

SOUTH WEST AREA PANEL held at the MEMORIAL HALL, ELSENHAM at 7.00 pm on 11 JANUARY 2007

Present:- Councillor G Sell – Chairman.
Councillors A Dean, C M Dean, J F Cheetham, R M Lemon,
D J Morson and A R Row

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, R Clarke, S Clarke, R Harborough,
V Harvey, S Hayden, P O'Dell, R Pridham and S Walker.

Representatives of outside bodies:- Ann Jones and Darren Godfrey from
Essex County Council
Anne Bishop from the Rural Housing Trust

SWAP43 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Richard Cheetham from Takeley Parish Council asked what action the planning department took to monitor the development progress with planning conditions and who monitors whether they complied with the Master Plan. The Panel informed Mr Cheetham that the Planning Policy and Conservation Manager was due to attend the meeting and would answer the question after arrival.

Ray Woodcock referred to the meeting held on 7 September 2006 whereby Councillor Robert Chambers had given a presentation on policing in Essex and at the airport. He was disappointed that Councillor Chambers had not replied to his question. Mr Woodcock was informed that his comment had been noted and he should expect a reply from Councillor Chambers shortly.

John Segar a resident of Elsenham asked when the proposed alcohol free zone in Elsenham would commence, as the project had been on going for 15 months. Councillor Morson said that there had been in a delay due to staff illness and in agreeing the signage. He hoped that the order would be in place next month.

SWAP44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E C Abrahams, K R Artus, J I Loughlin, E J Godwin and V Pedder.

Councillors made the following personal declarations of interest.

Councillor C Dean at agenda item 10 in respect of the airport as a Member of the Development Control Committee.

Councillor A Marchant in relation to agenda item 6 as a Member of the Community Committee.

Councillor R T Harris at agenda item 10 in respect of the airport as a Member of the Development Control Committee.

Councillor Cheetham at agenda item 10 in respect of the airport as a Member of the Development Control Committee.

SWAP45 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2006 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- (i) Some of the names of attendees under *Also Present* were incorrect, they should read, *Kath Parsons, David Hobday, Christina Hope, Pearl Wellings, Tony Wellings and W Frogley.*
- (ii) SWAP26 item iii to read *W Barker & Son is in Elsenham and the Post Office in Stansted.*
- (iii) SWAP26 item IV to clarify *a letter was asking for an extension to the time of consultation.*
- (iv) SWAP 26 item v to insert *'was a grant from the District Council'.*
- (v) SWAP27 to read that Mrs Keane be changed to read *Mrs King.*

SWAP46 **BUSINESS ARISING**

(i) **SWAP27 – Essex County Council Highways Department**

The Panel had received a report back from Davina Millership answering all questions that were put to her at the previous meeting. Members agreed to write to Essex County Council asking that the 333 bus service not be axed and if necessary should find a subsidy.

(ii) **SWAP32 –Multi-Disciplinary Agency Meeting**

The last meeting of the agency was held in December and a cross parish approach had been adopted. More revenue protection officers had been employed checking tickets on the Bishop's Stortford to Cambridge route.

SWAP47 **PRESENTATION BY TAKELEY SCOUT GROUP**

Les Thurston the Scout Leader, for Takeley Scouts gave a presentation on Scouting.

The Scout groups within Uttlesford were split into two divisions, Hatfield Forest to the South and Saffron Walden to the North. The Hatfield Forest Division had 520 scouts with 80 leaders and helpers. Some of the groups had their own headquarters whilst others met in Village Halls. As of 1 January 2007 all Scout Groups were open to girls.

Takeley Scouts had new headquarters, which had been in use since October 2005. The group had built it themselves with voluntary funds. The headquarters were also used by the Cubs, Brownies and Guides. With the

new developments planned for Takeley he was looking forward to a growing number of Scouts in the village.

As this year was the centenary of Scouting, the international Jamboree was taking place in the UK and was being held at Chelmsford, whereby 40,000 young people from over 200 countries were expected to come and celebrate.

Tim, a Scout from the Takeley group explained that at the jamboree he would meet a lot of new people from all over world and would help make them feel at home at the campsite. He was looking forward meeting the other international Scouts and hoped it would help open his eyes to the world.

Les Thurston concluded by saying that Scouting needed to be fun and challenging and provided youths with practical skills for life.

SWAP48

PRESENTATION BY ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S YOUTH LOCALITY OFFICE

Ann Jones and Darren Godfrey from Essex County Council were based at the Faircroft Road Council offices in Saffron Walden and made a presentation to the panel on the youth work in Uttlesford.

Ann Jones, the Locality Youth Manager explained that the role of her team was to enable the development of young people in their transition into adulthood. The service worked specifically with young people to offer programmes of personal and social education. She explained that the primary function of their work was to be informal educators and seek to engage with youths in their leisure time.

