

REPORT OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

(Meeting held 4 November 1998)

1. WOODGREEN – PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA (REPORT G) (MINUTE NO 83).

The Committee has agreed that a Conservation Area should be designated in Woodgreen, the boundary to include Barns Farm and the paddocks to the south. This follows a public consultation exercise on revised proposals, which increased the amount of Woodgreen Village which it was proposed to designate as a Conservation Area. The Committee was mindful of the need to discriminate areas which were worthy of designation from those which were not.

The Committee did not include land within the Godshill Inclosure, adjacent to the cricket pitch, in the Conservation Area. Conservation area controls cannot be enforced on Crown Land. In addition, the Forestry Commission now has extensive consultation processes prior to consent being granted for any felling. Their attention has, however, been drawn to the need for adequate supervision of their contractors. Unauthorised felling in the past had raised considerable local anxieties about future treatment of the tree belt, which formed an important element of the setting of the proposed conservation area.

2. 1999/2000 TRANSPORT PROGRAMME AND BIDS FOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO 84).

The Committee has made detailed comments on the County Council's 1999/2000 Transport Policies and Programme.

The Committee made a number of area specific recommendations. They also asked that the County Council's attention should be drawn to the need to encourage through traffic to use the Strategic Road Network; and also to follow Government advice to direct resources to maintaining the current road system. The County Council was also advised of this Council's support for measures to reduce road casualties; and animal fatalities in the Forest.

3. GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER : “A NEW DEAL FOR TRANSPORT: BETTER FOR EVERYONE” (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO 86).

The Committee has agreed initial comments on the Government's White Paper. While welcoming the general thrust of the Government's proposals, there was concern that the White Paper was written from an urban viewpoint and might, therefore, have consequential adverse effects on rural areas, where there may be no public transport alternative. It was reported that the national parks were closely monitoring the effect of the proposals on their areas, in view of the practical dilemma they faced. This Council will stay in touch with their views.

Detailed documents on the implementation of the White Paper will be published over the coming months and it was agreed that the Director of Environment Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and the Leaders of the Conservative and Independent Groups should be authorised to comment on the proposed draft guidance on local transport plans in the light of:

- (i) the views previously expressed by the Committee;
- (ii) the need to ensure consistency between local transport plans and the Development Plan; and
- (iii) other relevant practical considerations;

with a copy of the response to be reported in the Information Bulletin as soon as practical.

It was also agreed that the officers should continue to explore with relevant partners, in the light of proposals emerging from the White Paper, the advantages and disadvantages of different means of charging road users within the New Forest in order to help fulfil the objectives of the New Forest Transport Strategy.

A report will be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the financial and other implications of the proposed national minimum standard for concessionary fare schemes. The White Paper proposes a maximum charge of £5 per bus pass, available to all pensioners. This might have serious financial implications for this Council.

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Transport the Environment and the Regions highlighting this Council's concern that the White Paper may disadvantage people in rural areas. Consequently there should be full consultation with local authorities on the specifics of implementation to avoid this danger. A copy of this letter was also to be sent to the local Members of Parliament, the Local Government Association, the Council's representative on the Local Government Association and the local press.

4. SOUTHAMPTON TRANSPORT POLICIES AND PROGRAMME (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO 87).

The Committee has welcomed Southampton City Council's Transport Policies and Programme. In doing so, detailed comments on a number of particular proposals have been submitted. In particular, the City Council has been asked to develop their proposals for a park and ride in the west of the city in close consultation with this Council; with the objectives of the scheme to include measures to reduce car traffic, or at least constrain the increase of car traffic, both through Totton town centre and over the A35 Redbridge Causeway.

**5. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW (REPORT E)
(MINUTE NO 88).**

The Committee has noted, with great concern, the continuing impasse between the County Council, Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils on agreeing the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review. The Deputy Prime Minister has invited the Authorities to a meeting to try to resolve the situation.

The Committee was advised that SERPLAN had now agreed that revised regional housing figures for the 1991-2016 period should be submitted to the Deputy Prime Minister. These revised figures implied some 42,000 additional dwellings in Hampshire over the period 2001-2011, as compared with the 56,000 required by the existing regional guidance. However, the Deputy Prime Minister had made it clear that he expected the Structure Plan Review to have regard to the existing regional guidance.

