excessive workload and stress. To deliver excellence 6 new case officers and one clerical assistant are required to reach the recommended caseload at a net additional cost of £240,957. It is unlikely that such resources will be made available, nor that the staff could be recruited. In order to assist with building

capacity in the longer term it is recommended that an element of Planning Delivery Grant is earmarked to train technical and administrative staff to qualify as planning officers. Depending on existing qualifications this would cost around £1,100 per member of staff per annum for up to 6 years. Three members of staff have expressed an interest in so doing and this would cost at maximum £19,800, funded entirely from this year's grant.

- 6 The DC service was restructured on the expectation of handling 1700 applications per year. Last year over 2,200 applications were received and there is no sign of a slowdown. Administrative staffing has reduced over time up to 2001 with full time staff being replaced by part time staff. It is considered necessary to increase administrative staffing by 1fte to make up the deficit and to accommodate the increased workload, particularly as effective administration is a key element of good development control. This will also assist with the key elements of customer care required by the BV review. The shortfall has, for over a year, been taken up by contract and agency staff. Permanent recruitment would also assist in covering for staff studying for a planning qualification.
- 7 Despite market supplements it has taken some 9 months to fill two vacancies for planning officers, and while a new Officer started in May there is still one vacancy for which we are recruiting. Despite the use of consultants to take on basic applications our performance lags behind other Essex Authorities although it is improving. The EMDS's close involvement with the development control service remains an imperative. It is also expected by Members. There is no capacity in the Development Control service that would enable the EMDS to have less involvement. To create the capacity, and to help absorb the EMDS's role in the DC process, the Team Leaders require support in the form of 2 senior planning officers as a minimum, together with the continued use of consultants. It is anticipated that there will be more interest in Senior Planning Officer posts.
- 8 There is a further issue. The allocation of Planning Delivery Grant is based largely on DC performance. Failure to improve or to meet BV targets will result in no grant. There is therefore a link between performance and financial reward, a state of affairs that has not existed before.

#### Planning Policy and Conservation

- 9 On the policy side the Planning Service has to bring the local plan through to adoption which will occupy staff until Christmas, as well as respond to and participate in the regional issues that could have significant implications for the district. GoEast also expect us to start preparing the new-style development plans this year. We also have to prepare for the airport expansion applications which will involve considerable pre-application work until the first application is submitted next March. EMDS will continue to play a key role in all these matters. There is no capacity in the policy section to take on further work.

- 10 Two key areas of work arising from the QOLCP have been delegated to the Development Service: these are economic development and transport. Economic development was originally to form part of the brief of the then Business Development Manager while the Plan envisages a transport co-ordinator sponsored by a major employer to take on transport issues. Thus the service is being asked to take on, with existing resources, two high profile issues originally proposed to be assigned to two new members of staff. The service is already accommodating an increasing workload of transport issues, particularly those arising from the Highways LSA. This is already at the expense of the DC service because half of the functions of the DC/Policy Liaison Officer was supposed to be processing major applications. This work has, with the exception of the airport, passed to DC staff. All of the planning work carried out by the Director of Community Services will fall on EMDS, the Policy and Conservation Manager and the policy staff. There is not the capacity in Planning Services to take on the extra work involved in Parking, Economic Development and Tourism without an increase in staff resources. Long term needs indicate that a further staff resource is necessary to meet current anticipated planning policy workload issues, irrespective of the additional requirements of the QOLCP and restructuring.

#### Building Surveying

- 11 Ernie Spencer, Head of Building Surveying, has good contacts with the business community and can help with economic development. But he has a key job to perform in continuing to run a first class service that brings in revenue to the Council and works in partnership with the private sector and other local authorities. The service also steers the Uttlesford Access Group and is responsible for street naming and numbering. The Partnerships require staff to work overtime. Energy management is located within the Building Surveying Service: a further member of staff is required to develop the service in line with the QOLCP: this has been agreed by members provided it can be demonstrated to be self-financing and work is progressing on this. Additional work cannot impede the key areas of service delivery.

