

Committee: Environment
Date: 14 September 2004
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: REQUEST FOR FUNDING OF ESSEX BIODIVERSITY PROJECT
Author: Sarah Nicholas (01799) 510454

Summary

- 1 The Council has been approached by the Chair of 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.
- 2 This report explains the importance and relevance of the Essex Biodiversity Project to Uttlesford and recommends that the Council financially support the project for the next 3 years.

Background

- 3 The aims of the Essex Biodiversity Project (EBP) are:
 - To be a successful partnership with all partners involved and benefiting from the Project.
 - To have a set of plans to conserve species and habitats, known as the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan, to work from – up to date and consistent with national and regional priorities.
 - To carry out a set of targeted projects and monitor their success.
 - To raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity.
- 4 Its members include all Essex local authorities, Environment Agency and Water Authorities, Defra, English Nature and a wide range of national and local environment and conservation groups.
- 5 The Essex Biodiversity Project has two full time officers. The Biodiversity Coordinator whose role is to try and get as many different organisations and individuals involved in the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP) as possible and to ensure that everyone is working together effectively. The Biodiversity Project Officer offers practical help and support to organisations and individuals involved in projects which contribute to achieving the targets set out in the EBAP.

- 6 Work of the EBP, which has been of particular benefit to Uttlesford, includes
- Planning & Biodiversity Seminar for Officers and Members held May 2003.
 - Pond & Great Crested Newt Survey – making residents aware of the habitats in their garden and providing a useful dataset for planners.
 - Advice from Project Officer on pond management and creation particularly at Widdington, Henham and Hatfield Heath, and Hatfield Broad Oak Primary School
 - Species survey and monitoring. 6 Dormouse sites and 26 Otter sites in Uttlesford surveyed this year by Project Officer and volunteer groups.
 - Assisting with District wide Oxlip Survey and four year flora recovery project and habitat management at Hempstead Wood, Shadwell Wood, Little Bendysh Wood, and West Wood. Information will inform Oxlip/ancient woodland conservation and deer management.
 - Assistance with provision of colour images of wildlife for the 2004 Local Agenda 21 bird survey and for Archaeology in the Pipeline, the current temporary exhibition at the museum.
- 7 The 2002-2007 Development plan includes
- Providing a source of biodiversity information to help inform planning decisions.
 - Raising awareness of biodiversity with the public through county-wide parish based projects
- 8 Objective P5 of the Council's Quality of Life Corporate Plan seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment of Uttlesford. By supporting the EBP the Council will be specifically assisting a body which can help the Council deliver this objective. Action P5.1, for instance, is to maintain the geographical area of ancient woodlands in the District. The work being undertaken by the Oxlip/ancient woodland recovery project will contribute to meeting this target.
- 9 Funds have been secured for the next two years from Essex Wildlife Trust and Essex & Suffolk Water and support is being sought from Essex County Council, English Nature and the Environment Agency. An initial priming grant from Defra is unlikely to be extended. To fill the resulting £28,000 per annum deficit and to achieve a balanced partnership all local authorities are being requested to contribute £2,000 per annum for the next three years to enable the work such as that listed above to continue and to develop.

RECOMMENDED that budgetary provision be made for £2,000 per annum for the next three years (2005/06 to 2007/08) to support the Essex Biodiversity Project

Background Papers: Letter from Essex Biodiversity Project to Chief Executive dated 1 July 2004

Committee: Environment
Date: 14 September 2004
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A BIOLOGICAL RECORD OFFICE FOR ESSEX
Author: Sarah Nicholas (01799) 510454
Sarah Kenyon (01799) 510333

Summary

- 1 The previous report sought funding in support of the work of the Essex Biodiversity Project. One of EBP's initiatives is to establish a Biological Records Office for Essex. This major project, entitled the *Biological Initiative for Essex (BRIE)*, requires significant funding and therefore a separate working party has been set up to take this project forward. The Council has been approached by the Essex Planning Officers Association requesting a financial contribution to the initiative.
- 2 This report explains the importance and relevance of a Records Office to Uttlesford and recommends that funding for the Project be incorporated into the budget process.

