

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 PM on 22 JANUARY 2008

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

Officers in attendance:- David Bradley (Acting Head of Finance), Diane Burrige (Director of Operations), John Mitchell (Director of Development), Keith Osborne (Head of Building Surveying), Ron Pridham (Head of Street Services), Rebecca Procter (Committee Officer), Peter Snow (Committee and Electoral Services Manager), Simon Taylor (Temporary Parking Services Manager) and A Webb (Acting Chief Financial Officer).

E30 APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Anjum.

E31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Artus, Cant, C Dean, Down, Godwin, Mason and Wattebot declared personal interests as members of their respective town or parish council.

E32 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2007 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments.

- (i) Minute E26, the second sentence of the third paragraph on page 335 be amended to read “the last agonising decisions made in relation to the extra 2,500 houses in 1995”.
- (ii) Minute E26, the last line of the final paragraph on page 334 be amended to read “had arranged a Member workshop, but this had been cancelled due to low numbers indicated”.

E33 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute E26 – Local Development Framework

Councillor Howell asked whether the Council was negotiating a refund from the Post Office. The Chairman replied that Royal Mail had agreed to refund 17% of the approximate total cost of printing and distribution. She said that the Council was also pursuing them for the cost of re-printing. The Chairman expressed thanks to all those individuals who had helped deliver leaflets. Councillor Cheetham said that she had discovered that Round 3 in Takeley

had not had a delivery. She proposed the following motion, which was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that if no satisfaction can be obtained from discussions regarding the destruction of the LDF consultation leaflets, to write to the Chief Executive of the Post Office to complain.

Councillor C Dean said that PostWatch should be informed. The Chairman said that it would be helpful if in future an informal network of local people who would be willing to help with future deliveries could be established, and asked all Councillors to try to identify such contacts in their respective areas.

E34

LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT

Members were referred to the Council's website for details of the timetable for the Local Development Framework process. Councillor C Dean queried whether there was enough time for recording all responses in view of the numbers received. The Director of Development agreed that there was much work, and that it was inadvisable to force the pace. Whilst the Chairman said she understood this, it was necessary to try to move forward, and if a report could not be finalised for the next meeting on 11 March, then perhaps an extra meeting could be called. The Director of Development confirmed that Members would receive a progress report.

Councillor A Dean was concerned that there were now indications that the process would stretch beyond the statutory timetable referred to in the previous minutes. He also asked for information on costs of preparing the core strategy so far. The Director of Development said that costs were approximately £600 for the preferred options consultant, £2,500 for the printing of the leaflets, and £50K for various studies conducted to inform the process, and for installation of the Limehouse system. The £50K did not include internal costs such as salaries. In view of the additional work arising from the numbers of responses received, Councillor A Dean proposed that subject to discussions with GO-East, officers be instructed to set in motion further work needed to justify the core strategy.

The Director of Development replied that guidance was being sought from the Planning Inspectorate and GO-East and that new legislation would permit the timetable to be amended. Councillor A Dean renewed his proposal, eliciting comments in opposition.

In response to a question by Councillor Cant, the Director of Development said that the steering group would receive a report following the meetings with GO-East and Essex County Council. The Chairman welcomed this statement, and invited Councillor A Dean to consider whether his proposal was necessary in view of the action currently being taken. Councillor Dean wished to press the proposal, which was duly seconded, but which was not carried by a vote of 4 in favour, 5 against.

Councillor Godwin said that it would be useful to have a meeting of the LDF Group to allow more frequent opportunities to consider progress of consultation. It was agreed that Councillors Cheetham, Godwin, Cant, Ketteridge and Loughlin should be approached to agree a date.

RESOLVED that since the Local Development Framework Task Group had not met since August, to call a meeting of this group.

Members were then invited to accept performance indicators, as set out in the Lead Officer's report, to improve performance management of the Council's services.