Members expressed extreme disquiet that Southampton City Council was abusing the Development Plan process to displace their problems onto this District. The tone and scope of the comments that the City Council had made to the Deputy Prime Minister on Dibden Bay were considered an intrusion into the affairs of a neighbouring authority.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, Members of Parliament representing New Forest District, Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council have been informed that this Council:

- (i) is extremely concerned about the continuing delays in progressing the Structure Plan Review and the consequential implications for Local Plan Review and Development Control in the District;
- (ii) endorses the resolutions agreed at the meeting of the Hampshire District Councils on 16 October 1996; and
- (iii) objects in the strongest terms to the submission made by Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils to the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the Waterside Strategic Gaps.

**6. SITE THRESHOLDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (REPORT F)
(MINUTE NO 89).**

The Inspector's report into the District Local Plan has recognised the special problems that this District experiences in providing affordable homes to meet the needs of local people. The Inspector recommended that, in accordance with Circular 6/98, the threshold for sites on which an element of affordable housing could be negotiated could be reduced. The Committee have therefore agreed that, pending the publication of Proposed Modifications to the New Forest District Local Plan:

- (i) In considering schemes for, or including, residential development, the Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate with developers the inclusion of an element of affordable housing on all suitable sites where:

15 or more dwellings are proposed; or
the site is 0.5 of a hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings.

In considering whether or not the site falls within the threshold, the local planning authority will take account of the development potential of any adjoining land.

- (ii) On all sites where an element of affordable housing is to be sought, the Council's target is to negotiate 30% of dwellings on the site to be affordable dwellings which will address an identified local need.

In due course this will form the basis for new policies to be incorporated in the New Forest District Local Plan at Proposed Modifications stage.

7. LOCAL AGENDA 21 – PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT ON PROGRESS (REPORT H) (MINUTE NO 91).

The Committee has received the annual monitoring report on progress on Local Agenda 21 issues. Many of the targets for 1997/98 have been carried forward into next year, in a rolling programme. The following objectives were adopted for the period 1998/1999.

- (i) Consider the implications of the New Forest District Local Plan Inspector's Report and progress the Plan through modifications and towards adoption;
- (ii) Continue to monitor local plan policy;
- (iii) Begin work on a review local plan looking forward toward the period 2001-2011;
- (iv) Continue the close link between policy formulation, development, and implementation through the development control process, including reflecting development control experience in the review of the local plan;
- (v) Progress the procedure for public involvement in Committee business;
- (vi) Progress public consultation on traffic and environmental proposals for Totton Town Centre jointly with the County Council;
- (vii) Continue progress on a tree strategy for the District subject to the availability of resources;
- (viii) Begin work on a landscape strategy subject to the availability of resources;
- (ix) Continue the process of taking action to preserve threatened listed buildings, especially identifying threatened buildings before it is too late to undertake repairs;

- (x) Work in association with the New Forest Committee and Geodata to complete work on New Forest environmental indicators and monitoring systems by April 1999.

8. WORLD HERITAGE SITE (REPORT I)(MINUTE NO 92).

The Committee strongly supported the proposal to include the New Forest on the United Kingdom tentative list of World Heritage Sites. The New Forest meets the criteria for both natural and cultural landscapes.

The Committee supported the view expressed by the Council for National Parks that the boundary of any World Heritage Site should at least follow that of the New Forest Heritage Area, but that there is scope for the inclusion of some additional areas falling outside the current boundary, including sections of the Avon Valley and the countryside stretches from the Forest to the coast.

9. MINISTER'S MANDATE FOR THE NEW FOREST: CONSULTATION DRAFT (REPORT J) (MINUTE NO 93).

The Committee has agreed a response to the proposed revised Ministers' Mandate for the New Forest to guide forest operations by Forest Enterprise. The Deputy Surveyor was expected to submit an amended draft to the next meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel which recognised the concerns being expressed by other bodies about the need for the inclusion of sections from the existing mandate which give priority to the conservation of the Forest's traditional character, and were more specific regarding forestry operations within ancient and ornamental woodlands, inclosures and the open Forest. The Committee recognised these concerns, while supporting the broad statements which the draft mandate contained, and the Forestry Commission's wish to progress a partnership approach to the management of the New Forest Crown Lands.

On this basis, a response was agreed to the draft revised mandate, and the Director of Environment Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, together with the Leaders of the Conservative and Independent Groups, was authorised to prepare a response to any revised draft mandate which is published in recognition of the concerns already expressed.

**Cllr Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson MBE JP DL
CHAIRMAN**