Background

- 3 Biological Information is currently held by a large number of different organisations in the county, for example County Recordors for different animal and plant groups, local authority planning departments, museums, voluntary conservation organisations, developers and government agencies. This makes it difficult to access information for development control, development planning, conservation, and by the museum for education, environmental research and to promote the enjoyment of the environment.
- 4 The current plan is to establish a web-based system to facilitate data exchange, managed by an appropriate organisation. Improved access, via a centralised resource, will facilitate use of data by the Council but particularly by Planning Services and the Museum.
- 5 Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 on Nature Conservation expects local authorities to base Plans on "*fully adequate information about local species (and) habitatsnot only within designated areas but also within other land of conservation value. ... Authorities should take account of nature conservation considerations in assessing sites for any development proposals.*" Nature conservation and particularly the existence of a protected species is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Access to biological information from a comprehensive source by planners,

developers and the public would enable the early identification of the presence of wildlife on sites enabling more informed decisions and avoid delays and disputes at later stages. The fragmented nature of the data at present often means that such information is not available.

- 6 The Government expects that the production of the forthcoming Local Development Frameworks will be founded on a thorough understanding of the needs of the District and the opportunities and threats which operate within the area and have an up to date information base of all aspects of the environmental characteristics of the area. The biodiversity of the district will be one element of this information base.
- 7 It is envisaged that a BRIE website would be accessible to members of the public. Such a website would enable local people to find about wildlife in their area and foster independent life long learning. It may encourage people to visit publicly accessible sites that are important for wildlife and so contribute to improving the health of the local population. This website could be linked to the museum and UDC websites. Provision of public access computer terminals in the natural history galleries at the museum and at an off-site resource centre would enable 20,000 general visitors, school groups and researchers to access information about wildlife. This would contribute to objectives S1, S2 and S4 of the Council's Quality of Life Corporate Plan 'Supporting life long learning and developing better opportunities for young people'.
- 8 Provision of expertise to verify data and support the use of Recorder computer software will assist in the management of modern and historic biological records held at the museum. This will assist in achieving objective P5 of the Council's Quality of Life Corporate Plan 'Protect and enhance the natural environment of Uttlesford'.

Funding

- 9 Establishment of a biological record centre could attract funding from the heritage Lottery Fund, OPDM or EEDA but in the long term a large part of revenue funding would probably need to come from local authorities, where funding would be required in return for the services provided. It is likely that Service Level Agreements would be set up for regular beneficiaries, such as local authorities. A limited amount could come from consultants/developers for information.
- 10 In the short term funding has been found to employ an acknowledged national expert to prepare an outline development plan by September with a final report in spring 2005. However, additional resources from the Districts Councils would significantly help in ensuring that the project is progressed as quickly as possible.
- 11 Initial Draft Funding Proposals indicate a contribution from Districts of £24,500 to establish the project this year and £44,000 to set the project up in 2005/06. Divided between 14 Districts this equates per district to £1750 and £3150 respectively.

Conclusion

- 12 Local authorities are being encouraged to include biodiversity as a crosscutting theme and that comprehensive links are made to social, economic and environmental issues. The establishment of a County Biological Record Centre would bring the following advantages
- Timely and cost effective identification of biological constraints and opportunities as part of the land use planning process
 - Better informed decisions, better for the environment and better for the Council and the District's residents.
 - Better access to complex information
 - Better protection and promotion for statutory and non statutory wildlife sites and protected species
 - Better promotion of the enjoyment of the countryside.

RECOMMENDED that the Council support this project and that provision be included in the draft estimates of £1,750 for 2004/05 and £3,150 for 2005/06.

Background Papers: Letter dated 14 July 2004 to John Mitchell from Graeme Bloomer, Planning Services Manager, Basildon District Council on behalf of Essex Planning Officers Association

Committee: Environment Committee

Date: 14 September 2004

Agenda Item No: 6

Title: BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT

Author: Helen Swain (01799) 510315

Introduction

- 1 This is the first budgetary control report to this committee for 2004/05.

Basis of Report

- 2 The report is based on data held within the Council's Financial Management Systems for the period ending 31 July 2004. The Council's new Financial Management Information System (FMIS) went live from the 1 July 2004 and this report merges data from both the old and new systems to give the total position for the first four months of the financial year. Relevant Executive

Managers have been asked if they are aware of any significant variations, including any that may not be in the figures produced to date.