#### Engineering

- 12 The Engineering Service comprises one officer. The work includes flood prevention, as well as input into projects such as drainage issues (including surveys of private sewerage works associated with local authority housing), car park layouts and ad hoc projects. Changes in the way the Environment Agency responds to consultations on planning applications were introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004. This delegates considerable responsibility to the Engineering Service, including the assessment of flood prevention schemes, which will require significant input, the extent of which will become apparent over time. However, the scope for additional work above and beyond day-to-day duties falling on the service is negligible.

#### **Officer Comments**

- 13 There is not the capacity within the Service as it stands to handle existing and forecast workloads. This is irrespective of the additional functions falling into the Development Service arising from the QOLCP and the overall restructuring. The imperative priority should be the appointment of new, and the development of existing, staff to deliver our basic statutory services so as to build capacity to implement the QOLCP.
- 14 Unless there is a commitment to additional staffing in Planning Services then there will be no chance of meeting Best Value Targets. This will result in no planning delivery grant. Members need to be aware that if resources are not forthcoming the service will not improve to an extent deemed reasonable by ODPM, notwithstanding the implementation of the BV review, and we will not receive DC performance related Planning Delivery Grant.
- 15 As a consequence the **minimum (interim)** requirement for additional staff is considered to be two senior officers and a clerical officer in Development Control, one senior planning officer in Planning Policy and a new officer in Building Surveying to assist with energy management. Coupled with the continued employment of consultants this would enable a reasonable distribution of planning applications to DC staff, and provide additional capacity in planning policy to help accommodate the loss of the expertise of the Director of Community Services while pushing ahead with the requirements of the QOLCP.
- 16 The **ideal** solution - one which would give the opportunity to provide an **excellent service** - would be to abandon the use of consultants and have all staff employed in-house, ie a further 4 planning officers. Against this must be balanced the likelihood of actually getting any new staff – experience suggests this will not be possible. Consequently the optimum way forward, as an interim measure, would be to appoint new staff at senior level as detailed as the minimum interim requirement above, together with the continued use of consultants. This would enable a speedy reaction if there were to be a downturn in workload, as well as giving the opportunity later in the year to reassess the position should the workload continue at its current rate.
- 17 Implementation of the best value review will help with some procedural issues and will speed up systems in the office so far as DC is concerned. There are major improvements to customer care that will result. The review is being implemented in all other respects. But the BV review did not take into account the ODPM recommendation for 150 applications per case officer: this was only received **after** the BV review was completed and the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) approved by Members. The review could not have anticipated this. Moreover the BV Review identified a need for further resources in any event. Progress on the implementation of the Review will be reported to Scrutiny 2 in July.
- 18 The planning service needs support now. Staff are working at levels of work that are unsustainable. The possibility of fixed term and temporary posts has been investigated but in the current employment market it is unlikely that

these will prove attractive. It has been impossible to attract even agency staff to help with planning applications. The continued use of Planning Delivery Grant to finance consultants will continue to meet short term needs but without the additional permanent resource of senior staff it will not have a lasting effect on improvement, nor will it create capacity.

- 19 To this end Officers have approached the Consultants who carried out the Best Value Review with a view to implementing elements of the SIP and developing the skills and capacity of staff within the service. This would be a six month programme with the following objectives:
- Ensuring delivery of the SIP and providing the impetus drive for continuous improvement
  - Transferring project management skills and methodologies to start to build a culture of continuous improvement
  - Ensuring successful implementation of the revised processes, procedures and management control systems
  - Implementing a management skills development programme to support effective use of new processes, procedures and systems
  - Producing a master schedule to relate forecast workloads to resource requirements
  - Reviewing current skills and developing personal development planning

The cost would be £38,250 plus VAT and the project would take some 6 months. It is proposed to use the Planning Consultancy Reserve which is an earmarked reserve with an available balance of £40,000. Officers recommend that the Consultants be appointed.

- 20 To overcome recruitment difficulties staff have opened up the current planning officer vacancy to all comers, with a view to providing day release training. This works out cheaper than paying salary at the higher end of the career grade (the difference funding the training), but the depth of experience within the office to provide coaching and training is insufficient to expand the principle. An appointment is anticipated shortly.

21 Funding and costs

A full breakdown of funding is set out in appendices B, C and D.

