

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at the COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 4 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Present:- Councillor S Barker – Chairman.  
Councillors S Anjum, K R Artus, C A Cant, R Chamberlain,  
J F Cheetham, A Dean, C M Dean, C D Down, E J Godwin,  
S J Howell, H J Mason and A M Wattebot.

Also present:- Councillors M A Gayler, A J Ketteridge and A C Yarwood.

Officers in attendance:- D Burridge, R Harborough, H Rogers, J Mitchell,  
S Nicholas, R Pridham, M T Purkiss and S Taylor.

**E13 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

Paul Garland addressed the meeting concerning the Local Development Framework. He said that he represented the Uttlesford Futures Environment Group and Sustainable Uttlesford. He summarised the submission which had been made to the options and said that the opportunity should be taken to promote sustainable solutions to growth. He added that he hoped that long term horizons would be created and the opportunity should be taken to present sustainable options beyond 2020. He suggested that the preferred option should meet the following criteria:-

- (i) Reduce need to travel.
- (ii) Need for access to high quality public transport links.
- (iii) Low carbon, water efficient built environment.
- (iv) A mixed use development with a large proportion of low cost housing.

He concluded that the development should provide the opportunity for secondary education and should be a mixed use compact development taking advantage of the latest eco settlement initiatives.

**E14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Gower and R D Sherer.

Councillor Barker declared non prejudicial interests as a member of Essex County Council, the District Councillor for The Rodings and a member of the National Trust and the Housing Panel.

Councillor Cheetham declared non prejudicial interests as a member of NWEHPPA, the National Trust, SSE and the Hatfield Forest Management Committee. Councillor C Dean declared non prejudicial interests as a member of SSE, the National Trust and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council. Councillor A Dean declared non prejudicial interests as a member of the National Trust and SSE.

Councillors Anjum, Artus, Cant, C Dean, Down, Gayler, Godwin, Ketteridge, Mason, Wattebot and Yarwood declared non prejudicial interests as members of their respective town or parish council.

E15 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2007 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

E16 **BUSINESS ARISING**

**Minute E7 - Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England**

The Director of Development reported that a further meeting had been held regarding the allocation of gypsy and traveller sites in Essex. He said that a figure of 102 permanent sites had been agreed for Essex with around 15 being located in Uttlesford.

E17 **LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Director of Development submitted a report which included items on economic development, car parking, action plan update and planning policy for renewable energy.

Councillor A Dean said that he welcomed the economic development initiatives and said that there was a need to develop engagement between the LSP and the business community. The Director of Development suggested that a further report on these issues could be submitted to a future meeting.

In relation to the policy on renewable energy, Councillor Cheetham referred to the recent consultation paper on wind farms and their efficiency and Councillor Chamberlain asked whether there had been any consultation with South Cambridgeshire District Council concerning the planning application for a wind farm at Linton. The Director of Development said that there had been no formal consultation on the proposal, but the matter could be raised at the North Area Panel. In response to a further question from Councillor C Dean, the Director confirmed that the Council's climate change policy would be a material consideration.

E18 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY POLICY CHOICES AND OPTIONS FOR GROWTH**

The Director of Development summarised a comprehensive report on the results of the consultation on the policy choices and options for growth which had taken place in January 2007. He said that the total development requirement for the district was 9,672 dwellings and 5,466 were either built or were existing commitments. Therefore, the Council needed to provide an additional 4,206 dwellings for the period up to 2024.

The report put forward the following three options:-

- Option 1 - would involve distributing development between the District's main three settlements.
- Option 2 – would involve distributing the development across a hierarchy of settlements. The settlements identified were considered key service centres as defined in the East of England Plan.
- Option 3 – would involve distributing development across a similar hierarchy of settlements with significantly less development at Little Canfield and a significant increase in development at Elsenham as the start of a new settlement.

Prior to considering the options for growth, Members considered the following policies:-

## **1 Employment Growth**

The proposed vision statement, which attracted overall support, stated that by 2021 “Facilities exist for companies to grow without leaving Uttlesford”. This implied a focus on the needs of companies already in the district and not on capitalising the potential to attract inward investment, as sought in some representations. An alternative vision statement was “Facilities exist for companies to grow in Uttlesford.” Officers’ recommendation was that the latter was preferred as providing a better fit with the East of England Plan.

## **2 Core Strategy Policy E2 Employment Strategy**

There was a choice to be made between allowing the relocation and growth of firms to take place on sites beyond development limits where justified and assessed against sustainability policy criteria, or specifically allocating sites for relocation and growth. Officers’ recommendation was that a combination of both approaches should be the preferred option as this was the most likely way of achieving the vision statement.