Some of the workers were paid whilst some were volunteers, and the service ensured a wide range of information and support was available for youths. A wide range of learning opportunities was offered outside the area to allow the youths to gain a variety of different experiences. For example trips were being offered to Amsterdam and South Africa later this year.

The benefits to the youths included friendship, improved abilities, teamwork, knowledge and fun. She explained they recognise the achievement of the youths and offered accreditation for these.

The Prison No Way scheme was a large project running from the Stansted youth centre and by working in partnership with the Police and the Anti Social Behaviour Officer tried to discourage youths from the criminal justice system.

Darren Godfrey explained that the youth bus was donated by Stansted airport. The bus tried to cover as much of the locality as possible. He was pleased to announce that Berden, Manuden and Birchanger had developed youth forums and he was keen to develop as many as possible.

He was aware of the negative perception a group of youths hanging around on the street portrayed and explained that the majority of youths were not catered for. That was why teen shelters were due to increase in the villages,

and part of the agenda was to involve the youths in the design and building of the shelters; and by doing so hoped to work towards a better community.

The panel and members of the public were informed that a fund had been received offering £20,000 for investment and £10,000 for opportunities with youth projects.

Members commented on the recent achievement of Stansted Mountfitchet Secondary School in becoming the most improved school in the country and agreed to write to the school congratulating them upon their achievement.

A number of young people from within the South West area had attended the meeting and members expressed gratitude for their attendance.

SWAP49

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN UTTLESFORD

Suzanna Clark, the Housing Strategy Manager made a presentation to the panel on affordable housing. She gave a description of what in her view was affordable housing and explained how the Council could gain more properties within the district. She presented figures on what had been provided in previous years.

The Council now required on development sites with 15 dwellings or more that 40% of the development be affordable housing. She discussed the areas in which schemes were underway and gave an overview of the future policy initiatives.

Anne Bishop from the Rural Housing Trust then continued to speak about the work they undertook. The trust was a not-for-profit developer of small schemes of affordable housing in villages for local people. It worked with village communities and parish councils in helping to establish the scale and nature of housing needs and would arrange funding, obtain planning permissions linked to legal agreements and negotiate building contracts. They had developed 3,000 homes across England.

The Trust was set up due to the increase in house prices across the UK. This often would force young people to move away from the area they were brought up in, thus increasing the average age of residents in the area.

The Trust operated by carrying out housing needs surveys in the village with the support of the Local Authority, which they then published in a report. If there was enough general need and support they would look to the Parish Council to provide a suitable site and start to develop contracts. Properties would then be allocated to local people whose local connections would be verified by the Parish Council.

Anne Bishop then went on to provide figures within local villages and invited any questions.

A local resident asked how much of the property the Trust would retain. Anne Bishop explained that the Trust sold 60% of the value of the property to the individual/s and when it comes to sell the property they sold that 60%. The

trust retained ownership of the other 40% and the equity was split in accordance with those proportions.

SWAP50 **UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Leisure Manager gave a presentation to the Panel on how the District Council worked with young people. She explained all the projects and initiatives available within Uttlesford. Some of these included holiday programmes, working in the community, Healthwize, play strategies, drugs awareness and Z bikes. The Healthy Eating Lifestyle Programme (HELP) was available to adults as well as youths, this project was based at the leisure centre in Saffron Walden.

The Youth Initiatives Working Group enabled all authorities who worked with youths to come together to discuss current and future projects and many of these schemes offered partnership working with other bodies. They did however all rely on adequate funding. Recently the District Council had agreed funding for youth initiatives and skate parks. The Leisure Manager explained that the Council had a dedicated Alcohol and Drugs Officer who went into schools and offered educational sessions on those matters, and so far had been gratefully received.

The Panel was eager for the projects to be well advertised and suggested that in addition to the current advertising methods, brochures be distributed widely across the district.

SWAP51 **RECYCLING UPDATE**

The Recycling Officer gave a presentation on the recycling scheme that had been rolled out in Uttlesford last year. He talked over the preparation and implementation exemptions scheme. He explained that by the end of July phase 1 and 2 of the scheme and part of 3 had been rolled out. As each phase was rolled out the recycling rate increased.

After all 6 phases had been rolled out by the end of November; the recycling rate saw an increase of 25.4%. Residents were now starting to think about responsible recycling and waste minimisation.

Some problems had incurred, such as identifying the types of plastics, the placement of bins on collection day and a change of routes which had generated a change in collection day for many residents.

The next stage was to target schools and to start collecting paper, cans and kitchen waste. A trial was due to start at Felsted Primary school. Flats so far had been omitted from the scheme, but this year would see the roll out of the scheme to those properties.

