

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTH ESSEX AREA FORUM HELD AT 2.00 PM
ON TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2011 AT BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH**

Membership

County Councillors:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| * R C Howard (Chairman) | |
| D Abrahall | R A Pearson |
| S C Castle | Mrs I Pummell |
| Mrs T Chapman | * Mrs J M Reeves |
| W J C Dick | * C G Riley |
| J Dornan | Mrs T Sargent |
| Mrs E M Hart | J M Schofield |
| A M Hedley | K Twitchen |
| * S Hillier | Mrs M J Webster |
| D W Morris | * B Wood |
| * present | |

Also Present

Cllr N Hume – Essex County Council

(in order of signing the attendance book – and as there described).

John Anderson – Canvey Island TC, Harry Tucker – Neighbourhood Watch, George Whatley – PAM, Brian Fry – N/A, D Anderson – C.I. T/C, Brian Dallas and Tony Brockwell – Brockwell & Sons, Jon Payne and Julian Ashley – Essex Fire & Rescue Service, Geoffrey Sharp – CPCAB, JA Sheaf – Essex Chamber of Commerce, U Kipps – Resident, T Cutmore – Rochford DC, M Maddocks – Rochford DC, J Buchanan – EALC, M White – CAVS, Joe Cooke – CPCAB, Alastair Wells - London.

Officers Attending in Support

Sallyanne Thallon	Area Co-ordinator South Essex
Matthew Waldie	Committee Officer
Samantha Ball	Committee Assistant
Alastair Southgate	Transport Strategy Manager
Sean Perry	Principal Transportation Co-ordinator
Lesley Stenhouse	Minerals and Waste Planning Manager

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed Members, Officers and members of the public to the meeting.

2. Apologies and Substitution Notices

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of apologies from Councillors Stephen Castle, Elizabeth Hart, Roy Pearson, Iris Pummell, Terri Sargent and Kay Twitchen; Jackie Govier and Pam Challis, Castle Point BC, and Jackie Brown, RRAVS.

3. Declarations of Interest

The following declaration was received:

Cllr Terry Cutmore, Leader, Rochford District Council, as a member of the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the Forum meeting of 15 November were noted but, owing to a lack of quorum, were not signed. These would be agreed and signed at a subsequent meeting.

5. Public Questions

George Whatley asked whether the Chairman could confirm rumours that the area forums might be ceased, on the grounds of cost-cutting. The Chairman replied that he was unaware of any such intention, but he added that every County Council activity was under review at the moment. Mr Whatley voiced his ongoing support for the area forums, as they provided a unique platform for the public to have a say about the affairs of the County Council. He urged those organising the forums to advertise them widely.

Mr Efde asked that his position, as an individual who had been banned from contributing at these meetings, should be reviewed. The Chairman agreed that it should.

6. Local Transport Plan

The Chairman introduced Alastair Southgate, Principal Transportation Officer, and Sean Perry, Principal Transportation Co-ordinator, both ECC, and asked them to address the meeting.

The purpose of their visit was to alert the forum to the consultation on LTP3, the latest transport plan prepared by the Essex, in response to the Government's requirement that each local highway authority must produce a plan by 1 April 2011. The Plan should set out what the Council wished to achieve by investing in transport over the next 15 years, how transport provision would help to achieve sustainable economic growth and how services would be provided. Unlike with previous plans, the intention was to be more flexible and less prescriptive, so that

changes could be made over time, without any need to rewrite the overall Plan. The long-term transport strategy was likely to remain the same, but the implementation plan would be reviewed periodically to ensure appropriate resourcing and prioritisation.

The Plan had to fit with certain changes implemented by the new Government, eg there would be no longer be regional planning, but would be more emphasis on infrastructure. The Government had also specified 5 priorities for transport in its DfT Business Plan 2011-2015: delivering commitments on high-speed rail, securing the railways for the future, encouraging sustainable local travel, tackling carbon and congestion on the roads, and promoting sustainable aviation. And funding had been cut significantly. A new Transport White Paper was due in 2011.

The Integrated County Strategy (ICS) provided a vision for Greater Essex (including all 15 county, district and unitary authorities in Essex), and had three specific outcomes: Thames Gateway South Essex, Key Towns and Low Carbon Energy. The LTP would deliver the transport programme necessary to support the priorities identified in the ICS.

Five outcomes had been identified for the LTP, relating to:

- Connectivity with international gateways
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Improving safety for travellers
- Maintaining transport assets
- Providing sustainable access and travel choice.

Fifteen policies had also been identified, each linked to one or more of the LTP outcomes:

- Customer experience
- Integrated planning
- Connectivity
- Carbon reduction
- Promoting sustainable travel choices
- Access to services
- Natural and built environment
- Asset management
- Maintenance
- Road safety
- Congestion and network resilience
- Public transport
- Cycling
- Walking and Public Right of Way
- Freight movement.