RESOLVED that performance indicators be accepted for affordable housing, street and environmental cleanliness, percentage of household waste recycled, number of missed bins and CO2 reduction.

Members discussed the recycling rate which in December was 55.4%.

E35

REPORT ON CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08

The Acting Chief Financial Officer presented a report on the capital programme. The Chairman said that no update had yet been provided by the County Council on the proposed civic amenity site for Dunmow. There was discussion of the Council's policy on taking back kitchen waste bins, and the Head of Street Services explained that the majority of bins that were required were green bins and that these were issued to new houses and properties where the household was recycling more than one bin could contain. In reply to a suggestion that more publicity be given to the fact that the Council took back unwanted bins, he explained that this would be problematic if there were to be a future need to enforce recycling. Councillor Ketteridge said that it was important to retrieve bins if they were not used, to save costs of buying more bins, as he was aware of a case where a bin had been left in a skip repeatedly.

In answer to questions put by Councillor Cheetham, the Head of Street Services said that new bins cost about £18 each and that currently the Council did not charge for second bins.

Councillor A Dean commented on the slimness of the capital programme. The Head of Street Services said that this was mainly due to the slippage of expenditure on previously approved schemes including the depots, and the fact that new vehicles had been bought recently which meant that replacement costs would not recur until a later date.

Members considered the schemes proposed within the capital programme. In reply to questions from the Chairman, the Acting Chief Financial Officer said that the money referred to had already been allocated, but that the Dunmow depot scheme had slipped behind in the programme.

Following questions from Councillor A Dean, the Eastern Sector Scheme at Dunmow was discussed. The Chairman said that she had advised Councillor Gaylor that an application for funding for this scheme would be highly appropriate for consideration by the Essex County Council Community Initiative Fund. The Director of Development said that negotiations were well advanced between the District and Town Council and the developer on options for this scheme, and that comments from these two bodies were awaited. Councillor A Dean suggested that a note be made against this item

when funding the capital budget regarding whether it should be included in the money available. Councillor Cheetham considered there was potential for the Dunmow Town Strategy Group to seek match funding, and for the developer to provide a greater proportion of the costs. The Chairman said she was relieved that the Eastern Sector Scheme was going ahead.

In response to a question from Councillor A Dean, the Head of Street Services said that in the past there had been proposals for a workshop for vehicle maintenance either at the County Council waste amenity site proposed for Dunmow, or at Shire Hill, but that further discussions were taking place for alternatives. These could include private sector options or a partnership arrangement with Braintree. The Chairman said that this major issue was the subject of serious discussion, and that a business case would need to be prepared.

RESOLVED that Members recommend to Finance and Administration Committee the proposed revised capital budget for 2007/08 together with the proposed capital budgets for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11.

E36

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES: TRADE WASTE, SEPTIC TANK EMPTYING AND GARDEN WASTE BAGS

The Director of Operations said that in view of higher fuel costs, to keep pace with inflation, and to recover the cost of provision, a robust approach had been taken in addressing fees and charges for trade waste and septic tank emptying services, both of which operated on a commercial basis. Regarding the issue of garden waste bags, it was not intended to make a profit, but to set a charge that covered management of the volume of green waste collection arrangements.

Councillor Cheetham declared a personal interest in relation to this item, as a householder who used the septic tank emptying service. She asked whether the Council was emptying fewer tanks than previously. In reply, the Director of Operations said that the Council was not pricing itself out of the market.

In reply to a question put by Councillor C Dean, the Director of Operations confirmed that village halls and day centres would continue to receive one trade waste bag free per week or equivalent if using trade bins. Councillor C Dean said that this confirmation should be noted as a positive decision, and that all Members should declare a personal interest in this matter.

Councillor A Dean referred to comparisons with local services, and questioned whether charges for septic tank emptying could be increased to over £100, in view of the fact that peak charges set by other organisations were higher. The Director of Operations said that charges for septic tank emptying would be kept under review, and that community reaction would be monitored. Councillor Mason warned that people tended to notice percentage increases.

