

**NORTH AREA PANEL held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN AT 7.00 pm on 25 FEBRUARY 2008**

Present:- J E Menell – Chairman.
Councillors R H Chamberlain, S J Howell, J A Redfern,
H S Rolfe and A D Walters.

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, J Dear, L Lipscombe, J Starr and
C Roberts.

Also present:- Paul Garland, Jake Roos and Dr Patricia Dale – presenters.

Representatives from the parishes:

Arkesden – K Barwood and R Higgins.
Chrishall – R Keeling
Great Chesterford – P Fentem and R Shaw.
Debden – D Matthews
Hadstock – A C Thomas
Hempstead – S McCarthy
Littlebury – E Sanders
Stansted – Councillor J Hudson
Saffron Walden – M Hibbs
Greenways, Saffron Walden – D Dwyer
Wimbish – M Young
E Effer
H Shibata
N Spence

NP33

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

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

Mrs E Sanders of Littlebury referred to the new noise effect and track keeping map showing the existing and proposed flight routes. The organisation NATS was in favour of planes flying over rural areas with new quicker trajectories, the effect of which would be that Saffron Walden and Thaxted received more noise. She asked that Martin Peachey of 'Stop Stansted Noise' could be permitted to address the North Area Panel about this proposal.

Councillor R H Chamberlain expressed profound concern about implications of the proposal for Saffron Walden and the nearby rural areas. The consultation period for the proposals would be closed by the next meeting of the Area Panel and it was therefore necessary to take action as quickly as possible. All parishes in the north of Uttlesford should be alerted; the planning department should look at the implications and advise; a press release should be issued and residents of the area invited to make representations.

Mr M Young, the Chairman of Wimbish Parish Council, stressed that under the new route planes would fly directly over Wimbish, Radwinter and Swards

End, would affect Saffron Walden and possibly would stack over Hadstock and Manuden.

Mr D Dwyer, a member of the public resident at Greenways, Saffron Walden, spoke against the reintroduction of any play area at Greenways. He explained that the previous play area had been used and abused by youths of all ages, knocking on doors after dark, leaving graffiti, lighting fires, causing noise and destroying the base of the play area. Residents' lives had then been made a misery and had been much improved since the old play area had been taken away. There was already a play area at Ross Close and he suggested it was unnecessary to inflict another on Greenways. The Leisure Development Manager explained that the Community Committee had decided to reinstate the play area at Greenways and that funding was available for the scheme within the strategy. In view of the concerns expressed, however, officers would take the item to the residents for full consultation on it.

RESOLVED that the representations concerning air traffic noise be conveyed to the Environment Committee and the Development Control Committee.

NP34

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K L Eden, A J Ketteridge, D G Perry, D J Sadler, S V Schneider, P A Wilcock and A C Yarwood and also from the Chairman of the Hadstock Parish Council.

Members of the Panel declared personal and non-prejudicial interests as follows:

Councillor J E Menell as a member of Littlebury Parish Council.
Councillors J A Redfern and H S Rolfe as members of the Great Chesterford Parish Council.

NP35

MINUTES

The Chairman of the Committee informed the meeting that a special traffic calming plan was being organised for Littlebury, with much assistance from the Area Highways office.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 January 2008 be signed, approved and adopted.

NP36

CARBON NEUTRAL ACTIVITIES AT ASHTON HAYES

The Panel received a film presentation, on carbon neutral activities carried out by the parish council and residents of Ashton Hayes village which was well received.

NP37

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Presentations were given to the Panel by Paul Garland (entitled 'What Constitutes an Eco-Settlement'), Jake Roos (Ideas for Community Action on Climate Change) and Dr Patricia Dale (A wind farm for Uttlesford).

Paul Garland explained that he represented 'Sustainable Uttlesford' an organisation connected with LA21 one of whose objects was to minimise the social and economic consequences of the extra houses to be built in Uttlesford. He set out the development characteristics envisaged in an eco-settlement and said they were aimed at meeting present needs without compromising future generations ability to meet their own needs. Equally, sustainable development for new business was necessary to achieve sustainable accommodation in future for unavoidable business expansion.

Jake Roos explained the strategy and aims of the Council's carbon neutral programme and the targets for reduction of its carbon footprint by particular dates. He suggested use of thermal imaging to make heat leaks from houses more visible.

Dr P Dale, a representative of Friends of the Earth referred to the environmental impact assessment regarding the wind farm at Linton, fears about noise and infrasound damage to wildlife from the wind turbines and their decibel levels.

Mr M Barnard, on behalf of the residents who were opposed to the wind farm at Linton, suggested that as shown in the Ashton Hayes film, the solutions to climate change did not have to be major things. He understood that in Germany a huge expansion of wind farms had resulted in substantial destruction of the countryside. Wind farm electricity was only cheap because subsidised and the most commercial forms of it were onshore. High wind speed was essential and the wind farms in fact degraded aviation possibilities another reason for placing wind farms offshore.

The speakers answered questions from the floor. Concern was expressed particularly about the environmental impact of wind turbines to add to that already provided by pylons; the health impact of noise emanating from them; the cost of wind energy which was greater than the cost of coal or gas and the danger of wind turbines proliferating after the first wind turbine had been installed and had destroyed the landscape argument. The views were also put that climate change was a fact which would affect millions and therefore required to be reckoned with; it appeared that in North Norfolk the wind turbines were popular and the people of Swaffham had requested more.

The Chairman thanked the panel of speakers for their interesting contributions.

NP38

EMERGENCY PLANNING – FLOOD PREVENTION AND EVACUATION

The Panel received a presentation by Jason Dear, the Emergency Planning Officer, in which he described the Council's duty to plan and prepare for emergencies and to co-ordinate a multi-agency response to them.

He explained the various different types of plan in place and described the processes which would take place during an evacuation.

In answer to questions from the floor he confirmed that there were flood prone areas in Uttlesford which might require evacuation and that details of these were maintained on a database.

Mrs E Sanders, representing Littlebury, asked that the Planning Department examine the question of increased flood risk due to the number of paved and tarmacadamed drives and pedestrian areas where flood water could not be absorbed.

The Chairman of the Committee assured her that she would raise the matter with the Director of Planning, but said that she believed that it was already a matter of review.

NP39

AREA PANELS – FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

The Leisure and Community Development Manager explained that the Council had undertaken a review of future arrangements for Area Panels and officers wished to develop this further. She explained that a pattern of issues had been observed and it was hoped that these could be worked on, with the input of partners in the community, on a multi-agency basis. She hoped that the Panel would welcome this initiative.

NP40

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Panel received the Community Development report presented by John Starr, Community Development Officer. It gave detailed information about the Community Project Grant, the Young Fire Fighters scheme, the Reality Road Show 2008 and an update on information points in schools. Mr M Young, representing Wimbish, informed the meeting that he had attended the Reality Road show and been most impressed. He was most concerned that events of such high quality, which could not be provided by the schools, would possibly be discontinued due to recent redundancies.

The Chairman of the Panel added that she had attended the Crucial Crew event two years previously and hoped that this would be able to be repeated and that the Council would take into consideration the comments made.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.