

**NORTH AREA PANEL MEETING held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 30 MAY 2006**

Present:- Councillors H D Baker, M A Hibbs, S C Jones, A J Ketteridge, J E Menell, M J Savage, S V Schneider, B M Hughes and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance: - A Bovaird Chief Executive, G Bradley Leisure Manager, R Clarke Waste and Recycling Officer, S Hayden Community Development Officer, C Roberts Committee Officer and T Turner Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance).

Representatives from the Parishes:-

Arkesden	Mrs K Barwood Mr S Coltman Mr R Higgins
Great Chesterford	Mr H Rolfe
Hadstock	Mr H McIlwrick
Hempstead	Mr S McCarthy
Littlebury	Mr P Farnsworth
Radwinter	Mr J Hardisty
Saffron Walden	Mrs D Cornell (Tenants' Forum) Mr P Riding (Saffron Walden Initiative) Mrs B Wilcox (resident)
Wendens Ambo	Mr P Smith
Wimbish	Mr M Young

Also present Mrs M Walker, Uttlesford Primary Care Trust

**NP16 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor R F Freeman be elected Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

**NP17 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor P A Wilcock be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

**NP18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C A Bayley, R F Freeman, T D Knight and E Tealby-Watson.

**NP19 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

The Vice-Chairman Councillor Wilcock welcomed all present and assured them that in future the question and answer session would be listed as an

item on the agenda to occur during the formal part of the meeting, not before it.

Mr Hardisty (Radwinter) inquired about the progress with the matter of the re-instatement of the Local Road Safety Advisory Committee raised at the previous meeting of the Panel.

The Vice-Chairman informed the meeting of the debate in the Constitution Task Group on this matter (Minute CTG64 (ii) annexed to these minutes for information). He added that this was not necessarily the answer that some members of the Panel had hoped for but that it would be discussed later in the meeting.

Mr McIlwrick (Hadstock) informed the meeting that the Panel's agenda had been delivered on the Saturday before the meeting. He was assured that more notice be given in future.

Councillor A J Ketteridge referred to a newspaper item about the New Pond which stated that it was to be the subject of discussions by the Panel.

Members noted that the item was not on the agenda and agreed that the Lead Officer liaise with the Town Council on the matter.

Mr P Riding stressed that it was essential to obtain good attendance at the Area Panels' meetings.

The Vice-Chairman replied that this would be discussed at a meeting of the Panels' Chairmen and Vice Chairmen soon.

NP20

## **MINUTES**

The Panel considered the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 28 February 2006.

### **(i) Minute NP10 – Declarations of interests**

Councillor J E Menell informed the meeting that her interest was as a member of the Uttlesford Primary Care Trust not of the Community Safety Action Team.

### **(ii) Minute NP13 – Highways issues.**

Mr Riding drew attention to the undertaking of the Essex County Council to investigate funding of cycle routes. It was noted that no further information had been received and the Lead Officer agreed to pursue this matter.

In the context of re-instating the Road Safety Local Advisory Committees the Vice-Chairman informed the meeting that the Chief Executive had discussed issues around the Panels with Mr Ciabarro, the Essex County Council's Chief Highways Officer and had received the assurance that the Essex County Council would support the Panels with their attendance.

The Vice-Chairman read part of Minute CTG64, which described the relevant debate in the Constitution Working Group and the Chief Executive Alasdair Bovaird explained that it was within the powers of each Panel to take its own decision as to the way it wished to deal with the Road Safety aspect. Within the current Constitution of the Council it would be necessary for such a group to be called a Task Group and to have a specific task and defined period. He emphasised however that the Committee Section was very stretched dealing with the existing workload and could not support an indefinitely increasing number of additional task groups.

The Panel discussed at length the question what form would be best for a road safety forum.

RESOLVED that a local road safety task group be set up as soon as possible to deal with all the traffic matters previously covered by the relevant local road safety advisory committee and to report back to the North Area Panel for one year initially, to comprise three Councillors to be nominated by Group Leaders, one of whom to be the Chair, with representatives from the Parishes, Essex County Council and the Police.

#### NP21 **PRESENTATION ABOUT PRIMARY CARE TRUST**

The Panel received a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust Melanie Walker around issues of possible implications for the Community Hospital due to PCT reorganisation.

She explained that there was as yet no services plan because the organisation was in a period of transition. There were to be five PCTs for Essex of which Uttlesford would share one with Harlow and Epping. She added that the improvements which were required of the PCT by the Government included a reduction of 15% in management costs. There would be a need locally to reduce hospital admissions, particularly in Saffron Walden, because some wards would be used to provide a new endoscopy suite.

