

REPORT OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 17 February 1999)

1. **HAMPSHIRE AVON LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PLAN (LEAP) (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO. 107).**

Members have agreed their views in respect of the Draft Hampshire Avon Local Environment Agency Plan, which will also be considered by the Environmental Services and Licensing Committee at its meeting on 4 March 1999. A copy of the LEAP had been placed in the Members' Room. The Environment Agency will be informed of the following comments by this Council:-

- (a) the implications of Environmentally Sensitive Area designation in the Avon Valley should be explored in more detail;
- (b) consideration should be given to including a reference to the locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the Avon Valley identified by the New Forest District Local Plan;
- (c) more attention should be paid to recreation opportunities in the LEAP area, having regard to the duties of the Agency in this respect; and
- (d) more attention should be paid to working with partners to achieve the objectives of Local Agenda 21.

In addition, the Environmental Services and Licensing Committee have been requested to consider the need for monitoring of nitrate levels and the identification of nitrate pollution sources in determining their response to the LEAP.

2. **“BREAKING THE LOG JAM” : GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS FOR ROAD USER CHARGING AND WORKPLACE PARKING LEVIES (REPORT G) (MINUTE NO. 108).**

The Committee have agreed the response to be made in respect of a Government consultation paper on proposals to implement mechanisms for road user charging and workplace parking levies. These concepts were introduced by the Transport White Paper, which was published in July 1998.

The Committee reiterated their previous concerns that, should the measures be based on the needs of urban areas alone, they would be impractical and environmentally damaging in rural areas where there was no public transport alternative to the car. Traffic congestion from vehicles displaced from tolled routes; together with road-side and verge-side parking where employers supplied insufficient parking, or charged employees for its use, would both disproportionately affect rural areas.

The comments set out at Annex 1 to this report, together with the responses to questions set out in the consultation papers, as set out in Annex 2 to this report, will be conveyed to the Secretary of State as the views of this Council.

**3. A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST -
SERPLAN'S DEPOSITED DRAFT REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE
(REPORT F) (MINUTE NO. 109).**

The Committee have agreed the response to be made in respect of draft Regional Planning Guidance which has been prepared by SERPLAN, and published by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment Transport and the Regions.

The Committee was particularly concerned that the Regional Planning Guidance did not fully recognise the needs of the New Forest Heritage Area, which the Government has made equivalent to a National Park for planning policy purposes. Their response to SERPLAN has emphasised the need for the New Forest Heritage Area to be recognised and for it to be protected at a regional level.

The response has also included the following points:

- (i) Support for the "Sustainable Development" aims of the proposed revised Regional Planning Guidance but concern that the regional spatial development and transport aspects need to be more fully developed if these aims are to be achieved;
- (ii) Support for the "Plan, Monitor and Manage" approach to housing provision in principle, but concern that the development plan processes may not be able to react at the speed needed to bring forward additional land (if needed) in locations consistent with the "Sustainable Development Aims";
- (iii) Support for the additional reference in policies for the South Hampshire Priority Area for Economic Regeneration for the need to protect internationally and nationally designated areas from damage by development; and the recognition that the undeveloped coast and countryside (including the national constraint of the New Forest Heritage Area) are important in shaping the urban form of South Hampshire.

The Regional Planning Guidance should, however include a specific policy stating the regional importance of the New Forest Heritage Area and the need to protect it at the regional level.

Policy RR5 (South Hampshire Priority Area for Economic Regeneration) should also be clear that it relates to the urban areas of South Hampshire alone; and the key diagram should properly demonstrate how the New Forest Heritage Area relates to the proposed South Hampshire Priority Area for Economic Regeneration (without overlap between the two areas);

- (iv) The text relating to Policy ST6 should explain the intentions behind the "South Coast Priority Corridor for Transport Investment" which is shown on the key diagram for the west of Southampton (across the New Forest Heritage Area); and the RPG should recognise that any proposed major transport improvements must avoid harm to the New Forest Heritage Area;
- (v) Support for Policy ST4 and the associated text which specifies that key wildlife sites or areas of landscape and amenity value must be taken into account in evaluating proposals for port expansion;

(vi) In respect of parking policies the availability of destination car parking was recognised as having a major influence on the choice of travel mode, at least in urban areas. There was also support for the principle of a zone based approach to parking standards and of a phased and monitored reduction in parking provision within new development. GOSE has however been advised that this will be a challenging task and that attention also needs to be given to major practical issues, including:-

1. the increased need for enforcement of on-street parking restrictions;
2. how to define policy zones, land uses and development types;
3. how to enforce consistency by local planning authorities across the region, not only in their plans but in development control;
4. the implications of applying the new approach in the outer parts of the south east which are adjoined by competing centres lying in other regions; and
5. the implications of potentially environmentally damaging consequences of measures to reduce car usage.

This Council has indicated its willingness to participate in appropriate parts of the Examination in Public, into the Regional Planning Guidance.

