

To: All Members of the County Council
All Chief Officers

cc: Environment officers)
Officers named for action) e-mail
Committee Section)

From: COUNTY SECRETARY'S
DEPARTMENT

Ask for: Julia Harries

Ext: 5563

My Ref: jh

Your Ref:

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE
20 MARCH 2001

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

M V Bayes (Chairman), N Brook, F W Clayton, R N Copping, D J Drake, A K Gray,
M V Moore (Vice-Chairman), R J Smith, W A Storey, G F Wenham

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

I E M Tarry

Other Members in attendance

N E Agar, D A Ashley, G D Game, D W Hills, R Sanderson

C Drury, Police Officer

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Environment Select Committee meeting on 20 March 2001, as circulated, copy annexed, action was taken or decisions were reached on individual items as recorded below.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Membership changes

George Wenham had replaced **Brian York**

(ii) LTP Centre of Excellence Award

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Minister of Transport, Keith Hill, would officially announce on 21 March 2001 that Hertfordshire County Council had been declared a "Centre of Excellence" by the Government for its work in improving transport across the county.

The award reflected the quality of the County Council's Local Transport Plan, published in July last year.

In particular, the long-running TravelWise initiative and work to solve travel problems to schools and business were cited as good examples for other Authorities to follow.

Hertfordshire is the only Authority in the East of England to be given Centre of Excellence status, and is one of only 14 nation-wide out of 150 Local Transport Authorities.

As part of the award, the County Council would be encouraged to share its good practices with other authorities, as well as being able to learn new ideas from other Centres of Excellence across the country.

(iii) Flooding

The Director of Environment gave an update on the flood situation in Hertfordshire and circulated a report detailing roads under water (copy attached). The Committee agreed this should be sent to all members of the County Council. The Committee heard that problems have been exacerbated by the low nighttime temperatures following periods of rain causing a freeze/thaw effect. As a result, roads had been damaged with potholes occurring and verges collapsing. 18,000 tons of salt have been put on the roads in 60 precautionary outings (there were normally 42 precautionary outings during a winter).

Mrs Corley and Mr Tillyer, representing residents of Church End and Bell Austin, Redbourne described to the Committee the particular problems in their area since the New Year, including the flow of sewerage outside homes.

The Select Committee thanked the speakers who had taken time to explain their situation and, in expressing their sympathy, recognised the extraordinary nature of current and future problems. The Committee noted that there was confusion for the public about who to contact regarding flooding problems and that the various agencies concerned needed to co-ordinate their action points. Hertfordshire County Council would consider how to ensure solutions worked and that the efforts of all agencies were co-ordinated to this end; there should be planning to try to avoid future difficulties, including control of development in flood plains. The Committee requested regular updates on the situation regarding flooding in Hertfordshire.

(iv) Foot and Mouth Disease

The Director of Environment gave an update on the latest situation regarding foot and mouth disease and reassured the Committee that there were no confirmed cases in Hertfordshire. A map was displayed giving the location of livestock sites in the county, showing how scattered these were. The Committee thanked officers for their hard work in this area and recognised the need to remain extremely vigilant and retain all current restrictions on footpaths in order to avoid an outbreak of the disease. Each and every resident in the county had a personal responsibility to ensure the very necessary restrictions were respected; the Committee expressed their

sympathy and concern about the traumatic effects of foot and mouth disease.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Select Committee held on 23 January 2001 were confirmed as a correct record.

PUBLIC PETITIONS

None.

QUESTIONS

- 1) **George Wenham** asked the Executive Member for Environment:

"I refer to Hatfield Aerodrome Section 106 agreements which finance off-site Highway Improvements. There are five roundabouts and one junction which are to be signalised as a benefit of the major improvements. The one roundabout which is NOT to be signalised is the Green Lanes Roundabout, the one with six entry and exit points, the largest of the seven schemes mentioned, the one which from Green Lanes will provide movement from one of the largest housing developments in the scheme, to work, to schools, to shopping needs and to social pleasures. Why have the needs of the existing dwellers (some 600 in all) and those who will live in the many houses to be built not been taken into account when determining the movement of peoples in the days to come?"

The Executive Member for Environment replied:

"A comprehensive Transport Impact Assessment was undertaken in support of the Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted for the Hatfield Aerodrome site and this included an assessment of all of the junctions along the A1001.

Traffic surveys were undertaken by consultants to ensure that existing levels of traffic were known and forecasts of future traffic levels were estimated for the opening year of the development. The level of traffic predicted to be generated by all the development proposed was then added to each junction.

This provided an assessment of capacity needed for all of the affected junctions as a basis to determine where improvements were needed and the form they should take.

This work led to the proposals for the signalisation of the junctions along the A1001 and to the improvements identified for the Green Lanes roundabout at the A1001 north approach and exit.

The assessment therefore took full account of the traffic generated by existing and future residents. At Green Lanes roundabout the results showed that signalisation was not required. All of this work was checked by both the Highways Agency and County Council's officers and the improvements are contained in the S106 agreement associated with the outline planning permission."

George Wenham then asked the following supplementary question:

"Did the assessment take full account of the increase in traffic which will occur following the decision to increase the size of Green Lanes School, the increase in housing and the increasing amount of industry and commerce on the aerodrome site?"