- 22 The 'Ideal' scenario shown in Appendix B would have an ongoing cost per annum to the General Fund of £240,957, representing a 6.8% increase in the Council Tax . The Council funded part-year effect of this option would cost £120,480, and would effectively come from reserves, with no effect on this year's Council Tax level.
- 23 The 'Minimum' interim scenario shown in Appendix C would have an ongoing cost per annum to the General Fund of £111,445, representing a 3.1% increase in the Council Tax. The Council funded part-year effect of this option

would cost £55,724 and would again come from reserves , with no effect on this year's Council Tax level.

- 24 Both of the scenarios given assume £15,000 per annum additional income from charging for services and increased charges for documents sold.
- 25 The two scenarios have differing affects on the usage and balance remaining on the Planning Delivery Grant. Although the 'Ideal' option will cost more in market supplements for new staff, it will eliminate the need for £80,000 to be spent on consultants. This will mean that at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 there should be an available balance of approximately £96,000 to invest in further service improvements.

26 Planning Delivery Grant

The total award is £216,460. Some £45,485 is also carried forward from last year. It is proposed to apportion its use as follows, the costs being set out in appendix D:

- Existing Market Supplement
- IT Costs
- Temporary Enforcement Officer
- New Staff Market Supplements
- Staff and Member Training - Contribution to Earmarked Reserve
- IT Equipment
- Consultants to handle planning applications

- 27 The ideal solution would not require expenditure on consultants to handle planning applications. As Appendix D shows this would be used for guaranteeing market supplements and continued appointment of the trainee enforcement officer.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 28 The Planning element of Development Services is under considerable pressure arising from an increase in demands and workload. It requires substantial investment to bring the establishment to a level that would enable the provision of an excellent service. The report shows the costs of bringing the service up to this level. It is recognised that this may not be feasible in the short term hence a minimum interim option is suggested, with a further review to be considered through the budget process later in the year.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 That the Resources Committee is recommended to increase the establishment of staff as set out in the minimum interim scenario in para 15 and appendix C



- 2 That Validus Consulting are appointed to further implement the Planning Best Value Review and that Resources Committee are recommended to agree the use of £38,250 from the Planning Consultancy Reserve to finance consultants to work on the Service Improvement Plan
- 3 That Planning Delivery Grant for 2004/5 is apportioned as above and as set out in Appendix D
- 4 That a further report regarding longer term resourcing of planning issues be considered as part of the budget setting process

Background Papers: Report into UDC Planning Services by Lynda Addison Associates, Feb 2004; "Delivering Excellence in Planning" March 2004, LGA

Appendices:

- A Key facts about the planning service
- B Costs of ideal solution
- C Costs of minimum interim solution
- D Use of Planning Delivery Grant

## **Appendix A: The Planning Service: key facts**

### Development Control: Key Facts

Planning staff in Development Control:

- 2 team leaders (one working a 9 day fortnight)
- 4 full time planning officers
- 1 part time planning officer (on day release)
- 1 vacant planning officer post (interviews under way at time of writing)
- TOTAL establishment of case officers inc team leaders: 8.5
- ACTUAL establishment of case officers: 7.5
- 3 full time clerical staff
- 3 part time clerical staff (2 fte)
- 1 full time technician
- 2 part time technicians (1fte)
- 2 enforcement officers (one on day release)
- 1 trainee enforcement officer
- 1 clerical assistant/pa to EMDS and team leaders

Workload in DC 1/4/03 – 31/3/04 (1/4/02 – 31/3/03)

- 2165 planning applications (1792) – 21% increase
- 86 appeals
- 233 enforcement complaints (214)

Applications per case officer in post: 333  
Applications per case officer if at full establishment: 254  
Applications handled by consultants: 420  
Recommended caseload per case officer (ODPM) 150  
No. of case officers required at ODPM standards to handle 2154 applications: 14.5  
fte  
Shortfall over establishment: 6 fte  
There are currently two vacancies in the Planning Information Desk, one as a result of the retirement of the postholder's husband, Richard Secker.