It was also agreed that the Chairman would write to the Government Office for the South East (with a copy to SERPLAN) to express the view that the process for the preparation of regional planning guidance could be strengthened by using aggregation of local authority housing needs surveys to establish the regional requirements for affordable housing; and that there might be merit in establishing mechanisms to differentiate affordable housing from the general housing allocation within local plans and also to allow local planning authorities to specify the type and size of houses to meet the projected needs of the local population.

4. CAR PARKING STANDARDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (REPORT H) (MINUTE NO. 110).

The Committee have adopted revised car parking standards to be applied to affordable housing schemes in the light of Government advice set out in Circular 06/98 that such standards should be flexible. As a result of this advice a detailed survey had been carried out of car ownership patterns within the Council's affordable housing schemes. The revised car parking standards were suggested in the light of the findings of the survey. The Committee was concerned that there should still be some degree of flexibility and that the car parking requirement in rural areas should be higher to reflect the greater levels of car ownership in these areas. The effects of the lower car parking standards will be reviewed in two years time. The revised statements are attached at Annex 3 to this report.

5. NEW FOREST TRANSPORT STRATEGY : BROCKENHURST ENVIRONMENTAL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME (REPORT I) (MINUTE NO. 111).

Members considered the response to be made to the New Forest Transport Strategy Members Panel for public consultation on proposals for environmental traffic management in Brockenhurst. It was noted that the public had opposed the overall package of measures, in particular the proposals for the physical downgrading of Grigg Lane and Sway Road to single-track roads. On this basis the Panel have been requested not to proceed with the scheme for Brockenhurst, but to divert funding towards Stage 2 of improvements to Lyndhurst High Street which falls within the same package bid. Although the main scheme would not be progressed in Brockenhurst, the County Council has been urged to carry forward £42,000 allocated for the implementation of two proposals in 1998/99, into the next financial year to allow the work to be carried out. These proposals were for changes to road signs to encourage traffic to use the A337 in preference to Sway Road through the village centre; and the installation of safety measures outside Brockenhurst Primary School in Sway Road.

6. NEW FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE AMPRESS SITE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (REPORT K) (MINUTE NO. 114).

Supplementary Planning Guidance is produced on both general and site specific issues, in support of policies in the District Local Plan. Some guidance has already been prepared. Some of this needs to be updated, and other topic areas need to be covered. This matter has been referred to the Planning and Transportation Review Sub-Committee for a programme of action to be developed.

In addition, revised supplementary planning guidance had been prepared for the Ampress site at Lymington in the light of discussions on issues such as landscape, access and public transport relating to recent planning applications. Much of the guidance is indicative, the only prescriptive elements relate mainly to issues on the perimeter of the site. The SPG will be published for public consultation.

7. AMPRESS SITE, LYMINGTON (REPORT T) (MINUTE NO. 116).

The Committee have invited English Partnerships to assist in seeking the industrial re-development of the Ampress site. English Partnerships are directly funded by the UK Government and charged with the re-generation of derelict, vacant and under-used land and buildings throughout England. Since 1994 they have assisted in the creation of 3.25 million square feet of industrial and commercial floorspace, with a development programme worth over £1bn. Members were advised of the options which were open to English Partnerships in pursuit of this aim. The confidential findings of a study commissioned by the Council from King Sturge regarding the viability of the Ampress site were noted by the Committee. English Partnerships had seen this report and were happy to be involved in discussions to bring forward the redevelopment of the site for employment purposes. Their initial view was that the Ampress site was a key one for the future provision of employment and business in Lymington and New Milton. Once the site was formally registered with them they would actively explore ways of achieving the desired redevelopment. The Committee will consider a progress report in due course.

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

Annex 1

1. The Government's recognition (see paragraphs 3.14 and 6.29 of the consultation document) that revenues from charging schemes may in some cases be best spent over a wider area than the area charged - and even within the area of adjacent authorities - is to be welcomed. There is, however, some concern that the decision on the diversion of revenues will rest solely with the highway authority who collect the money and who could therefore ignore the needs of other affected authorities. Proposals for central Government to claim a percentage of local revenue are however a cause for concern - particularly if no ceiling is placed upon that percentage.
2. Charging on motorways and trunk roads (see Chapter 5 of the consultation document) should only be introduced after the fullest consultation in order that the effects on local roads in the vicinity can be fully considered.
3. The proposal (see paragraph 6.37 of the consultation document) to set aside (in areas subject to a workplace parking levy) all existing planning conditions requiring the provision of private parking space in association with development raises a major practical question.

It is recognised that initially workplace parking levies will probably only apply in comparatively congested urban areas. It is also recognised that in many such areas, planning policies either already limit provision of private non-residential parking space or will increasingly do so in the future, in accordance with government guidance in PPG13 and possible further guidance emerging through consultation on revised RPG9.

However, where current policies and/or planning permissions require such provision by reference to a minimum standard, the suggested mechanism for resolving the difficulty is a blunt instrument. It would leave no discretion for the local planning authority either to require a minimum amount of operational parking (i.e. for deliveries and similar purposes) or to require non-operational parking spaces to be provided where this is necessary to address specific road safety or traffic management problems (as suggested in PPG13 Chapter 4).