Iris Tarry, Executive Member for Environment, answered in the affirmative.

Graham Burrow asked the Executive Member for Environment:

- i) *"As she is obviously aware Watford Borough Council took over the control of enforcing parking controls in its area when it became designated as a CPZ area some time ago.*

Prior to this enforcement, mainly during the normal hours Monday to Saturday of single yellow line enforcement, traffic wardens carried out enforcement and outside these hours enforcement of double yellow lines was normally by police officers. Since the creation of the CPZ area of Watford the police will only get involved where vehicles are creating a dangerous obstruction.

Watford, unfortunately have decided on a policy outside single yellow line hours to enforce Sunday and evening fixtures in the Vicarage Road match day area and extremely limited enforcement in resident parking zones. An even more limited enforcement between 5.30pm and 8.30am and on Sundays is provided to other areas.

This policy has in relation to double yellow lines; outside the enforcement of single yellows meant they have become a safe place to park. It has even got to the stage that some drivers will even park and block pavements alongside double yellow lines without fear of receiving a ticket for this obvious offence.

I have no problems on reducing the amount of double yellow lines where it can be agreed that safety is not compromised but believe that where lines exist enforcement is paramount.

I understand from the Divisional Commander of Fire and Rescue for A Division that during a recent fatal fire in Watford the two appliances called to the emergency had to operate in excess of 60 meters from the incident due to their access being blocked. On this occasion, I am informed, the unfortunate death would have resulted even if the access had not been blocked, however it does highlight a reoccurring problem facing fire crews in Watford and I would assume the other emergency services.

Would the executive member agree that safety should not be compromised and that we must ensure that enforcement should be persuaded to this aim?

As the Highways Authority, what actions can the County take to pursue this and what actions is she prepared to take to both protect residents rights and enable the emergency services to carry out their duties?"

The Executive Member for Environment replied to question i):

"I understand your concern and agree that access for emergency services must be maintained within our streets.

As Highway Authority, the County Council approved the CPZ arrangements implemented and managed by Watford Council. Due to the low priority afforded to parking issues by the Police, parking was decriminalised and enforcement is managed by contractors directed by Watford Council.

Whilst the detailed enforcement regime is the responsibility of the Borough Council, the County Council needs to be satisfied that systems are in place to ensure that the regime is reasonable and equitable given all the circumstances. Safety is, of course, of prime importance.

The police also retain responsibility to ensure there is safe passage and re-passage of vehicles and therefore hold a responsibility to address dangerous obstructions. As such, representatives from Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire Police meet regularly to discuss parking controls and enforcement. They have agreed that, outside of normal hours, any safety concerns and main routes will be given priority. A recent fire incident in the Cardiff Road area, for example, led to the application of new yellow lines and priority enforcement.

The Watford Council / Police meeting is the appropriate forum in which to raise such concerns and I shall ensure that your concerns are forwarded to them.

I will also suggest that a Fire Service representative is invited."

Graham Burrow asked the Executive Member for Environment:

- ii) *"I personally endorse, handled correctly, the use of displays on lampposts is quite acceptable as a revenue generator. Such displays on lampposts are commonplace in many areas of Holland and would appear to have no detrimental effect. However, advertisements positioned on pavements can cause considerable difficulties to residents particularly those with disabilities.*

Could she explain the County Council's policy relating to the usage of pavements for the sitting of advertising boards? Who is responsible on a day to day basis and what powers, if any, has the County Council?"

The Executive Member for Environment replied to question ii):

"Thank you for your support for the use of lamp posts for advertising.

Turning to the issue of pavement-sited advertising boards, it is our policy to discourage their use and wherever they are found to cause obstruction or significant distraction, we seek their removal.

This is done initially by negotiation, but if this is unsuccessful we will prosecute under Section 149 of the Highway Act 1980. I should add, however, that where the pavement is of sufficient size to accommodate shop related advertising that is not obstructive, recent case law tends to support the practice as an acceptable contribution to the streetscape."

1. 30 MPH SPEED LIMITS IN VILLAGES

[Officer contact: Wendy Broome 01727 816960]

1.1 The Select Committee considered a report on a proposed change to the existing policy of a 30mph speed limit in villages to allow the introduction of a 40mph limit in certain locations, with supporting speed reduction measures where necessary.

1.2 Members discussed the report and made a number of comments. These included:

- the change in policy would help to prevent 'bunching' of traffic
- the change in policy was welcomed
- more warning signs should be introduced
- Harper Lane in London Colney would benefit from the retention of the 30mph speed limit with a 40mph buffer zone at each end and interactive signing, since 'bunching' was already a problem there - the effectiveness of this could be reviewed at a later date
- the change in policy would apply only to the part of the B156 through the village of Langley itself which had residential development along it

1.3 Response to Cabinet

D Roberts

- that the County speed policy should be amended to allow 40 mph limit provision, as a first stage, to cover situations where the road geometry could lead to an increased potential for accidents if a lower limit were to be immediately adopted.
- that the Director of Environment should be authorised to resolve police objections to new speed limit orders based on the revised County policy.
- that Harper Lane, London Colney should retain a 30mph speed limit, with a 40 mph buffer zone either side and interactive signing.
- there should be an increase in the use of interactive signing.

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

None

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary