

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 14 SEPTEMBER 2004

Present:- Councillor A R Thawley – Chairman.
Councillors C A Cant, J F Cheetham, C D Down, E J Godwin,
B M Hughes and V Pedder.

Also in attendance:- Councillor S Flack.

Officers in attendance:- V Borges, R Harborough, N Harris, J Mitchell and
P Snow.

E13 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E Tealby-Watson.

Councillors C A Cant, J F Cheetham, V Pedder and A R Thawley declared personal interests as Members of SSE and drew attention to the dispensation from the Standards Committee.

Councillors C A Cant and J F Cheetham declared a personal interest as Members of the National Trust and Councillors C A Cant and A R Thawley declared personal interests as, respectively, the Council's representative and a member of CPRE.

E14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2004 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

E15 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute E5 – Uttlesford Local Plan Modifications

In response to a question, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the period for public inspection and comments had now passed. Councillor Cheetham said that Takeley Parish Council had not held a meeting since receiving the Local Plan Proposed Modifications. Members were reassured that, in spite of the difficulties caused by the timetable considerations, parish councils would have been aware of the issues concerned through the workshops held for local councils before the beginning of the deposit period and the offer of early documentation.

(ii) Minute E12 – Recycling Performance Improvements

The Executive Manager (Development Services) informed Members that a report about recycling performance would be brought before the next meeting of this Committee.

E16

ESSEX BIODIVERSITY PROJECT – REQUEST FOR FUNDING

An approach was reported from the Essex Biodiversity Project (EBP) requesting a contribution of £2,000 per annum for the next three years to enable the project to continue its work. The principal aims of the EBP were to form successful partnerships with those benefiting from the project, to prepare plans for the conservation of species and habitats, to monitor the success of targeted projects and to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity.

Councillor Pedder said Councillor Corke was coordinating a Countryside Forum for Uttlesford and said she hoped it would be possible for relevant information relating to the biodiversity project to be posted on a web site being developed. The Executive Manager (Development Services) agreed that it would be logical to involve the Countryside Forum in the work being carried out by the EBP.

RESOLVED that, subject to further consideration in the budget cycle, approval be given, in principle, to funding of £2,000 for the next three years (2005/06 – 2007/08) to support the Essex Biodiversity Project.

E17

BIOLOGICAL RECORD OFFICE FOR ESSEX – REQUEST FOR FUNDING

Further to the previous item, it was reported that one of EBP's initiatives was to establish a biological records office for Essex. This project, entitled the Biological Initiative for Essex (BRIE) would require significant funding and a working party had been set up to take the project forward. The Council had now been approached by the Essex Planning Officers Association requesting a financial contribution to the initiative.

The current plan was to establish a web-based system to facilitate the exchange of biological data that was likely to be used principally by planning services and the Museum.

RESOLVED that support be given to this project from within existing resources in the current financial year, in the sum of £1,750, and that, subject to the budgetary process, approval in principle be given to funding of £3,150 in 2005/06.

E18

BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT

The Principal Accountant presented the first budgetary control report to this Committee for 2004/05. The report utilised data held within the Council's new Financial Management Information System (FMIS) merging data from both the old and new systems to give the total position for the first four months of the financial year. He drew attention to the variation between the spend at the end of July, compared to the profiled budget for the same period of some £14,000, but indicated that this variation was not expected to impact greatly on the projected outturn. Any variations on the budget would continue to be monitored.

Members highlighted the need to provide further explanatory information as part of the profiled budget data and officers undertook to investigate possible adjustments to the presentation of future budget reports. The Chairman also requested some clarification of figures included within brackets in the profiled budget report. He also asked the officers to consider the inclusion of financial data relating to regional and sub-regional planning.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the budgetary control position as at 31 July 2004 be noted; and
- 2 consideration be given to making presentational adjustments to the profiled budget information as suggested at the meeting including the provision of explanatory notes.

E13 **GOLD ENTERPRISE ZONE – ELSENHAM**

The Committee received a progress report on the management and lettings of the units at Gold Enterprise Zone. One further letting had been completed since the last report. In addition, the tenants of one of the units where no formal lease agreement existed had given notice to quit in June. This tenancy had not complied with the terms of the Council's head lease and it was consequently in the interests of the Council that the tenancy had ended.

Councillor Cheetham drew attention to the fact that the signing at the site still referred to Golds Nurseries. The Executive Manager (Development Services) undertook to ensure that new signing was provided for this site in the near future.

RESOLVED that the present position at Gold Enterprise Zone be noted and that arrangements be made to provide new signage as quickly as possible.

E14 **CHRISTMAS 2004/05 REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE**

Members received a report detailing the options available to deal with the refuse collection service over the Christmas and New Year period. It was noted that Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day would all fall on weekends over this period. Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 December and Monday 3 January would be bank holidays and there would be no landfill facility available on 25, 26, 27 and 28 December or on 1, 2 and 3 January.