Councillor Gayler said that the East Area Panel had resolved that development should be allied to the availability of employment land and the plan should require developers to provide employment opportunities adjacent to their housing developments. Councillor A Dean reiterated that the dialogue with the business community had not been adequate to know whether the proposals would meet their needs. The Head of Housing and Planning Policy said that there had been a workshop for businesses as part of the Issues and Options Consultation and representations had been received from the East of England Development Agency and the East of England Investment Agency urging that there should be potential for more job growth.

Councillor Yarwood pointed out that the proposals appeared to have omitted the need for the provision of transport to education.

### 3 **Development in Villages**

Development in villages could be planned for in one of two ways. Officer's recommended the first method.

1. A policy listing the criteria by which applications for minor residential development would be judged including the level of existing services available.
2. Policies listing specific villages based on the level of services in the village and the indicative scale of development which would be allowed. For example
  - Group Villages (Residential development & redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of a group of 10 dwellings)
  - Infill Villages (infill development – redevelopment or subdivision of not more than 2 dwellings (indicative max)).

RESOLVED that Option 1 be agreed.

### 4 **Affordable Housing**

Current policy was to require housing development of 15 units or over or 0.5 ha and over to provide 40% affordable housing. This policy was justified by the Council's Housing Needs Survey. Officers' recommendation was that there was no change to this policy until studies show otherwise.

RESOLVED that 40% affordable housing remain the target unless studies identified otherwise

### 5 **Infrastructure**

There was an in principle choice between a "roof tax" approach and specifying on a site by site basis infrastructure funding contributions. At present, the emerging core strategy assumed the latter route. Infrastructure planning work on the options that progress to the next stage would inform this issue.

Members agreed that a mix and match solution could be appropriate and it was important to remain innovative and they asked for further work to be undertaken.

### 6 **Stansted Airport**

There were three alternative approaches: a) plan for the delivery of the Air Transport White Paper policies; b) plan on the basis of the current planning consent or c) ensure that the core strategy was consistent with a two runway airport whilst making it clear that the Council continues to object to the government's policy. Officers'

recommendation was that the core strategy cannot proceed on the basis of the current planning consent.

Following further discussion, Members

RESOLVED that a statement should be included that “this Council recognises the growth of Stansted Airport”.

**7 Retail Strategy**

There was a choice to be made between accepting that there were limited opportunities for new shops to be built in any of the town centres and that expenditure would be lost to larger shopping centres outside the District or to allow shops on the edge of town or expansion of edge of town supermarkets.

RESOLVED that the words “with appropriate consultation” be added at the end of this policy.

**8 Countryside Protection Zone**

The current extent of the Countryside Protection Zone was inconsistent with national policy as expressed in the Air Transport White Paper. If a CPZ was to feature in the core strategy it would need to reflect an airport boundary related to a wide spaced two runway layout.

Councillor Cheetham said that the Countryside Protection Zone had been a successful policy at appeals and should be maintained.

RESOLVED that the following wording be included:-

“the Countryside Protection Zone recognises the boundary of Stansted Airport”.

**9 Housing Provision**

Members then considered the officers recommended three options for growth for the period 2001 – 2024.

The District Council will make provision for 9672 new homes in Uttlesford during the period 2001 to 2024 in locations in the following order of preference.		
Option 1	Option 2 or 3	1. Committed urban/settlement expansion at Rochford Nurseries Birchanger/Stansted Mountfitchet; Priors Green, Takeley/Little Canfield; Woodlands Park, Great Dunmow; and Oakwood Park (Flich Green), Little Dunmow
		2. Committed and proposed redevelopment sites within Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet.
		3. On the edge of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow

		4. On the edge of Key Service Centres of Elsenham; Great Chesterford; Newport; Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted
		5. In other villages

Councillor Ketteridge said that the points raised by Paul Garland at the start of the meeting were important and he put forward the following proposal which he considered would meet these criteria. He suggested that four growth options should go to consultation for further consideration and moved the following motion:-

“To approve the three growth options as outlined in the paper and to add the fourth option of 3,000 dwellings in a new settlement to the north east of Elsenham.

750 dwellings in larger towns.

250 dwellings in villages.

And to identify option 4 as this Council’s preferred spatial strategy.”

Councillor Godwin said that it was important to meet the sustainability demands and she said that the existing secondary schools were at capacity in land terms and much more consultation was required.

She declared a non prejudicial interest as chairman of the Board of Governors of Birchanger Primary School.

Councillor C Dean said that, whilst she was in favour of eco developments, this option had been presented at tonight’s meeting without any rationale. She said that the roads were inadequate in Elsenham and the infrastructure needed could give the green light to a second runway. She said that it was essential that other options were investigated.