In answer to questions she said that an intermediate care team would help people to move out of hospital. Unqualified staff would be important and valuable in this context. In answer to another question, she added that if a hospital admission could be prevented this saved £2,000 per patient.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the PCT's Chief Executive and congratulated her on the achievement of three star status for the PCT.

#### NP22 **PRESENTATION ABOUT CHLAMYDIA SCREENING IN SCHOOLS AND HEALTH PROJECTS**

The Leisure Manager informed the meeting that the Government had recently withdrawn funding for future chlamydia screening in schools .

She outlined other health projects currently in operation in the District and answered questions. The Vice-Chairman thanked her for her presentation.

#### NP23 **WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Mr R Clarke, Waste and Recycling Officer gave a presentation updating the Panel on progress with the Council's recycling policy and answered questions. Mr McIlwrick (Hadstock) raised the question whether village halls should be charged for waste collection.

RESOLVED that the matter of charging for waste collections from village halls be submitted to the Environment Committee for consideration.

#### NP24 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Leisure Manager presented her report on community development related activities and schemes which would be taking place in the next few months. She agreed to provide Councillor Menell with the Job Specification for the Area Champions.

#### NP25 **ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Leisure Manager informed the meeting about proposed arrangements for consideration by the Panel of "Yellow Buses" and "Park and Ride transport to and from Audley End Station".

The Vice-Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and informed the meeting that funds from his abseil had purchased two seats in memory of Councillor Bowker, a former Chairman of the Local Road Safety Advisory Committee.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.

**ANNEXED** minute of the Constitution Task Group referred to in Minute NP20(ii) above:-

#### CTG62 **REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The Executive Manager Corporate Governance reported that a number of suggestions had been put forward by Members, but none of these would result in a change to the Council's Constitution.

##### **(i) Area Panels**

He said that he had drawn up a list of items which might be appropriate for delegation to the Area Panels. He said that the list included items such as residents' parking, alcohol free zones, alarm notification zones and dog control orders.

Councillor C M Dean said that she was pleased to hear that a list had been drawn up and felt that clearer delegation to area panels was essential. She referred to two recent issues which had been considered by the South-West Area Panel where the decision could not be taken at that level. Officers explained that committees could delegate to area panels any issue relevant to that area. The problems were that the system was still new and some decisions would involve budgetary considerations which needed to be looked at further. Councillor Sell said that proper delegation would avoid the current time delays and would give the area panels greater authority.

The Chief Executive said that when policy committees delegated specific decisions to area panels they could also recommend a change to the scheme of delegation so that the general issue could be dealt with more quickly in future. He pointed out that there could be difficulties where there was not a budget for some of the issues which were delegated such as alcohol free zones which would require expenditure on consultation and signage.

Councillor Morson summarised the debate and concluded that the principle of taking local decisions at local level was supported.

## **(ii) Road Safety**

The Group then discussed the issue of Road Safety. Councillor Schneider said that at the last meeting of the North Area Panel it had been suggested that a Road Safety Advisory Committee could be reformed as a sub-group of that panel. Councillor Morson said that the way that the Road Safety Advisory Committees had been wound up was unfortunate and said that the input of partner groups was very important. However, he said that if they were reconstituted they could dominate proceedings at area panels.

Councillor C M Dean said that most of the issues raised at the former road safety advisory committees could have been discussed at parish council level and added that more strategic road safety issues could be dealt with at area panels.

Councillor Thawley said that he had attended the meeting of the East Area Panel and it had been agreed that written reports on issues such as accident statistics could still be submitted to the Area Panel, but there would be no need for police and highway attendance at every meeting. Councillor Godwin said she felt that the former Road Safety Advisory Committees were merely talking shops and the issues which had been raised could have

been dealt with directly with the Highways Department and there was no need for all the parishes to discuss such specific matters.

The Chief Executive said that Tony Ciaburro, the Service Director, Highways and Transportation, had undertaken to provide support to Area Panels. He also pointed out that there was a road safety committee set up under the community safety umbrella and this body could take on more responsibility. He said that the committee team and other support officers were already stretched and if additional committees were set up it would be very difficult for these to be supported. Councillor Freeman accepted this point and said that the sub-group could be more informal and could be serviced by Councillors. The debate on this issue was concluded with general agreement that each area panel could address the issue of road safety in its own way.