RESOLVED that Members approve the proposed charges for 2008/09 for trade waste, septic tank emptying and garden waste bags, as follows:

Trade Waste

	2007/8			2008/9		
	Current Collection +disposal £	Current Landfill Tax	Total	2008/9 Collection +disposal	2008/9 Landfill Tax	Total
Trade sacks (3 cubic feet)	1.00	0.12	1.12	1.14	0.16	1.30
Trade tape rolls (12 rolls = 360 sacks)	30.00	0.12	30.12	32.84	0.16	33.00
Bins 240 litre	3.00	0.33	3.33	3.26	0.44	3.70
Bins 660 litre	6.45	0.97	7.42	7.17	1.29	8.45
Eurobins (1100 litre)	9.05	1.87	10.92	10.26	2.49	12.75
Light containers (12 cubic yard)	60.00	8.75	68.75	63.33	11.67	75.00
Heavy containers (12 cubic yard)	88.00	16.43	104.43	108.09	21.91	130.00
Large containers (30 cubic yard)		(i)	210.00		(i)	241.44

Septic tank emptying

	2007/08	2008/09
1 load (1000 gls)	£88.00	£98.00
Double load at same location	£154.00	£169.00

Green waste service

Green waste bags	£1.05	£1.10.
Green waste bags for people aged 65+	£0.55	£0.60

E37

BULKY WASTE CHARGING

The Director of Operations presented a report and explained that there was an opportunity to charge for a service which was not used by everyone, but for which there was rising demand, and to reflect the rising costs of providing the service. She referred to comparisons with other local authorities, some of which charged for this service, although not all did so. She asked that Members consider the report, but said that the option at paragraph 15, ie a charging structure that permitted low cost or free first collection in each financial year, should be deleted, as logistics were not viable. Councillor Ketteridge was concerned that this option was not to be considered, as he thought it was an acceptable way forward. Councillor Godwin declared a personal interest regarding disposal of bulky items, and said she also supported the option at paragraph 15 as the elderly find transporting heavy items very difficult.

In reply to a question from Councillor Artus, the Director of Operations said that it cost the Council £150K to provide the service and revenue would depend on demand. Members sought more information on reasons why the option for a free or low cost initial collection was now not considered possible. In answer, officers explained that it was a question of the capacity of the computer system to provide officers with the necessary robust information when taking a telephone service request. It would require much work to track evidence of whether an individual had already used the service within that financial year, as the CRM system could not currently log the type of Ocella request received.

Councillor Cheetham said that equity across the District was important, as the lack of a civic amenity site for people in the south of the District was an issue. Councillor Howell said he would support the scheme only if there were firm financial reasons, as he was concerned at the likelihood of increased fly tipping, and accordingly until the Council could deliver the proposal at paragraph 15 he preferred the status quo. Councillor Chamberlain agreed with these points, and said he was also concerned that none of the options provided figures for projected income. Councillor C Dean accepted that it would be better to grasp the nettle now, accepting that the Dunmow civic amenity site was not yet available. It was reasonable that people should understand that there is a cost for the service, for which a charge should be made. Councillor Cant said she had mixed feelings about the proposals, and would like to see a concession for those on benefits.

The Chairman said she was aware that the Council had to increase its income next year, and suggested a trial period of one year in view of Members' concerns about potentially increased costs of fly tipping. Following further discussion of possible rates for charges, she proposed the following resolution which was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED to introduce a minimum charge of £12 for collection of up to two items of bulky waste, with a charge of £6 per item thereafter, with an exemption for those on council benefits, but no concession for those aged over 65; the scheme to be subject to a trial for one year, with a review after six months to establish whether the policy was leading to increased fly-tipping and assess reduction in demand; and to publicise the new charging structure together with updated recycling information.