Councillor A Dean said that the Council had asked for an open and informed debate on the pros and cons of the options so that an informed decision could be taken. He added that it was necessary to discuss principles before getting down to numbers and no background work had been carried out on the implications for the locations now put forward. He said that there was potential for the Mountfitchet School to grow and concluded that providing development close to a railway station would create more dormitory accommodation. He then moved the following amendment:-

“No decision is taken on choosing options for consultation and supporting evidence until clearer rationale have been produced for the impacts (positive and negative) on existing Uttlesford communities.

The committee declines to get into details of numbers for housing and location debate until the principles have been clearly established and communicated with the public.

This committee, wishes to maintain a quality process and not to rush forward with a flawed process for Uttlesford’s LDF that could be subject to external review”.

Councillor Gayler reiterated that the recommendation of the East Area Panel was for more work to be undertaken before decisions were taken on preferred options. He said that an analysis was required to ascertain where affordable housing was needed and what impact the proposals would have on communities. The Chairman said that a lot of the detail was already included within the document and more information would be provided during the consultation process. Councillor Cheetham said that the time had now been reached where the Council needed to move onto the next stage of the consultation and provide more detail for the community.

The amendment was then put to the vote and was lost.

Councillor Godwin then moved a further amendment as follows:

“to approve the three growth options as outlined in the paper and that a new settlement be looked at within the district”

The amendment was put to the vote and on the casting vote of the Chairman was lost. The original motion proposed by Councillor Ketteridge was then put to the vote and was carried.

It was therefore

RESOLVED to approve the three growth options as outlined in the paper and to add the fourth option of 3,000 dwellings in a new settlement to the north east of Elsenham.

750 dwellings in larger towns.

250 dwellings in villages.

And to identify option 4 as this Council's preferred spatial strategy.

E19

## **DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Temporary Parking Services Manager presented a report setting out a thorough and robust enforcement policy through which all enforcement activities could be justified. He said that the proposed policy document had been prepared with great attention to detail and was fundamentally based on other such documents used at other Essex local authorities which had withstood close scrutiny over time.

Councillor Barker suggested that there needed to be more flexibility for issues relating to the repair of flat tyres, first responders and meals on wheels staff.

Councillor Howell felt that a robust policy was inappropriate in a law abiding community such as Uttlesford and a more sympathetic approach was needed. He urged that there should be greater flexibility on some of the issues and said that a 15 minute grace period should be built into the policy.

However, Councillor C Dean said that a robust policy provided clear guidelines for the attendants and they used their discretion where appropriate.

Councillor Cheetham asked how airport fly parking was dealt with under the policy. The Temporary Parking Services Manager said that fly parking in restricted areas could be dealt with by the Council, but on unrestricted areas it would be necessary to contact the BAA fly parking hot number. In answer to earlier questions he outlined the financial arrangements of the scheme and said that the majority of machines were now being replaced. He said that a grace period was built into the system.

Councillor Mason expressed concern at parking availability particularly in resident parking areas and also referred to parking on green verge areas around Saffron Walden. Councillor Barker suggested that the latter issue could be considered by the North Area Panel.

Councillor A Dean said that it was essential to have clear rules, but there needed to be flexibility in dealing with mitigation. He referred to problems at the Lower Street Car Park, Stansted where season ticket holders used the general parking area and said that there were also problems with the access road. The Parking Manager said that a review of the parking order was being carried out and these issues would be addressed.

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of discretion in the areas mentioned at the meeting, the Policy be adopted.

E20

## **FLOODING AT ASHDON**

Members considered a report advising them of the flooding at Ashdon on 14 June 2007 and considered proposals for further investigation into alleviation measures. It was noted that the cost of the modelling and associated survey works was estimated to be £22,000 which could be funded from the Council's Flood Risk Management Budget.

The Director of Development said that the criteria for use of this fund required that the Council's contribution was matched by other parties. However, the parish council were not in a position to contribute significantly and, whilst they had offered technical assistance, the Environment Agency would not be able to offer financial support as their resources must be concentrated on main river issues.

Councillor Chamberlain said that 30 properties had been affected as well as the Museum and he asked that the work be carried out as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED that the Council agree to vary the criteria for the use of the flood risk management fund to allow the Council to procure hydraulic modelling of the River Bourne without obtaining matched funding.



E21

## **SWAN MEADOW POND**

The Director of Operations reported that there was an opportunity to adjust the configuration of the Swan Meadow Pond to make it equally attractive in both wet and dry conditions. She said that this would enhance the area that was frequently travelled past by visitors to Saffron Walden. In response to a question from Councillor Cheetham she said that the issue of matched funding would be looked into.

Councillor A Dean said that the matter could have been dealt with through the North Area Panel.

RESOLVED that a sum of £19,000 be earmarked in the Capital Programme for 2008/09 to undertake the reconfiguration of Swan Meadow Pond to improve its sustainability and all year round appearance and that matched funding be investigated further.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm.