

NORTH AREA PANEL MEETING held at the WIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL at 7.00 pm on 28 NOVEMBER 2006

Present:- Councillors R F Freeman, H D Baker, P Boland, M A Hibbs, B M Hughes, S C Jones, V J T Lelliott, A J Ketteridge, J E Menell, M J Savage, and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance: - G Bradley Leisure & Community Development Manager, D Demery Architect & Property Advisor/Consultant, C Roberts Committee Officer, P Snow Electoral Services Officer, J Starr Community Development Officer (Youth and Arts).

Representatives from the Parishes:-

Arkesden	R Higgins
Hadstock	H McIlwrick
Littlebury	B Lewis

Radwinter	J Hardisty
Saffron Walden	P Jacobs
	P Riding (Saffron Walden Initiative)
	M White (Town Council)

Sewards End	T Ali
Widdington	R Darling

Also present D Corke (Local Agenda 21)
J Broomfield (member of the public).

NP37 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The Chairman Councillor Freeman welcomed all present and opened the question and answer session.

NP38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Tealby-Watson and A C Yarwood.

Declarations of interests were made as follows:-

Councillor H D Baker as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council.
Councillor M A Hibbs as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council.
Councillor S C Jones as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council.
Councillor A J Ketteridge as a member of the Saffron Walden Town Council
Councillor J E Menell, as a member of the Littlebury Parish Council.
Councillor B M Hughes, as a resident of Freshwell Street, Saffron Walden.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 30 May 2006 were approved as a correct record subject to the addition of words to identify the Parish Council Members present representing Littlebury Parish Council.

(i) Minute NP31 – Street Lighting

Some Members had heard that a decision had been taken by the County Council on this topic.

(ii) Minute NP32 – Audley End and Great Chesterford Railway Stations.

In answer to a question the Leisure & Community Development Manager explained reasons why the County Council was reluctant to release the Mouchel Parkman report and it was agreed to ask Councillor Chambers to intervene in this matter. She added that Linda Smart and Jeremy Pine would be willing to attend the Panel to discuss these issues and that she thought Jeremy Pine was chairing the Stansted Transport Forum organised by BAA.

Councillor A J Ketteridge proposed that the Council should oppose using the Swan Meadow car park as a park and ride for the Audley End Station and Members discussed this at length, putting forward a variety of possible actions to be taken. Councillor Hughes suggested that the proposal should be recommended to the Council for ratification, and Councillor Menell asked that the Council be informed that the fragmentation of transport matters between Committees is most undesirable and the lack of a proper committee for transport decisions needs addressing soon.

RESOLVED that as a response to the proposal in the Mouchel Parkman report that the Swan Meadow car park be used as a park and ride for the Audley End Station the Council be recommended to ratify the proposal that the Council totally opposes that use.

(iii) Minute NP33 – Update on Stansted Airport

Members commented favourably on the work undertaken by officers and councillors.

(iv) Minute NP35 – Review of polling districts and polling places

It was noted that the Panel's decision had been overturned.

TRAFFIC CALMING TASK GROUP

The Panel received a comprehensive report by Councillor Menell about the meetings of the Group which had received presentations from Dorsetshire Highways Officers, on the subject of traffic calming, and the Highways Policy Engineer, Cambridgeshire County Council.

In answer to a question she said that she hoped Councillor Bass and the Essex Highways Officers would attend the Task Group to present reports and that a template could be made for Littlebury based on solutions in other areas.

Councillor Savage was concerned that one solution should not be proposed for all villages and the Chairman suggested that “best practice” would be a more apt expression than “template”.

Members mentioned individual villages’ needs and concerns, particularly about speed humps, and the need in Saffron Walden for lit crossings and traffic calming, and Peter Riding updated the meeting on Castle Street speed control measures.

NP41 SWAN MEADOW POND - SUSTAINABILITY

The Council’s Architect & Property Advisor ,Mr D Demery, led a discussion on possible methods of improving the sustainability of the Swan Meadow Pond. He outlined the history of works undertaken to the Pond over the years and the new proposals for a large shallow, plant-margined pond, the cost of which would be in the region of £10,000-£12,000.

In answer to questions he explained that the island would be removed. The Panel was sympathetic towards the aims of the project and local residents gave their views about improving the area. It was also noted that the Town Council should be consulted on this matter.

Members also felt that it should be investigated how far the island was important to the ducks and their breeding., and reference was made to the Council’s ecology planner and biodiversity officer whom Members expected to be involved in this project.

NP42 PARISH ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel received the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Review Working Party held on 9 May 2006 and noted the recommendations which had been made to the Operations Committee.

The Electoral Services Officer explained that recommendation 6 in particular set out the policy regarding electoral arrangements and reviews. Swards End now had an electoral arrangement scheme and other Parishes had expressed interest in parish reviews. There had also been a request to merge wards at Quendon and Rickling.

Members expressed the view that holding of elections and participation on them was to be encouraged.

NP43 PLAY STRATEGY PRESENTATION

The Leisure & Community Development Manager delivered a presentation with slides on play strategy for Uttlesford. She explained that she wished to

build into the Strategy instructions as to how people could apply for funding to provide play facilities.

Members contributed their ideas about gaps in provision in their wards and , in answer to a question from Councillor Ketteridge, the Leisure & Community Development Manager explained the consultation which had taken place with Town and Parish Councils on this matter.

NP44 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Area Champion, John Starr, presented a report advising the Panel of community development activities undertaken since the last meeting. These included an on-line Forum, grants awarded and Community Achievement nominations, and a Health Promotion scheme as well as the usual Sports and Arts programme.

NP45 **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

Concern was expressed about poor attendance at the Panel's meetings by members of the public and various strategies were suggested to remedy this.

The Area Champion agreed to pursue this.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.