E38

SAFFRON WALDEN CEMETERY REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Operations explained that the review set out in the report aimed to ensure this service kept pace with inflation and external influences, and that it recovered the cost of provision. Councillor Howell objected to the recommendation at paragraph 2(b), to set the exclusive right of burial lease and the exclusive right of burial for cremated remains at 50 years and 20 years respectively, as he considered this proposal would cause distress. In reply to questions from Councillors Artus and A Dean, the Director of Operations said the revised charges would not result in the service breaking even, but would close the gap slightly.

Following a question from Councillor C Dean, the Chairman said that the raising of charges would make the transfer of the cemetery to the Town Council a more likely proposition in the future.

Councillor Ketteridge said that it was important to take a sensitive and equitable approach to the definition of residency for the purposes of this report. Whilst the Chairman agreed with this statement, she said that this aspect should be considered in more detail on another occasion. Accordingly she invited Members to agree the proposed charges for 2008/09 for Saffron Walden Cemetery set out in the report, subject to the removal of the proposal at paragraph 2 (b) relating to exclusive rights of burial.

RESOLVED that Members agree the proposed charges for 2008/09 for Saffron Walden Cemetery set out in the report as follows:

RADWINTER ROAD CEMETERY FEES AND CHARGES	2007-8	Proposed residents 2008-9	Non resident 2008-9
BURIALS LAWN SECTION			
Interment (Adult)	£268.00 *	£275.00	£550.00
Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial (Adult) 99 Years	£353.00 *	£410.00	£820.00
Interment (Stillborn to 16 years)	£0.00	£0.00	£275.00
Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial (Stillborn to 16 years)	£0.00	£0.00	£390.00
Purchase of two adjoining grave spaces	£921.00 *	£945.00	£1,890.00
Permit for placement of Memorial	£81.00	£84.00	£84.00
 TRADITIONAL AREA BURIALS			
Interment (Adult)	£268.00 *	£275.00	£550.00
Purchase of Traditional Exclusive Right of Burial 99 years	£643.00 *	£665.00	£1,330.00
<i>Additional choices available in association with Traditional area:</i>			
Adjacent to Path plot within Traditional area	£428.00 *	£440.00	£880.00
Permit for placement of memorial up to 1.45m (h) 750mm (w) 75mm to 150mm (d)	£161.00	£166.00	£166.00
Permit placement of full kerbset (includes memorial} 750mm (w) 1800 (L)	£214.00	£220.00	£220.00
 CREMATED ASHES			
Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial in the Garden of Remembrance 99 years	£193.00 *	£198.00	£396.00
Interment of Ashes	£86.00 *	£89.00	£178.00
Scattering of Cremated Remains	£54.00 *	£55.00	£110.00
Provision and Erection of Plaque. plus cost of plaque. (+VAT)	£86.00	£88.00	£88.00
 Additional			
Use of Cemetery Chapel (to include use of organ)	£107.00	£107.00	£107.00
Saturday Interment	£97.00 *	£100.00	£200.00
Additional Inscription	£44.00	£45.00	£45.00

Adult resident charge will apply to non-resident under 16 years

** These charges show the reduced charge if the deceased was in permanent residence in Uttlesford at time of death. Should the deceased have resided in the district for more than 20 years and moved from the district to receive care within the last five years they shall be regarded as resident subject to provision of evidence by the family.*

E39

PROPOSED CHARGES FOR STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING

Members considered the report presented by the Head of Building Surveying, which set out a scheme of charges to be levied on developers creating new properties and on individuals wishing to change the name of a property. In answer to a question from the Chairman, he said that developers were not currently responsible for the cost of the initial signs, and that the District Council had a statutory obligation to replace signs. The Chairman responded that it should be made clear that developers should pay for the initial sign.

Councillor Artus questioned the level of charges, and Councillor Godwin said that in view of the work entailed in processing new signs that the fees were not high enough. The Chairman said that it was not clear from the recommendation who was to be charged. Subject to clarification of this point when the scheme of charges was publicised, Members agreed the proposals as set out, in order to cover the costs of providing the service.