Two methods were presented for the Committee's consideration. The first was the traditional "catch up" method of collecting on the Saturday after a bank holiday. Under this method, normal collections would not resume until Monday 24 January. The alternative approach would be to carry out normal collections on all days other than Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 December when no collections would take place. Collections carried out normally on those days would receive a double collection the following week.

The latter approach had been used successfully on a number of occasions and the report recommended adoption of this method over the forthcoming Christmas period.

Members were anxious to ensure that householders were advised that recycling collections would not take place during this period. Arrangements were in place to provide adequate publicity for the proposed refuse collection and recycling collection dates.

RESOLVED that the second method listed in the report be adopted for refuse collections over the Christmas period, that is, to provide double collections the following week for households not in receipt of a collection on either Monday 27 or Tuesday 28 December.

E15

STANSTED AIRPORT – SCOPING REPORT TO CONSIDER FURTHER GROWTH OF THE AIRPORT

The Principal Planning Officer presented a detailed report, together with a series of appendices, dealing with the background and consultation responses to the Scoping Report issued by Stansted Airport Ltd. The Committee was invited to identify issues to be addressed in the Scoping Opinion to be issued in response to this report. This would cover matters that should be included in the Environmental Statement that would accompany the planning application to be submitted, in due course, to provide for further growth of the Airport to about 35 million passengers per annum (35 mppa).

The Scoping Report had already been considered by the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel. The Panel had made a number of suggestions, as listed in the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2004, and had recommended this Committee to appoint a member reference group to advise officers in finalising the Scoping Opinion.

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the general flavour of the responses received to date relating to the 16 studies identified in the Scoping Report. It was noted that the report only provided an outline of the proposed studies and the detailed terms of reference, methodologies and exploration of their findings through sensitivity testing would need to be the subject of continuing discussions between Stansted Airport Ltd, expert bodies and various statutory authorities throughout the studies. The Scoping Opinion was, however, an opportunity for formal advice to be offered at an early stage.

A number of Members spoke, in turn, to voice their views about the matters identified in the consultation exercise and those suggested by the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel. There was general agreement with the Panel's recommendation to appoint a member reference group and officers undertook to compile a comprehensive summary of all the matters raised as part of this exercise and to finalise a draft response that would be circulated to Members appointed to serve on the reference group, prior to the Scoping Opinion being formally submitted.

After further consideration, the Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1 the detailed comments agreed by the Committee be incorporated in the Scoping Opinion in response to the report issued by Stansted Airport Ltd; and
- 2 a member reference group be appointed to advise officers in finalising the Scoping Opinion comprising the following Members:

C A Cant, J F Cheetham, A Dean, E J Godwin and A R Thawley

E16

NIGHT FLYING RESTRICTIONS AT HEATHROW GATWICK AND STANSTED

Members received a report inviting the Committee to comment on matters raised in the stage 1 consultation on night flying restrictions to apply after October 2005 initiated by the Department of Transport. The Government intended to formulate one or more environmental objectives for each airport and considered that they should take account of a number of broad aims including "The Future of Aviation" and the WHO "Guidelines for Community Noise" to enable a fair balance to be struck between the protection of local communities and the provision of air services at night which had economic benefits. The objectives of the current restrictions at Stansted enabled competitive factors and research, for example into health effects and the impact of sleep patterns, to be taken into account. They were intended to encourage the use of quieter aircraft at night and provide for the planned development of Stansted.

Councillor Godwin said that it was important to reiterate the Council's policy that no night flights should be permitted at Stansted. In considering the matters raised in this consultation, she felt that Stansted Airport should be considered alone and not be bracketed with different considerations that applied at Heathrow and Gatwick. Members agreed that "bunching" was intolerable and there should be no compromise on the policy not to allow night flying. The intention of the Government to introduce a new QC banding was broadly welcomed. Concerns were expressed about the growing movement of freight at night and there was agreement that freight traffic should be included in the general restrictions.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the issues identified at this meeting be included in the response to the stage 1 consultation, including a firm reiteration of the Council's policy that no night flights should be permitted at Stansted; and
- 2 officers be authorised to respond to the consultation by 29 October in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

E17

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman drew attention to a letter he had received from Essex County Council requesting him to sign a pledge against fly tipping in Essex as part of a campaign that it was hoped would be supported by every Essex local authority.

RESOLVED that the Chairman be authorised to sign a pledge against fly tipping in Essex as invited by Essex County Council.

The Executive Manager (Development Services) advised Members that a workshop on modifications to the Local Plan and the new planning system would be held on Monday 18 October 2004 at 7:30pm.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.