The table in the attached Appendix 1 to this report shows the following data;

- 2003/04 Actual spend (subject to Audit)
- 2004/05 Budget
- 2004/05 Profiled budget ('expected' spending or income to date)
- 2004/05 Expenditure and Income to 31 July 2004
- Over/underspend between profiled budget and actual to date
- Actual expressed as a % of the profiled budget
- Projected outturn (a judgement as to what the year end position will be)
- Current Status of projected spend compared with budget (on line/under or heading for an overspend, as depicted by a smiling or sad face)
- Notes to explain any apparent discrepancies

Analysis of Variation

- 2 It can be seen from the data in the table that at this stage there is a variation between the spend at month 4 compared to the profiled budget for the same period of an underspend of some £14,000 (2% of profiled budget). At this early stage in the financial year officers do not consider this variation will impact on the projected outturn. These variations will continue to be monitored and any savings/underspend that are confirmed will be built into the revised estimates for consideration by Members at the meeting of this committee on 9 November 2004.

New FMIS

- 4 The introduction of FMIS from the 1 July gives greater scope for reporting purposes and officers will be developing this over the coming months. Members may like to give consideration to what information they would like to see in future budget monitoring reports. The report attached at Appendix 1 has been compiled from data held on the new system, rather than being a report from the system itself, which is still being refined. In future, reports will be produced direct from the system and can include, for example, graphical analysis of spending.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 Members note the budgetary control position at 31 July 2004.
- 2 Members consider what information they would like included in future budgetary control reports.

Background Papers: FMIS budget reports

Committee: Environment Committee
Date: 14 September 2004
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: STANSTED AIRPORT – SCOPING REPORT TO CONSIDER FURTHER GROWTH OF THE AIRPORT TO ABOUT 35 MILLION PASSENGERS PA
Author: Roger Harborough (01799) 510457

Summary

- 1 This report invites the Environment Committee to identify issues that should be addressed in the Scoping Opinion to be issued in response to Stansted Airport Limited's report.

Background

- 2 Stansted Airport Ltd published its Scoping Report on 12 July setting out some information on the proposed development and the studies it proposes to carry out of the effects. The report of the studies will form an Environmental Statement accompanying a planning application to be submitted in due course, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.
- 3 The Council as the local planning authority for the airport needs to consider the Scoping Report and respond with a Scoping Opinion setting out formal advice to Stansted Airport Ltd on the information that needs to be included in the Environmental Statement.

Scoping Report

- 4 The Scoping Report proposes 16 studies to assess the effects of the development subject of the anticipated application, which is likely to be for permission to increase passenger numbers beyond 25 mppa, permission to increase ATMs beyond 241,000 a year; and some limited additional facilities.

These studies are as follows:

1	Air Noise
2	Ground Noise
3	Air quality
4	Airspace considerations
5	Public safety and risk
6	Public Health

7	Nature conservation
8	Surface access
9	Landscape and visual aspects
10	Employment and housing effects
11	Economic effects
12	Archaeology
13	Water management
14	Waste Management
15	Energy Management
16	Construction

The proposed outline scope of each study as set out in Stansted Airport Ltd's report is appended.

Consultation responses

- 5 Stansted Airport Ltd issued the report to a wide range of organisations and officers have written to these organisations requesting any views that they may wish the Council to take into account in issuing its Opinion. Views received are appended to this report.

Comment

- 6 The Scoping Report only provides an outline of the proposed studies and the detailed terms of reference, methodologies and exploration of their findings through sensitivity testing will need to be subject of on going discussions between Stansted Airport Ltd, expert bodies and various statutory authorities throughout the studies. The Scoping Opinion is, however, an opportunity for formal advice to be offered at an early stage.
- 7 The baseline for the assessment of effects will be 25 mppa and therefore this will need to be reviewed in the light of new information since the assessment previously carried out in 2000-2. This will need to take into account subsequent monitoring.
- 8 Government guidance was published in July on the Preparation of Airport Master Plans. It is considered that a master plan for Stansted is essential, and it should be submitted in advance of the 35 mppa planning application. The scope of the proposed studies therefore needs to be broadened, since the 35 mppa planning application must be considered in the wider context of the impacts of expansion to two runways and longer term growth in the London-Stansted-Cambridge Peterborough (LSCP) corridor. Airport growth will have significant impacts on the area's infrastructure, particularly transport. The long lead times required for infrastructure improvements means that they need to be planned for well in advance of need, and the implications of future need may change the nature and phasing of shorter term infrastructure projects undertaken to address full use of one runway. It is also important to consider how growth at Stansted will influence and be influenced by the step change in development proposed for the LSCP Growth Area. This entails integrating the studies outlined in the current Scoping Report with the requirements of the Guidance on Master Plans as well as regional and sub-regional planning

