

Mr Roger Harborough
Director, Uttlesford District Council
Mr John Mitchell
Chief Executive, Uttlesford District Council

29th July 2013

Dear Roger

CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING SYSTEM

Our confidence in the planning system at UDC has been further weakened recently by the way two controversial planning applications in Stansted are being handled. We are making these complaints in an effort to ensure that transparency and democratic representation are fully made possible.

Our specific complaints relate to applications UTT/13/1618/OP at Walpole Farm, UTT/13/1126/FUL at 14 Cambridge Road and UTT/13/1456/FUL at 10 Cambridge Road.

All are in Stansted and are, at the latest information we have, due to come to the planning committee on 28th August 2013. This is Bank Holiday Week. This is the busiest holiday week of the year. We will both be away on holiday. We also understand that Cllr J Rich will be on holiday that week. This means that none of the Stansted members will be able to attend the committee to make representations on these controversial planning applications in our community.

Moreover, both Cambridge Road applications were due to come before the committee on 31st July. On 16th July the case officer told Cllr Dean that the reports had been completed ready for internal review. Three days later we were told that the reports were not complete. We have been denied an explanation for this delay.

Between 3rd July and 19th July Cllr Dean corresponded with [REDACTED] a highways officer at ECC and [REDACTED] the case officer at UDC over seemingly inconsistent and contradictory planning procedures for assessing respective on-site parking at the two Cambridge Road application sites. On 22nd July Nigel Brown wrote to block further correspondence on this issue despite the fact that Cllr Dean's questions had not been answered. This issue has been the cause of consternation to the applicant and his agent. On 18th July revised plans for 14 Cambridge Road were posted on the UDC website. There has been no consultation on these, nor has any answer been given to Cllr Dean's raising of this point by email. All correspondence is attached to this letter.

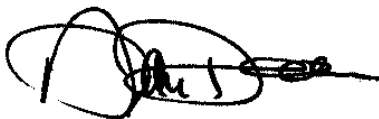
All of these applications are of major and strategic concern to the community of Stansted and its elected representatives. It is unacceptable to us for officers to change the date of the Cambridge Road applications at the eleventh hour and to obscure the reasons for this in correspondence with no better reason than "there is no conspiracy". (See Andrew Taylor's

email of 22nd July.) The Dunmow and Stansted Observer of 18th July quoted on its front page a reason for delaying taking to committee the Fairfield application in Elsenham: that it is a controversial application that should not be decided in a peak school holiday week when many members of the public will be away. This has since been denied by officers as being a valid reason for delay. Yet it is a reason that was placed in the public domain by the council. We feel that it would be unhelpful to the council's reputation to be seen again to be inconsistent in its treatment of controversial applications in Stansted.

In conclusion, our complaints are:

1. that officers are being inconsistent in the way they treat the evaluation of on-site parking at adjacent planning application sites in Stansted;
2. that officers have changed the committee dates for controversial planning applications, having previously claimed their reports were complete, without giving any reason;
3. that officers are intending to place controversial planning applications before the planning committee in the peak school and general holiday week when they have recently claimed such coincidences should be avoided; and when all local members are also on holiday;
4. that officers are failing to be transparent and have refused to answer questions about the planning process regarding on-site parking, recent changes to plans and the cause of delays.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Dean', with a large, loopy initial 'A' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Alan Dean p.p. Iris Evans

Copied to: John Mitchell for action in the absence of Roger Harborough on holiday; Jackie Cheetham, Christina Cant

ADDENDA: EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

From: Andrew Taylor
To: Cllr Dean
Sent: Mon Jul 22 11:09:40 2013
Subject: RE: Stansted applications

Alan

I really do think that you are seeing a conspiracy where there isn't one.

The department are currently dealing with a huge number of applications and while we have taken on additional resources we are still working to the maximum.

I am not indicating there is a problem due to the complaint you have received. Far from it. I have been quite clear that due to pressures of other work neither report was finished in time for this committee.

Andrew Taylor MRTPI
Assistant Director Planning and Building Control

Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4ER
T 01799 510601
F 01799 510550
E ataylor@uttlesford.gov.uk

From: Cllr Dean
Sent: 20 July 2013 07:36
To: Andrew Taylor
Subject: RE: Stansted applications

P.S. I also notice that on 18 July (Thursday this week) a series of new plans for the proposed homes at 14 Cambridge Road was posted on the UDC website. That is two days after I was told that the reports were complete apart from recommendations. These plans have not been consulted upon. Is it not more likely that, if work is still needed on the reports for these applications for 14 Cambridge Road rather than for the more simple application at 10 Cambridge Road? Would you please explain the significant of the revised plans.

Regards

Cllr Alan Dean
01279 813 579 or 07710 105 824

tel:

From: Cllr Dean
Sent: Fri 19/07/2013 20:28
To: Andrew Taylor
Subject: Re: Stansted applications

Dear Andrew

I am quite certain that **Maria Tourvas** told me on Tuesday that she had completed both reports and that they had been sent to wherever the next stage is. She didn't go into detail, though I took her to mean for preparation to be submitted to the officer meeting which finalises them and agrees a recommendation.

However, if you are indicating that there are problems with a complaint that I have received over what appeared to be an inconsistent approach by Essex Highways and hence perhaps UDC over on-site parking, then please say so.

I am away until Tuesday but will be following up these matters when I return. I am keen to ensure an even handed approach is being taken.

Regards
Alan Dean

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Andrew Taylor
To: Cllr Dean
Sent: Fri Jul 19 17:20:02 2013
Subject: Stansted applications

Alan

Further to our conversation earlier I have spoken to **[REDACTED]**.

[REDACTED] says that she told you she was working on the reports rather than that she had completed them.

Neither report is completely finished although the 14 Cambridge Rd report is nearly there.

A decision was taken a while ago to send the reports to the same committee so it was not appropriate to only take one.

I can't see that there is anything untoward with the process.

Andrew Taylor MRTPI
Assistant Director Planning and Building Control

Council Offices
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Essex
CB11 4ER
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F 01799 510550
E ataylor@uttlesford.gov.uk

ENDS