Special priorities had been set for Thames Gateway, the densely populated area along the Thames estuary, including the districts of Basildon, Castle Point and Rochford.

Further details were on the <http://www.engageessex.org.uk> website and it included an online questionnaire. Essex wanted to ensure it had got its priorities right and had received over 150 responses so far.

The floor was then opened to general questions on Highway issues, and a summary of responses is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1.

The Chairman thanked the officers and Councillor Hume for their presentation and assistance with questions.

7. Developments at Southend Airport

The Chairman welcomed Alastair Welch, Managing Director, Southend Airport, and invited him to address the meeting.

Mr Welch gave a few details about the airport:

- Its activities were mixed: as well as commercial flights, private clubs and business clubs flew from there, and significant maintenance work was carried out there – employing over 500 people, and mostly providing services to foreign airlines (especially those outside of Europe)
- It now took on 40 apprentices per annum
- Its new control tower had been erected within 12 months, costing £1.7 million – although the avionics within it cost over £5 million
- The new rail station was on schedule to open in March, having cost £12 million, funded by private investors
- To be commercial, the airport needed to be able to deal with larger aircraft, to enable greater passenger payload; work was underway to extend the runway by 200 metres, which would allow these larger planes to use it. The aim was to finish the extension by the end of 2011, and have it fully tested by March 2012, so enabling them to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics. The airport was also looking at new routes
- A new, upmarket hotel was also planned, to be sited at the entrance to the airport. All in all, he hoped that these developments would serve as a catalyst for regeneration in the area.
- A brief computer-generated walk-through of the new terminal had been produced and could be sent by email. Anyone interested was invited to contact the Committee Officer

There followed several positive comments from the meeting, pointing out how much progress had been made, in good time, and all funded from private investment, rather than any Government support.

However, it was noted that not everyone was in favour of the scheme; so Mr Welch asked about his response to the local residents association, who were vociferous in their opposition. He acknowledged that every major change to infrastructure would have those for and against it. They carried out regular polls of local opinion and have found a consistent 90% support rate for the scheme. They had received relatively few complaints to date and he believed that everything had been carried out with due democratic process.

The Chairman thanked Mr Welch for his informative presentation and looked forward to hearing about further progress in the future.

8. Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership

The Chairman welcomed Mark Pragnell, Executive Director, Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership, and invited him to give a brief update.

Mr Pragnell pointed out that Thames Gateway was one of the biggest regenerative areas in Europe, stretching into Essex, Kent and London. The Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership brought together the local authorities, so that they might have a co-ordinated voice in respect of Thames Gateway. The economy of South Essex was worth some £10 billion to the national economy per annum, and commuters added a further £3 billion.

However, Government funding has dried up with the coming of the new financial year. This would lead to certain apparatus being wound up (eg Renaissance Southend, and Basildon Renaissance Partnership) and their functions being taken back into local government. Fortunately, South Essex had won a large amount of the final issue of capital expenditure programme of the last Government, and there was continuing private investment, boosting the local economies.

Another development was the creation of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), which would replace RDAs on their demise in 2012, and would bring together local government with local businesses. The local LEP covered Kent, Greater Essex & East Sussex, which created a good critical mass.

One further plus point for this area was that Thames Gateway was an area of specific priority; and Bob Neil had been appointed Minister for Thames Gateway – the only minister with a geographic portfolio.

The Thames Gateway Strategic Group had also been created, to bring together local representatives with the Minister.

The Chairman thanked Mr Pragnell for his update.

9. Minerals Preferred Approach

The Chairman welcomed Lesley Stenhouse, Minerals and Waste Planning Manager, Essex County Council, to the meeting.

Ms Stenhouse informed the meeting that she would be making a presentation to each area forum as the MDD Preferred Approach would apply to the whole county. She added that it might be of less interest to those in the South Area Forum, as there were no existing sites or proposed sites in the Basildon, Rochford or Castle Point districts. However, the County Council was the statutory body to look after this and it was a countywide consultation, so she would be presenting at each area forum.

The overall plan related to the adequate supply of minerals to 2028, having regard to the national minerals planning policy (MPS 1), the managed aggregate supply system and the process of plan preparation (PPS 12).

Primary aims were to reduce mineral use waste produced, and maximise recycling – currently 14% of aggregate was going to landfill; this compared well with the EU's 70% recycling figure by 2020.

There were three primary mineral supply requirements:

- Land Won Sand and Gravel apportionment of 4.31mtpa and maintaining a seven year land bank
- To maintain a land bank of at least 10 years reserves of silica sand
- To ensure a stock of reserves of brick clay was maintained for 25 years production.