RESOLVED to introduce a scheme of charging at the rates suggested in the report to Committee for street naming and numbering, as follows:

Change of Name or Re-numbering to Existing Property £25.00

New Dwellings.

1 Dwelling on an Existing Road £35.00

2- 10 Dwellings on an Existing Road £70.00

Over 10 Dwellings on an Existing Road £70.00+ £5.00 for each additional dwelling over 10

Where a Parish/ Town Council initiates a scheme to name and number an existing un-named road a charge to that Council will be levied of £25.00 + £5.00 per dwelling affected.

1-10 Dwellings on a New Road(s) £100.00

More than 10 Dwellings on a New Road(s) £100.00+ £5.00 for each additional dwelling over 10

On large developments naming and numbering will only be implemented on those phases that are commenced. Amendments to approved naming/numbering schemes may incur further charges.

E40

REVIEW OF CAR PARK FEES AND CHARGES

The Temporary Parking Services Manager referred to the report now before Members, and said that it was appropriate to suggest increased charges as these had not been increased for three years. Members considered the details of the tariff bands set out in the report, which would bring in differing revenue amounts. In response to detailed questions from Members, he said that proposed charges took into account incentives to park for longer periods

in less central car parks, the discouraging of inappropriate parking, and increased throughput.

Councillor Cant said that during consultations on parking in Great Dunmow many representations had been received from the Chamber of Commerce regarding their preference for 1 and 2 hour parking periods, rather than the 30 minute tariff, to allow people time for shopping. In her view Appendix 5 penalised those who used Angel Lane car park to visit the GP surgery. The Chairman said that the Chamber of Trade and Commerce had indicated to her that they preferred a 30 minute tariff.

Councillor C Dean recognised that different places should be treated differently, and referred to the car park at Crafton Green, which does not benefit from a nearby attraction such as the castle near Lower Street. To encourage fuller use of Crafton Green, she would prefer Appendix 3, particularly in view of parking restrictions due to be implemented on Cambridge Road, and would suggest a maximum season ticket for Stansted of £250, with a figure for a season ticket for residents of £200.

Councillor Down was also against standardisation, and felt that charges of £2 for 5 hours and £3 for 10 hours were appropriate in Dunmow. Councillor Artus recalled that in previous years he had suggested that a formula for determining car parking charges should be used.

Following further discussion, the Chairman proposed amendments as set out below to the off-street tariff set out in Appendix 3, and invited Members to approve the adoption of the tariff as amended and set out in the table.

Councillor A Dean thanked the Temporary Parking Services Manager for the work he had put into this report.

Members then considered the second part of the recommendation, to introduce a fee for the issue of parking dispensations. The Temporary Parking Services Manager said that the Council's current practice of issuing such dispensations free of charge gave no incentive for users to find alternative parking. In reply to a question from the Chairman, he said that dispensations could be effected by telephone and it was not necessary to attend the offices in person. In reply to a question from Councillor Cant who asked whether the proposal would have cost implications, he said that the Council already incurred the cost of issuing dispensations. Councillor A Dean raised questions regarding the approach roads to the two car parks in Stansted Mountfitchet, regarding which officers confirmed they were taking action. In answer to a question from Councillor Ketteridge regarding implications for resident parking areas, the Temporary Parking Services Manager said that a visitor's permit could be obtained if appropriate.

The Temporary Parking Services Manager went on to explain that to expedite the process of changing fees, it was desirable that the Committee should delegate the authority to address objections made against the proposed Order to a nominated sub-group of the Committee. The Committee and Electoral Services Manager advised that the Committee could call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Environment Committee to address such objections. Accordingly the Chairman put forward a proposal which was duly seconded

and agreed that such a meeting take place at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 19 February immediately preceding the Council meeting that evening.