A better approach would be for the Secretary of State to issue planning policy guidance setting out clearly (at least in areas where the parking levy applied) the restricted range of circumstances in which minimum amounts of non-operational parking space might be required, and that this would apply retrospectively to existing planning permissions. This would ensure that relief from the requirement for each individual site was achieved through the planning control process, enabling site-specific considerations to be taken into account.

(PC170299)

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION PAPER

Issues applying to both road user charges and the workplace parking levy

Response to questions:

- 1 & 23 Statutory consultees need to include at least district councils in the area; any national park authority or similar body in the area; and adjoining local authorities.
- 9, 10 & 27 A national exemption for vehicles displaying a valid Orange Badge seems sensible, but the Secretary of State should have the discretion to vary this by order (e.g. by replacing it with an exemption related to a narrower class of vehicle or driver) following appropriate consultation. Alternatively, it might be appropriate for the narrower exemption to be granted at national level, with local authorities empowered to extend this (e.g. to all Badge holders) through each enabling order.
- 17 & 46 The statement of intended use of revenues would seem to be more appropriately included in the local transport plan than in the enabling order. Inclusion in the enabling order would be too inflexible and thus likely to encourage provisions in the order which were so wide-ranging as to be meaningless. So long as there are effective sanctions against authorities who might misapply their revenues, the opportunity for periodic review afforded by inclusion in the local transport plan should determine this issue.

Workplace parking levy only

Response to questions:

- 26 A national exemption for vehicles not used for the journey to work would restrict opportunities for charging schemes aimed also at reducing non-commuter traffic levels. It might be preferable for authorities to retain the option of setting out such an exemption in the enabling order, albeit that in the vast majority of cases they would be likely to do so and exceptions would be few.
- 29 Whilst some of the possible exemptions discussed in the consultation paper (e.g. for disabled badge holders) are justified by operational considerations, others are not. The Government's view that there should not be national exemptions for schools, colleges and hospitals, is supported.
- 31 For the same reason, the Government's view that there should not be a national exemption for buildings which are charitably owned is also supported.
- 32 The levy should be imposed irrespective of whether a business already charges employees for workplace parking (or for that matter subsequently opts to do so). If such pricing decisions are already impacting upon motorists' travel decisions (and the degree to which this occurs will of course vary), then businesses which charge employees will benefit (as against non-charging competitors) by virtue of having reduced the pressure upon themselves to provide parking spaces, and hence bearing a lower levy. In addition, the charge imposed upon employees is one of the rational means by which businesses would be expected to finance their own liability for the levy. There seems no logical basis at all for the suggested exemption or concession, which would also raise substantial issues of equity

and of enforceability.

- 33 Exemptions and privileges for businesses developing green commuter plans raise similar issues to those raised by Question 32. It is difficult to see how such arrangements could be applied in a manner that was seen to be fair and transparent. If the levy is to be effective, it will need to be set at a level at which the prospect of reducing workplace parking provision creates its own incentive to the development of green commuter plans.
- 34 It is agreed that the levy should apply to government and local government buildings as much as to other buildings. It is also accepted that in those few cases where the levy was effectively only an internal transfer, the diversion from general revenue funds (or indeed from the budget of a particular business unit within the organisation) to a dedicated local transport budget should provide sufficient incentive for a review of parking needs. In addition, even in these cases a proportion of the levy due would presumably be payable to the Consolidated Fund as suggested at paragraph 6.2(i).
- 35 A threshold seems essential if schemes are not going to be prohibitively expensive to operate. However, whilst a national exemption might be appropriate, consideration should be given to setting this at a very low level, with authorities having discretion to apply a higher threshold in a given enabling order so as to take account of the particular characteristics of the area in question.
- 38 The power to impose a different rate of levy in different parts of the area is essential, particularly as a graduated structure to the levy imposed in a large urban area might help to avoid distortions arising from a “step change” at the outer boundary of the area within which the levy applied.
- 47 The Government’s view that the levy should apply to all long-stay parking in public car parks, irrespective of what agency owns or operates them, is supported.

(PC170299)

SUGGESTED REVISED CAR PARKING STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

These standards would only apply where the Council was satisfied that the development would remain as social/affordable housing. The developer will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to ensure this unless this requirement can be secured by other means.

The standards would only apply where parking spaces (except for casual/visitor parking) are either within the curtilage of the property or both secure and conveniently located (this requirement would be met by the parking spaces being both overlooked by the accommodation and located within 25m of the accommodation). When these requirements cannot be met the current car parking standards for residential accommodation shall apply (referred to in the table below as current standards).

No of Bedrooms in Dwelling	Current Standard	Suggested Standard
1	2 spaces per dwelling	1 space per dwelling with additional provision for visitors if on street parking not acceptable to Highway Authority
2	2 spaces per dwelling	1.5 spaces per dwelling (includes 0.5 to be provided for casual/visitor parking)
3	2 spaces per dwelling	1.5 spaces per dwelling (includes 0.5 to be provided for casual/visitor parking)
4	3 spaces per dwelling	2.5 spaces per dwelling (includes 0.5 to be provided for casual/visitor parking)