Extraction of sand and gravel was the main mineral issue, and 43 potential sites had been identified, with a total potential yield of 120mt (ie 3 x the requirement). 20 preferred sites, scored according to certain criteria, would produce the necessary yield, included 4 new sites.

The adopted spatial strategy would optimise locations to serve the whole County by taking into account the growth locations, factor in existing mineral infrastructure (rail depots and ports), redress the supply balance (sites in centre & east and demand across whole County inc west), transportation (to reduce mineral miles) and carbon use.

Site Selection Methodology was used, including certain selection criteria and scoring system with weighting given to promote sites in the west of the county. There were appendices to the main report that detailed all the sites that had been assessed.

The MDD Preferred Approach was not the final version – changes were anticipated in the wake of comments and points raised.

The consultation period was open till 17 February 2011. Comments could be made via the website: www.essex.gov.uk/MDD

There were a few acknowledgements from the meeting, of the efforts being made by the Council to recycle materials and reduce carbon emissions.

The Chairman thanked Ms Stenhouse for her contribution to the meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on **Tuesday 15 March 2011 at 2.00 pm**. Venue: To be confirmed. Potential venues were being researched.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 4.10 pm.

Chairman

Appendix 1**South Area Forum Response to Highways Questions****Q1. What is the County Council doing with respect to the A13 and catering for commuter flows?**

A1: The A13 is seen as predominantly a public transport corridor, and as such public transport improvements are currently being implemented in the form of bus priority corridors with intelligent signals, improvements to bus passenger waiting facilities real time information and new bus stop flags. These improvements also link with works which Southend Council have implemented on the stretch of the A13 in their Borough. It is understood that commuters use this route heavily and as such the route is intended in the future to be used as a potential route for the South Essex Rapid Transit. In order to assist highway traffic the stretch of the A13 between Sadlers Farm and Tarpots will be widened to 3 metre width lanes with the Tarpots junction being converted to a signalised junction. The signals will also work with the signals planned to be installed at the Sadlers Farm Roundabout

Q2. When are the Pitsea Bridge repairs going to come to an end, are we good at building things?

A2. The Pitsea Flyover was constructed in the late 70's to a poor standard, the repairs being carried out now are in a phased programme. To demolish the flyover would be cost prohibitive

Q3. Dartford Tolls – When are we doing away with them?

A3. The Dartford Tolls will remain but the intention is to improve the flow of traffic through the tolls

Q4. Why have Canvey Town Council not got representation on the TGSE Partnership?

A4. SP will pass this onto the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership

Q5. Under investment in road infrastructure in Rochford, particularly with large HGV's using the network this needs a rethink?

A5. The County Council recognises the transport issues in Rochford particularly during the peak period and as such have identified it as a priority for the new LTP 3. In terms of large HGV's the new LTP will have a policy on freight movement which will essentially ensure that the County Council encourages the right vehicle for the right road.

Q6. As a result of the Southend improvements diverting traffic is coming through Rochford?

A6. The works (including Progress Road, City Beach and the Victorias) in Southend are being carried out under the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) administered by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). These schemes as part of the funding agreement have to be completed by 31 March 2011 so any traffic diverting onto routes in Rochford should only be temporary

Q7. Within the new LTP is there a policy to ensure that those with mobility impairments are catered for?

A7. Those with mobility impairments will be included within the LTP within the transport policies (mainly access to services), however Alastair Southgate is very keen to discuss this further

Q8. What about the A13 and freight movements west of Sadlers Farm Junction?

A8. The new LTP will contain a policy on freight movements and will ensure that the right vehicles are on the right roads. The A13 is a principal route and as such is appropriate to take freight traffic. In terms of improvements to the A13 there are at present no plans to improve the route west of Sadlers Farm.

Q9. Works on the A13 between Sadlers Farm and Hadleigh how are they progressing?

A9. The works are progressing well along the A13 with a programmed completion of early summer 2011 for the stretch between Tarpots and Kenneth Road. The stretch between Tarpots to Sadlers is scheduled to be completed by April 2012, and will be undertaken by Birse Civils as it is in very close proximity to the works at the Sadlers Farm roundabout

Q10. Access to Canvey Island has been included in plans since 1983 when is it going to happen?

A10. The County Council recognises that access to Canvey Island is an issue, but given current financial circumstances there are no plans to provide a new or improved link from the island. However, with the planned works at Sadlers Farm, access onto and off the A130 Canvey Way will be improved.

Q11. Bus services into the industrial areas in Basildon will they be included in the new LTP 3?

A11. It is acknowledged that access to the Enterprise Corridor and other industrial areas in Basildon particularly by public transport could be improved. As part of the strategy development for the LTP 3 the County Council will investigate the possibility of providing public transport facilities. In the longer term it is hoped that the South Essex Rapid Transit (**sert**) will provide a link to the Enterprise Corridor.