Performance against BV targets:

Major applications in 13 weeks – 25% (target 60%)  
Minor applications in 8 weeks – 55% (target 65%)  
All other applications in 8 weeks – 75% (target 80%)  
Overall 8 week performance – 70% in 8 weeks (59% 2002/3)

### Planning Policy and Conservation: Key Facts

Staff in Policy and Conservation

- 1 Planning Policy Manager
- 1 Planning Policy/DC Liaison Officer
- 1 part time senior planning officer
- 1 planning officer
- 1 conservation officer
- 1 landscape officer
- 1 technician

Workload for forthcoming year and beyond

- Local Plan to progress to adoption by February 2005
- Implementation of new planning policy legislation from June 2004
- Input into regional planning issues including EIP of RSS in February 2005
- Delivery of ODPM sustainable communities by bidding for sustainable communities funding, management of studies and identification of the way forward
- Implementation of 25mppa airport development planning permission
- Preliminary work on and processing Application for expansion of airport to maximum use of 1 runway
- Preliminary work on application for application for 2<sup>nd</sup> runway anticipated in 2005/6
- Transport issues inc implementation of highways LSA
- Conservation and landscape input into development control as well as proactive work
- Continued development of GIS
- Economic development

### Building Surveying: key facts

### Staff in Building Surveying

- Head of Building Surveying
- Principal Building Surveyor
- 2 Senior Building Surveyors (one inc. energy management)
- 3 Building Surveyors
- 1 Assistant Building Surveyor
- 3 clerical/admin assistants (one part time)
- 1 project officer (access issues)
- 1 technical assistant

### Workload in Building Surveying

- 996 applications received (similar numbers received over the last 3 years)
- 1161 projects under construction with a value of £32.9m
- 94% of applications dealt with in 5 weeks
- Uttlesford fee income £358,354
- Partnership work income £22,983
- Consultancy work income £60,885







**Committee:** ENVIRONMENT

**Date:** 8 June 2004

**Agenda Item No:** 6

**Title:** ENERGY EFFICIENCY POST

**Author:** ERNIE SPENCER (01799) 510530  
JOHN FARNELL (01799) 510538

### Summary

- 1 This report provides the additional information requested by Members to support the creation of an Energy Efficiency post.

### Background

- 2 At the meeting held on 4 November it was agreed in principal to the preparation of a further report to include a cost / benefit analysis and consider further options for funding from within the Council or from other sources.
- 3 At the Council meeting held on 20 April it was resolved that the authority should aim to cut energy consumption in its operational buildings by 10% by 2005 through practical housekeeping measures.

### Cost Benefit Analysis

4

Task	Benefits	Savings / Income
Devise and implement meter reading strategy, based on cost and risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify excessive use as early as possible to minimise cost and wastage</li> <li>2. Correct data used to ratify estimated invoices from supplies to smooth out expenditure.</li> </ol>	Prevention of potential significant overspends due to water leaks etc.
Interrogate invoice data on Energy Management system and query inconsistencies and errors. Compare costs with budgets	Identify over / under spends early, improve accuracy of budgets. Avoid paying incorrect invoices.	Not possible to quantify at present time.

Survey all properties included in BV180 report for benchmarking	Improved accuracy of BV180 performance indicator to enable year to year improvement to be determined.	Not possible to quantify at present time
Oversee energy audit of the 30 or so buildings associated with greatest expenditure. (Possible government funded Action Energy surveys, part in house audits).	Opportunities to reduce use and expenditure will be identified and costed. (Quality of life plan). Council commitment to cut energy consumption by 10% by 2005.	£19,000 pa at current budgeted prices.
Co-ordinate or commission a full questionnaire or take phone survey to assess HECA progress to date.	Fulfil statutory requirements of HECA in a more robust way than before.	Savings of around £2,500 if carried out internally.
Carry out an assessment / audit of the potential Renewable Energy resource in the district.	Identify opportunities locally to help produce 14% of power from Renewable by 2010 (Quality of Life Plan).	Not possible to quantify at present time
Project work; Grant funded insulation projects; ie Interglow loft insulation project. Partnership projects ie EAGA Solar Scheme.	Maximise take up of grants available to Local Authorities. Enable UDC to benefit from finance which is available for project work.	For example; over £400,000 received in grant aid for improvement of Council stock in 2004
Investigate closer links with local Primary Care Trust and Uttlesford Benefits network.	Greater targeting of fuel poverty for grants. Reduced excess winter deaths.	Not possible to quantify in financial terms.
Carry out SAP energy ratings on new dwellings from plans (Building Regulation applications).	Enhance Building Surveying Service.	Potential fee income of £2,000
Deputise for Technical Assistant in plan checking role, setting out checks, road sign checking.	Currently surveyors have to carry out this function.	Potential fee income £1,500
Checking for compliance with certain aspects of Part L (conservation of fuel & power) of the Building Regulations.	Reducing workload on Building Surveyors. All work undertaken would be fee earning.	Potential fee income of £1,500