guidance for the LSCP corridor. Master Plan guidance looks to a date of 2030 to provide a framework for airport growth, while for regional guidance, 2021 is the key date for assessing the infrastructure needs and urbanisation effects arising from Stansted development. The Scoping Report anticipates about 35 mppa by 2012.

- 9 Seven key areas have been identified that warrant study of the impacts of future development at Stansted at both 2021 and 2030 based on the assumption of two runways in operation. These are Air Noise, Ground Noise, Air Quality, Airspace Considerations, Surface Access, Employment and Housing, and Economic Effects. Whilst the detailed information needed to support the second runway application will take time to prepare, it is appropriate to identify likely milestones and trigger points at this stage.
- 10 Forecasts of airport movement growth, passenger profile and traffic mix are the basis of predicting future wider impacts of airport growth. Modelling the rapid and volatile growth at Stansted is a challenge, but must be carried out. The work can build on studies already carried out through the regional planning process. Additionally, a considerable amount of work was carried out for SERAS and the Airports White Paper. This may need to be revised in the light of subsequent developments at Stansted and changes in the aviation industry, but still forms a useful basis for further work.
- 11 Officers have already raised the above issue informally with Stansted Airport Ltd, but the Opinion is an opportunity to do so more formally.
- 12 Officers also have some suggestions, for example, as to how studies of effects at 35 mppa in 2012 could usefully be enhanced. In the proposals on Air Noise, the penultimate paragraph suggests that increases in flight movements on different NPRs and arrivals tracks will be reported on. Officers would like to see this in the format used in the Australian discussion paper 'Expanding ways to describe and assess aircraft noise' (ISBN 0 642 42262 1) in particular the 'average daily movements' as shown in Chapter 2. The contours for an average 'easterly day (05)' and a 'westerly day (23)' should also be calculated as this gives a much better picture of how noise is experienced by residents.
- 13 In relation to Air Quality, a comparison between the modelled data and the measured data obtained as a result of the s106 agreement and other ad hoc monitoring would help to gauge the accuracy of the model. The background air quality levels are crucial in predicting whether the additional contributions from airport and aircraft sources are likely to take levels above the National standards. The government provides predictions of background levels for future years taking in to account annual changes in the national road vehicle fleet and other sources. Consequently predicting the effects of the proposal needs to be provided on a yearly basis rather than an mppa basis. This will mean producing more contours to cover the spread of future years (for example 2011, 2012 and 2013) over which it is possible that 35mppa will be reached.

- 14 In relation to Surface Access, as well as consideration being given to the need for improvements, the implications of different surface access strategies to maximise use of public transport should be considered. This should include an exploration of alternatives to meeting demand for on site car parking.

RECOMMENDED that

The Environment Committee identify any issues that should be addressed in the Scoping Opinion responding to Stansted Airport Limited's report.

Background Papers:

Scoping Report, BAA Stansted, July 2004

Correspondence received from consultees

Committee: Environment
Date: 14 September 2004
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: Gold Enterprise Zone, Elsenham
Author: Roz Millership 01799 510516

Summary

- 1 This Report updates the Committee on the current position at Gold Enterprise Zone, Elsenham.

Background

- 2 The Committee has requested a regular progress report on the current situation of the management and lettings of the units at Gold Enterprise Zone.

Break-ins

- 3 There have been a couple of break-ins since the last committee report. Recordings from the CCTV system have been passed to the police to assist them in their enquiries.

Lettings

- 4 The Council has completed one further letting since the last report.
- 5 The tenants of unit 6 gave notice to quit in June. This was one of the units where no formal lease agreement existed and consequently the Council accepted one months notice on this unit. It should be noted that this tenancy did not comply with the terms of the Council's Head Lease and the Landlord could have sought substantial damages from the Council if it had been still in place at the end of the lease term. In the circumstances it is in the interest of the Council that this tenancy ended.

