

To: All Members of the County Council
All Chief Officers

From: County Secretary's
Department

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

Ask For: Nicola Hayden
Ext: 25560
My ref:
Your ref:

**ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 JUNE 2003**

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

N E Agar (substitute for B A York), J Anderson, S A Batson, M V Bayes (Vice-Chairman), R S Clements, R N Copping, D J Drake, H M Saunders, S Jones, C J White (Chairman)

Also present:

Executive Members: D A Ashley (Environment)

Other Members: B C Engel, M Green, B N W Hammond, M H O'Neill,
D T F Scudder, I Simpson

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership Changes

Nigel Agar replaced Brian York for this meeting only.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PUBLIC PETITIONS

None

QUESTIONS

1. **Roy Clements** asked the Executive Member for Environment, **Derrick Ashley**, the following question:

"Can the Executive Member explain what is being done to achieve the target in the Bus Strategy to "reverse the decline in bus patronage and recover to 2000/01 levels by 2005/06?"

Derrick Ashley replied:

"The county council has increased its budget to address the shortfalls in the commercially provided network by 54% over the last 4 years for the provision of publicly subsidised services. The District Councils jointly fund these services and with these authorities we will be undertaking Network Reviews to ensure that we direct this investment in the most appropriate services for local people.

The Bus Strategy has a range of initiatives in it to encourage users back to passenger transport ranging from bus priority, to better roadside information, more bus shelters, ticketing schemes, improved interchanges, demand responsive services and Real Time Passenger Information to name a few.

I am particularly focused on the need to improve the overall travelling experience for bus (and train) users. This starts at the home with the provision of accurate information kept up to date and in real time through the internet and telephones, carries on with having adequate shelter at stops, through to the confidence, reliability and comfort of the actual journey itself.

I am keen to deliver this programme of improvements as quickly as possible and I hope that this will help the bus industry rise to the many challenges it currently faces.

I would like to highlight the penultimate paragraph further – the aim is to improve the overall travelling experience for the public. We spend considerable amounts of money on the bus service and are less focussed on the travelling experience. The bus will get you from A-B but we must also consider the other elements of the journey – waiting at the bus stop, travelling conditions on the bus etc. Some vehicles are not old but are very uncomfortable and I would ask Members to join with me in looking further at this issue."

PART 1 (OPEN BUSINESS)

1 WITHDRAWAL OF THE TRAFFIC WARDEN SERVICE IN HERTFORDSHIRE

[Officer Contact: Mike Younghusband, Hertfordshire Highways
Tel 01707 356551]

Councillor C J White declared a prejudicial interest but in accordance with the Code of Conduct remained in the meeting (in the Chair).

1.1 Following an initial request from Councillor B A York, the Committee considered a report that detailed issues generated by the decision of the Chief Constable to withdraw the traffic warden service in Hertfordshire by March 2004.

1.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee expressed its concern about the timing and efficacy of this change in policy.

- (b) The Committee agreed to set up a short life Topic Group comprised of the three group spokespeople to meet with a personal representative of the Chief Constable to address issues concerning:
 - The basis of the decision
 - The timing/phasing of the implementation of DPE (decriminalised parking enforcement) to ensure a smooth transfer
 - How to enforce yellow line regulations in a district where there is no traffic warden or DPE

Nicola Hayden/
Clare Kaye

The Committee further agreed to hold a special meeting if necessary, to receive the formal report of the Topic Group.

All to note

- (c) The Committee expressed their disappointment that the Police had chosen not to be represented at this meeting.
- (d) The Committee requested a written response from the County Secretary clarifying the legal liability of the Police and the County Council over parking enforcement.

Andrew Laycock

1.3 Recommendations to Cabinet

- (a) The Committee agreed with the recommendations of the Transport Panel that the scheme should be delayed and that a phased implementation should be requested to allow districts more time to make effective plans.
- (b) Cabinet should assure themselves that adequate contingency plans have been made for a situation where Districts are unable or unwilling to bring in DPE schemes.
- (c) The County Council should not become involved in DPE schemes.

David Roberts

David Roberts

David Roberts

2 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN

[Officer Contact: Jon Tiley, Head of Forward Planning
Tel: 01992 556292]

2.1 Following an initial request from Councillor B A York, the Committee considered a report on the Sustainability Appraisal of the Structure Plan.

2.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee recognised that this issue would now be addressed through the regional planning process.

- (b) The Committee agreed that no further scrutiny of this item was required.

3 THAMESLINK 2000

[Officer Contact: Keith Shephard, Consultant
Tel: 01992 555368]

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report that had been referred from Councillor C J White which commented on 'Thameslink 2000'.

3.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee thanked the report author – Mr. Cust – for bringing this issue to their attention.
- (b) The Committee was in agreement that there are concerns about the capacity of Thameslink and whether the proposals would in fact meet demand.
- (c) The Committee agreed to set up a short life topic group to better understand and explore the underlying issues of Thameslink 2000. It was agreed the topic group would report back to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 21 October 2003.

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The membership of the topic group was agreed as being Brian York (Nigel Agar substitute), Martin Saunders and Chris White.

All to note

4 REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF 24SEVEN

[Officer Contact: Mike Palmer. Assistant Director (Transport Management)
Tel: 01992 556121]

- 4.1 As agreed by Members to form part of their work programme, the Committee received a report that detailed the role played by 24Seven in the provision of street lighting within Hertfordshire.