It can be clearly seen that the employment of an Energy Efficiency Officer would be self financing and bring about significant benefits to the Council and residents of Uttlesford. The post would also enable the Council to fulfil its growing statutory duty in this area of activity

**RECOMMENDED** that the Committee be requested to approve the creation of the Energy Efficiency Officer post, and that the resolution is forwarded to the Resources Committee for endorsement that the post be added to the establishment.

Background Papers: Council Minutes 16 December 2003 and 20 April 2004  
Job Description & Person Specification.

Draft Job Description Energy Manager





**Committee:** ENVIRONMENT  
**Date:** 8 June 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 7  
**Title:** Gold Enterprise Zone, Elsenham  
**Author:** Ian Orton (01799-510402)

### **Summary**

- 1 This report updates the Committee on the current position at the above site.

### **Background**

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

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

- 3 A CCTV system has been installed on the estate that provides twenty four hour visual surveillance coverage to the premises. The system comprises a number of external network cameras. The system does not require the use of Broadband, as reported in March, as data from the cameras is collected locally and recorded to a hard disk, which is situated in a secured cabinet on site. Electricity to the cameras is provided through a separate metre for which the Council will be billed direct.
- 4 The re-branding launch is being organised by Royston Simpson for the end of June. Following the launch the site will be referred to as 'Gold Enterprise Zone' and will be identifiable by the following logo:



- 5 Work was completed in accordance with the EEP timetable and the Council received the maximum capital grant of £12,000 towards the security and rebranding work.

## **Lettings**

- 6 The Council has completed two lettings since the last report and is expecting one more completion within the next month. Five further lettings have been negotiated and heads of terms are being prepared. When these lettings complete this will bring the total to 15 occupied units out of 18 units on the estate.

## **Insurance**

- 7 The cost of buildings insurance has gone up by a considerable sum this year from £6,269 to £8,245. Under the terms of the head lease the Head Landlord arranges the insurance and the Council reimburses the cost of the premium. This year the Head Landlord had difficulty in arranging the insurance cover when it became due for renewal in April 2004. 3 companies declined to insure the units and cover could only be provided at the additional cost. If the units are uninsured and damage occurs then the Council would be responsible for any repairs required.
- 8 The cost of the insurance premium is recoverable by the Managing Agent through a Service Charge to tenants and it should be noted that this additional cost could result in an adverse effect on future lettings.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Committee notes the current situation.

Background Papers – GOLDS NURSERIES FILES 1984 onwards.

**Committee:** ENVIRONMENT  
**Date:** 8 JUNE 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 8  
**Title:** ESSEX WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS  
**Author:** Richard Secker (01799) 510580

## **Summary**

- 1 This report advises Members on the waste management contract arrangements which may be available for Uttlesford post 2006/7 and seeks Member nominations to the Annual Essex Waste Management Conference.

## **Background**

- 2 Members will be aware from previous reports to this Committee that for a considerable time all the local authorities in Essex have been working together through various forums to increase recycling performances and ensure secure contracts for the disposal of residuals. More recently the Waste Management Advisory Board have been reviewing progress and future actions necessary to have these essential arrangements in place by 2008/9.
- 3 Although this may seem an extended period it is well known that even after winning a disposal contract any company faces a number of years delay in obtaining all the necessary permissions before construction can start. In addition to actual disposal systems such as anaerobic digestion, materials recycling facilities (MRF) and bulking and transfer stations will be required.
- 4 The opportunity of joint working/contracts between authorities is being explored in all the various combinations ie UDC plus other districts and Uttlesford District Council plus the County Council and other districts.

