

**SPECIAL HIGHWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 28 NOVEMBER 2000**

Present:- Councillor R C Smith – Chairman.  
Councillors Mrs S Flack, M A Gayler, D W Gregory, P G F Lewis, Mrs J E Menell and R J O'Neill.

Also present at the Chairman's invitation:- Councillor W F Bowker.

Officers in attendance:- Mrs M Cox, A Forrow and Mrs S Nicholas (Uttlesford District Council), P Hardy and C Stephenson (Essex County Council).

**HW19 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C A Bayley, R W L Stone and P A Wilcock.

**HW20 COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON ROAD TRAFFIC REDUCTION**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Chris Stephenson from Essex County Council Highways, Transportation and Development Control Group. Mr Stephenson gave a short presentation giving an overview of the County Council's consultation paper concerning road traffic reduction. The paper had been based on technical information about the existing amounts of traffic and the likely future increases. It had been concluded that traffic numbers in Essex were high, were likely to increase, but would not be spread evenly over the county. Absolute reduction was only likely to be effective in localised areas and only if the necessary funding was forthcoming.

The County Council had prepared an action plan and a range of targets had also been proposed for urban, rural and inter-urban areas.

Members had been asked for comments which would assist in translating the County targets into local targets to meet local aspirations as well as countywide objectives. Uttlesford District had specific characteristics and a number of local targets proposed by Uttlesford Members were set out in a report to the Sub-Committee. A questionnaire asking for views on these target had been sent to all Members and the consultation period had been extended until the end of December.

The Sub-Committee then discussed a number of the issues in the consultation report. Members commented that due to the rural nature of Uttlesford and the relatively poor provision of public transport, it was necessary for most people to travel by car. Also, as there were no large industries or large towns providing employment within the district, a significant number of people travelled long distances to work.

It was generally considered that much of the increase in road traffic was outside the control of the District or the County Council. It was therefore felt that any resources should be used to target those areas where a difference could be made. The Sub-Committee was particularly concerned about the numbers of parents driving their children to school and felt that action should be taken to encourage pupils either to walk or to use public transport. Member cited cases where children could not use the school bus, even if spaces were available because they did not meet the qualification criteria. There was a view that the qualification distances for subsidised school transport should be reviewed. A number of pilot schemes for “safer routes for schools”, were currently underway. Members asked that an afterstudy of the schemes be undertaken to establish which parts of the scheme were more effective for future use.

Members then considered possible future initiatives including the Stansted – Braintree corridor rail link and discussed the importance of the role of Stansted Airport. County officers also mentioned the possible implementation of quiet lane initiatives.

Members were aware that the County Council was likely to have limited resources for road traffic reduction schemes and it was only practical to set targets when there was a costed action plan in place. The Chairman then summed up by endorsing the local targets as set out in the report. Arising from the discussion, he also asked that the following points be emphasised

- the need for affordable public transport
- a review of the qualifying distances for school transport
- resources needed to be forthcoming if the targets were to be met.

RESOLVED that the Sub-Committee respond to the County Council’s consultation on road traffic reduction as outlined above, and a copy of the response be sent to all Members of the Sub-Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.