A local resident asked why there were such variances in recycling schemes across the country and suggested that if the country had a uniformed scheme

it would be easier for residents to follow. The Recycling Officer explained that each council had a scheme set by members in accordance to their priority on environmental issues.

Many residents asked why the kitchen waste had not been collected over the Christmas period. They were informed that due to the increase in non-recyclables it was felt more suitable to have a more frequent collection of this bin. However the timetable for next Christmas would be revised in accordance with the problems that had been identified.

Councillor C Dean asked when community halls would be included in the scheme. She was informed that after the schools and flats, community halls would take priority.

Councillor Cheetham drew attention to the number of clothing banks that would be increasing, and suggested the fact needed to be wider advertised.

SWAP52

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY – ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR GROWTH CONSULTATION

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager gave a presentation on the Local Development Framework core strategy issues and options further consultation, outlining policy choices and options for growth. He explained how the community had been involved in the development of the strategy to date and that the presentation to the Panel was part of that process.

A consultation document reflecting the range of comments and other inputs was due to go out for consultation in January and February.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager explained that a proposed vision for 2021 had been developed with the themes: Economy, Employment and Training; getting around, district character and living in communities. Each theme was linked to the Community Plan priorities and suggested objectives and policies. As an example, he outlined how under the District Character theme, the suggested vision for Stansted airport could be taken forward through a set of objectives and policies.

Taking into account urban capacity and committed sites the Council would need to allocate new sites for about 3,000 homes. Either a dispersed or a concentrated approach could be pursued, with a range of options under either approach. The other 5,000 homes would reflect existing developments since 2001 and outstanding permissions.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager invited the South West Area Panel to consider the consultation document and make their comments based on the following questions:

- Do you agree with the strategic objectives?
- Do you think the strategic objectives will achieve the vision?
- Do you agree with the suggested Core Strategy Policies and do you think they will help to achieve the objectives?

- Do you have any comments on the assessment of the implications for sustainability?
- Which growth options you agree with and which you think should not be considered.

The item would be revised at the next panel meeting and therefore Members felt the item should be discussed in length at the meeting.

SWAP53 **UPDATE ON STANSTED AIRPORT**

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager gave an update on the current situation of Stansted Airport. In November, the Development Control Committee refused full use of existing runway. BAA had appealed against that decision and Council officers were currently discussing the logistical arrangements for the inquiry into the appeal. The public would be made aware of the inquiry dates, however if they wished to speak they would need to register their intention with the Planning Inspectorate. The Council had written to all those who had made representations on the planning application explaining the procedure. Norman Mead thanked the Councillors for listening to their constituents and refusing the planning application.

A local resident asked the Panel why it would not possible to hold just one public inquiry into the refusal of BAA's Generation 1 proposal and into the Generation 2 application. He reasoned that double the cost and resources would be encountered with two inquiries. He further added that if the Council used all their best arguments in inquiry number one, it would then be in a weaker position for the inquiry into Generation 2. He asked if the Council could push for there to be only the one inquiry. Councillor A Dean informed the members of the public that only one planning application had so far been received and refused and unfortunately the process was out of the hands of Uttlesford District Council.

SWAP54 **CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET 2007/08**

The Director of Resources gave a presentation to the panel on Uttlesford budget consultation. He explained that questionnaires were sent out to parish and town councils and responses were in the process of being received. A decision would be made at Operations Committee meeting in February. Views of the public and the panel were still being encouraged to be brought forward as the decision was yet to be made. He stressed that there was potential to influence the long-term approach.

He gave an overview of how the budget was set, which took into consideration government funding, inflation, new spending pressures and council tax; he then went on to explain the gearing problem which occurred within local government.

Currently Uttlesford had the lowest council tax of any district within Essex and the projected rise for next financial year stood at 4.5% which would be determined by members at the Full Council meeting in February. He

explained that only 9.7% of council tax went into Uttlesford District Council services.

Uttlesford's grant from the Government had gone up £70,000 for next year, but inflation alone would add £350,000 to the budget. The Council had already responded to public opinion and would not increase car park charges, but potentially £80,000 of extra income would be lost. The Wheeled bin system would add an extra £140,000 to the budget next year and statutory and other pressures originally cost around £480,000. All of this meant that there would be a £1 million shortfall.

The Director of Resources said there had been a recent senior manager restructure, which made a saving £130,000 per annum.

The Area Panel consultation fitted into the budget process by proposing to put more money in the budget to improve specific services, bearing in mind that this would need to be paid for, proposing service reductions, cutting back on any planned new spending, proposing to amend fees and charges for services and considering the devolution of more budgets to Area Panels.

SWAP55 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Members noted the Community Development Report as prepared by the Community Development Officer (Cultural Services).

The meeting ended at 10.15pm.