## **Vertical Integration**

- 5 Contractual integration of the districts and Essex County Council is being explored by dividing the County into three geographical areas. Uttlesford is in the West Area together with Harlow, Brentwood and Epping Forest. In the extreme case this group could put together a contract linking those districts and the County Council. Thereby combining the collection and disposal processes together and having a single contractor responsible for delivering the total packaged service.
- 6 The benefits which would be available from this level of integration would result from management savings to the contractor and districts. However, these could be achieved similarly by districts only forming partnerships and having linked contracts.
- 7 There is potential however because of the long term capital nature of the disposal infrastructure which the County must provide for their contract to be PFI based. This approach is increasingly being used in other parts of the country and has significant advantages for the disposal authorities. If this method was adopted it is possible that districts could as a result receive financial assistance towards the acquisition of their vehicle fleets.
- 8 However, in order to attempt this method of funding it would be necessary for at least 45% of all Essex Waste to be recycled. This very challenging target will clearly not be achieved on current district and county forecasts. As for the latest DEFRA funding awards the figure for all Essex Waste recycled by 2005/06 is only 33% and it will be difficult for some partners to deliver their declared share. Therefore the anticipated 8% extra recycling performance which anaerobic digestion should provide will not close that gap.

## **Horizontal Integration**

- 9 The management advantages which vertical integration would provide would be equally available with district partnerships and the linked contracts which result. This method would also ensure that close local control on quality, service levels and costs would be maintained. It is clear from discussions with other districts that these controls are essential to ensure that these high profile public services are maintained and are district specific.
- 10 In Uttlesford's case the very high satisfaction ratings achieved in the Best Value Surveys both locally and across Essex must not be put at risk. This district receives the highest ratings in Essex for refuse collection and recycling and in the East of England produces the highest levels of dry recyclables of the 48 district and unitary areas covered.
- 11 This Council has consistently achieved high recycling levels and Members have endorsed the Best Value Improvement Plan to enhance the services provided and increase recycling outcomes. It is known that at least Harlow District Council are preparing to copy the Uttlesford arrangement of using twin bodied vehicles for the single pass collection of residuals and recyclables on the same day. Similarly, it will not adopt fortnightly collections of residuals which are unpopular with the public and are not supported in the Government's report "Climate change and local communities – How prepared are you?"

## **Essex Conference**

- 12 The Waste Management Advisory Board arranges a one-day conference annually to update Members on developments generally and the current Essex situation. This year the event is planned for 15 July 2004 at the Essex Records Office in Chelmsford. Each district is able to nominate a maximum of 10 Members to attend.

### **RECOMMENDED** that:

- (i) participation continues via the Waste Management Board on projects beneficial to this Council's future Waste Management Initiative; and
- (ii) discussions are held with Harlow District Council (or other districts as appropriate) to develop the possibility of a joint or linked waste management contract post 2006/07;
- (iii) up to ten Members be nominated to attend the Annual Conference on 15 July 2004 in Chelmsford.

Background Papers:           None.



**Committee:** ENVIRONMENT

**Date:** 8 June 2004

**Agenda Item No:** 9

**Title:** Forward Committee Programme 2004/2005

**Author:** John Mitchell (01799) 510450

### Summary

- 1 This report summarises topics which may be considered at forthcoming meetings of the Committee this year.

	<b>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September</b>	
1	Flood Prevention	PH
2	Stansted Airport: Scoping Studies for maximum use of existing runway (report shared with DC if possible)	JM/RH
3	Regional Planning issues update	JM/RH
4	Waste management strategy progress report	RP
	<b>Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November</b>	
1	Preliminary budget considerations	JM/PO'D
2	Regional Planning issues	JM/RH
3	Progress on QOLCP	JM
4	Local Plan – responses to proposed modifications	MJ
	<b>Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005</b>	
1	Implementation of Planning BV Review update	JM
2	Budget and finance	JM/PO'D
3	Deposit Draft Regional Planning Guidance	JM/RH
4	Local development scheme	RH
5	Essex Local Transport Plan	JGP
	<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2005</b>	
1	Scoping Studies for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Runway application	JM/RH

**RECOMMENDED** that the timetable be noted.

Background papers: None