Sale of Units

- 6 The Council has received notification from the Head Landlord that they are intending to sell units 14 and 28. They have requested details of the tenancies on these units, so that they can assess whether the sale is prejudiced by incorrect tenancies. As unit 14 has a non compliant lease there is a possibility that the Head Landlord could seek damages of some sort if this lease is not regularised. The Council's Managing Agent is attempting to regularise the situation.
- 7 Current Situation:

Total of 18 units
9 Let
6 under offer – with the Council’s Solicitor
3 vacant

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the current situation.
Background Papers – GOLDS NURSERIES FILES 1984 onwards.

Committee: Environment Committee
Date: 14 September 2004
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: Christmas 2004- 2005 Refuse Collection Service.
Author: Ron Pridham (01799) 510597

Summary

- 1 This report details the options available to deal with the refuse collections over the Christmas and New Year periods and recommends a revised schedule of work.

Background

- 2 Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years day all fall on weekends this year. Therefore Monday 27, Tuesday 28 of December and Monday 3 January will be Bank Holidays. There will be no landfill facility available on 25, 26, 27 and 28 of December and 1, 2 and 3 of January.
- 3 If the traditional “catch up” method of collecting on the Saturday after a Bank Holiday is followed, Normal collections will not resume until Monday 24 January (see table 1). As a result of this option every householder will suffer disruption to collections over an extended period and, as past experience has shown, it will be very difficult to ensure the public are aware of all the revised dates.
- 4 An alternative approach is to carry out normal collections on Wednesday 29, Thursday 30 and Friday 31 December with no collections on Monday 27 and Tuesday 28. Collections carried out normally on these days will receive a double collection the following week (see table 2). Normal collections will resume on the 10 January. As a result of this option only those households who have collections on a Monday or Tuesday will be affected.
- 5 This approach has been agreed in the past, by this Committee and used during the Christmas 1999 and Millennium refuse collection arrangements.

- 6 Special arrangements will be made to collect trade waste bags in town centres on Saturday 1 January. The Civic Amenity site at Thaxted Road Saffron Walden will be open for the disposal of household waste on 29, 30 and 31 December.
- 7 Arrangements will be made to notify the public of any changes to refuse collections during the Christmas period via leaflets, web page and Parish Council Notice Boards.
- 8 Recommended that the Proposed Method be agreed

Table 1 Traditional “catch up” Method.

Normal Collection Day		Revised Collection Day	
Monday	27 December	Wednesday	29 December
Tuesday	28 December	Thursday	30 December
Wednesday	29 December	Friday	31 December
Thursday	30 December	Tuesday	4 January
Friday	31 December	Wednesday	5 January
Monday	3 January	Thursday	6 January
Tuesday	30 December	Friday	7 January
Wednesday	31 December	Saturday	8 January
Thursday	1 January	Monday	10 January
Friday	2 January	Tuesday	11 January
Monday	10 January	Wednesday	12 January
Tuesday	11 January	Thursday	13 January
Wednesday	12 January	Friday	14 January
Thursday	13 January	Saturday	15 January
Friday	14 January	Monday	17 January
Monday	17 January	Tuesday	18 January
Tuesday	18 January	Wednesday	19 January
Wednesday	19 January	Thursday	20 January
Thursday	20 January	Friday	21 January
Friday	21 January	Saturday	22 January

Normal collections will resume from **Monday 24** January 2005.

Table 2 Proposed Method.

Normal Collection Day		Revised Collection Day	
Monday	27 December	No Collections	
Tuesday	28 December	No Collections	
Wednesday	29 December	Normal Collections	

Thursday 30 December
Friday 31 December

Normal Collections
Normal Collections

Normal Collection Day

Monday 3 January
Tuesday 4 January
Wednesday 5 January
Thursday 1 January
Friday 2 January

Revised Collection Day

Tuesday 4 January **Double Collections.**
Wednesday 5 January **Double Collections**
Thursday 6 January
Friday 7 January
Saturday 8 January

Normal collections will resume from **Monday 10** January 2005.

Background Papers: None.