4.3 Conclusions

- (a) Whilst the Committee noted the recent slight improvements in service, they still felt the situation was entirely unsatisfactory.
- (b) The Committee wished to exercise their role in holding servants of the public to account by requesting the attendance of 24Seven at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- (c) The Committee requested that officers provide a monthly statistical monitoring report (format to be agreed) to Members and an update report to each Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Mike Palmer

Mike Palmer

5 REVIEW OF FLOODING

[Officer Contact: David Hope, Environmental Land Management
Tel: 01992 555237]

5.1 As agreed by Members to form part of their work programme, the Committee considered a report that set out the current situation with regards to land drainage and flood prevention and described the roles and responsibilities of central and local government and the Environment Agency.

5.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee welcomed the positive work that has taken place, including that led by the Community Information and Protection Scrutiny Committee (as was – now the Community Services Scrutiny Committee), in response to flooding.
- (b) The Committee agreed to set up a topic group with 3 members, in consultation with the Community Services Scrutiny Committee (to be invited to the meetings), to look at the issues surrounding flooding in more detail. The remit of the topic group was agreed as:
- Examining the effectiveness of current land drainage and flood defence arrangements.
 - Addressing issues of long-term, cross-boundary, integrated flood prevention and relief planning.

Nicola
Hayden

6 UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2003/4

[Officer Contact: Nicola Hayden, Committee Administrator
Tel: 01992 555560]

6.1 As agreed by the Scrutiny Co-Ordination Panel, the Committee received a report that updated them on recommendations made to the Chief Officer at the last meeting, updated them on petitions presented at the last meeting, informed them of progress made on previous scrutiny items and confirmed the work programme for forthcoming meetings.

6.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee formally noted the report and were made aware of the emerging workload for officers and Members. It was agreed the group spokespeople would prioritise items on the work programme at the next agenda strategy meeting on 11 September 2003.

Chris
White/Mary
Bayes/ Brian
York

7 INFORMATION REPORT ON AVIATION POLICY

[Officer Contact: Steve Bailes, Head of Forward Planning
Tel: 01992 556293]

7.1 The Committee received a report that detailed some of the issues of Aviation Policy affecting Hertfordshire for consideration prior to the Airports Hearing which was held during the afternoon session.

7.2 Conclusions

(a) The Committee formally noted the report.

8 “THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: SOUTH EAST” – A NATIONAL CONSULTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT – FIRST AND SECOND EDITION

[Officer Contact: Clare Kaye, Scrutiny Support Officer
Tel: 01992 555300]

8.1 Following the Committee’s decision to postpone the scrutiny hearing on airport expansion last year after the consultation document was withdrawn following a legal challenge, and the subsequent release of a new consultation document, the Committee rescheduled its scrutiny hearing for 17 June 2003. A letter was sent to all interested parties in April 2003 inviting people to attend the hearing and give evidence in person or send a written response to the revised proposals.

8.2 The Committee heard oral evidence from a range of people. Each “witness” was given five minutes in which to address the Committee followed by a short question and answer session from Members. The list of witnesses is attached at Appendix A.

8.3 Points of Particular Note from Speakers

The issues raised by speakers that were of particular interest to the Committee included:

- Significance of Environmental costs: Much has been made of the importance of the aviation industry bearing the true environmental cost of air travel. However, it was pointed out that this in itself would not raise airfares enough to reduce demand for air travel. Taxation could however be used as a form of demand management.
- Environmental Impact: Individual environmental assessments of all potential sites have not been undertaken and must be for a realistic and robust comparison of sites to be made.

- Hub airport: The proposal for a four-runway hub needs to be considered within the context of the whole planning environment – for example housing implications, spin-off industry and the movement of employees.
- Economic benefits: The potential economic benefits of airport development need to be looked at in the long term and not just in terms of “quick wins”.
- Infrastructure requirements: There was almost unanimous agreement between the speakers that the development of transport infrastructure must pre-date any increased airport capacity. There was concern expressed that the current proposals do not fully address this issue.

8.4 The Committee formally thanked all of the witnesses for their contribution to the debate.

8.5 **Comments to Cabinet**

(a) The Committee expressed overall support for the Cabinet’s proposed approach which is to support expansion within existing capacity but would wish to emphasise the following issues:

- Some of the offshore/estuarial options merit further exploration if it is proved that expansion is necessary.
- The environmental capacity of individual sites, in particular the water capacity, needs to be fully explored to ensure the chosen options are sustainable.
- The provision of transport infrastructure in advance is vital and the current proposals appear unsatisfactory in this respect.
- The predict and provide approach compounds the environmental and transport capacity issues in Hertfordshire, some degree of demand management should be applied.
- The Committee does not believe the interests of the people of Hertfordshire would be best served by increasing runway capacity at Stansted, Luton or Heathrow.

David
Roberts

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Item 1 - Withdrawal of the Traffic Warden Service

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary

Appendix A**List of Witnesses**

Adam Wood	Herts Prosperity Forum
Robert McCarthy	Environment Agency
Natalie Blaken	EEDA
John McDonald	International Airport Transport Association
Cllr Mike Carver	East Herts District Council
Terry Morgan	Stansted Airport
Chris Butler	Stansted Airport
Roger Pellman	BAA Plc
Michael Nidd	London Luton Town and Villages Communities Committee
Francis Cory-Wright	The Chiltern Society
Ian Slater	Luton Borough Council
Dr John Davis	Luton & District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise
John Appleby	London Luton Airport Operations Ltd