RESOLVED

- 1 To adopt the tariff at Appendix 3, subject to the amendments in the version of the appendix set out below.
- 2 To call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Environment Committee to address objections to the proposed new car parking charges at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 19 February immediately preceding the Council meeting.
- 3 To introduce a fee for the issue of dispensations at the rate of £15 for the first day and £5 per day thereafter.

Revised appendix referred to at 1 above:

Saffron Walden

Fairycroft and Common	up to 30 mins	40p
	up to 1 hr	60p
	up to 2 hr	£1.00
	up to 3 hr	£1.80
Rose & Crown	up to 30 mins	40p
	up to 1 hr	60p
	up to 2 hr	£1.00
Swan Meadow	up to 1 hr	60p
	up to 2 hr	£1.00
	up to 4 hr	£1.80
	up to 6 hr	£2.30
	up to 10hr	£3.00
Coaches	up to 5 h	£3.00
	up to 10hr	£6.00
Swan Meadow Season Tickets	per annum	£300 inc.vat
Great Dunmow		
White Street	up to 30 mins	30p
	up to 1 hr	50p
	up to 3 hr	£1.00
	up to 5 hr	£2.00
	up to 10 hr	£3.00
Angel Lane, New Street and Chequers Lane	up to 30 mins up to 1 hr	30p
	up to 3 hr	50p
		£1.00
White Street & Chequers Season Tickets	Page 10 per annum	£275 inc.vat

Stansted Mountfitchet

Lower Street	up to 30 mins	30p
	up to 1 hr	50p
	up to 3 hr	£1.00
	up to 6 hr	£2.00
	up to 10hr	£3.00
Coaches	per visit	£6.00
Crafton Green	up to 30 mins	30p
	up to 1 hr	50p
	up to 3 hr	£1.00
	up to 10hr	£2.00
Season tickets	Per annum Available to local businesses & employee per annum	£225
	Season tickets purchased by others	£375

Councillor Artus asked officers to pursue with Highways the question of enforcing parking restrictions outside schools.

E41 **CONCESSIONARY TRANSPORT: TRAVEL TOKEN ISSUES AND GENERAL UPDATE**

Members considered the recommendations in the report before them. The Temporary Parking Services Manager said that bringing this service in-house would reduce bureaucracy. Members were provided with a general update on progress towards the new National Travel Scheme to be introduced in April 2008.

RESOLVED that the Council should issue all travel tokens in-house and that it should discontinue the current arrangement for issuing tokens via post offices.

E42 **REVENUE BUDGET 2008/09**

The Acting Chief Financial Officer presented a report to Members. He said that the Planning Delivery Grant had not yet been issued to local authorities, but that he was hopeful it would be due later in the year. He drew to Members' attention the fact that there were some legal issues around LABGI, so he had deducted from this amount an allowance for such costs, in order to take a cautious approach.

Councillor A Dean asked how decisions made by this Committee would offset the Council's deficit. The Chairman said that this would be done for the meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee on 7 February, and the Acting Chief Financial Officer referred to an update issued earlier today. He

said that the reduction in posts was looking to address the £1m deficit, and that increased charges would go towards the £800K deficit, and that therefore matters agreed at this meeting would have an impact on the Council's finances. Councillor A Dean was concerned about implications for the Council's work on climate change arising from measures to address the financial situation. In reply Councillor Cheetham said that all were concerned to try to minimise cuts and to find a way forward.

The Chairman asked about the status of Golds Nurseries, which had to be returned under the terms of its lease in the same condition as when it was taken over. She requested a report on this matter. Councillor Chamberlain provided further background, and confirmed that a significant amount of money had in the past been spent to maintain the standard required under the lease.

The Chairman asked that the Council's financial obligations towards Thaxted Guildhall be clarified.

RESOLVED that Members approve and submit to the Finance and Administration Committee the revised Revenue Budget for Environment Committee 2007/08, and the draft Revenue Budget for Environment Committee for 2008/09, as set out in Appendix 1 to the papers before Committee.

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm.