

Annual Council Meeting – 17 May 2018

Agenda item 13 – Reports from the Leader and Members of the Executive

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18 – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

I will not repeat comments from my colleagues but list the following as important developments:

- Investment in Chesterford Research Park.
- Sound finances and an extension of services. Investment in statutory responsibilities such as Waste collection.
- A real focus on the maintenance of the District including for litter picking.
- Investment in the rollout of Superfast Broadband.
- Support for economic development including for BIDs.
- Support, including financial, for a new tertiary college at Stansted.
- Proud to be one of the most generous supporters of voluntary work in Essex.
- Sponsor of the Local Strategic Partnership and its 4 sub groups: Health and Well Being, Community Safety Partnership, Children and Families and EESET.
- Making best use of Council offices to support charities, Saffron Hall and the Police.
- Facilitating the creation of Uttlesford's Youth Council.
- Launching a new model of engagement with Town and Parish Councils including for planning matters.
- Re-enforcing UDC's enforcement structure and strategy.
- Introducing Planning Performance Agreements.
- Progressing the Local Plan and the governance that supports it.
- Building Council and other affordable homes. Maintaining high standards in existing Council houses.
- Modernising Sheltered housing facilities and developing Care and Extra Care homes.
- Inviting external examination of several aspects of the Council including a Peer review and for Planning, Scrutiny and the Local Plan.
- Introducing a more robust Corporate objectives programme with supporting examples and outcomes.
- Working more effectively with outside bodies including MHCLG, County Councils, LSCC and neighbouring Councils.
- Improving the Council's standards of service and response.
- Improving the Council's governance and process arrangements.

In 2018-19 we will endeavour to continue all of the above but also to increase our focus on Member Development.

Howard Rolfe

Leader of the Council

ANNUAL REPORT – DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

From Susan Barker

Following the issues raised at the last council meeting by Mrs Jo Murphy, I would like to thank the officers for arranging for bollards to block part of Stortford Road in Dunmow to prevent vehicles parking there. Essex Officers will also be carrying out work on their footpath to further restrict access.

I would also report that Uttlesford has successfully prosecuted two incidences of Fly Tipping and will shortly be bringing a paper to Cabinet to increase the maximum fines for both littering and Fly Tipping.

Report to Annual Council – Finance and Administration

Chesterford Research Park

Perhaps the most significant development in the Council's financial position for a number of years has been the District Council's decision to purchase a 50% shareholding in Chesterford Research Park, in a joint venture with an Aviva pension fund. Our decision to make the investment was prompted by continuing year-on-year reductions in funding from Central Government. In the three years that I have been Cabinet Member for Finance, funding from Westminster has fallen from £7.65m to £5.1m, a reduction of £2.5m, roughly one third.

Completion on the purchase took place in May 2017. In its first year Chesterford Research Park has made a contribution of £2m to the Council's finances. During the year we further invested in the redevelopment of one of the key properties on the park. Although any commercial venture brings with it new challenges, not least cultural, I firmly believe if we had not made this investment we would now be looking at making significant cuts in services.

Additional investment in key areas

As a result of the income from our investment, I am pleased to be able to report we have maintained front-line services. We have also been able to invest additional resources in some key areas, including litter picking, supporting our five Day Centres across the District and additional funding for Public Community Support Officers. We continue our rolling programme of investment in the running of the Council. For example, we will spend £600k this year on replacements to the fleet, part of a £2.9m programme over the next 5 years. We have made further funding available to support the roll-out of Superfast Broadband across the district, aiming to bring coverage to many of the more difficult to reach communities.

Budget Consultation and Local Council Tax Support

Over the course of the summer we undertook the annual consultation with residents on the Council's budget priorities and our Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme. Council took the decision to maintain our LCTS contribution rate for working-age recipients at 12.5%, which continues to be the lowest contribution rate of any council in Essex.

Supporting local businesses

Changes to the business rates regime has resulted in 35% of our businesses across the District paying no business rates. In the last year the Council has put in place transitional arrangements to smooth the implementation of the new business rates arrangements, including the Revaluation Relief Scheme and Pub Relief scheme.

Council Tax

Uttlesford's share of your council tax bill is approximately 9% of the total and its council tax per household continues to be lower than 2010/11. The Council agreed a 2.99% increase in Council Tax for this year, raising an additional £165,000. For a Band D property Uttlesford's share of the Council tax bill is £147.21p per annum - an increase of £4.28p per annum.

Cllr. Simon Howell

Cabinet Member for Finance & Administration

COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO

ANNUAL REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL MAY 2018

GRANTS The Council has continued to operate schemes of grant funding the essential Voluntary sector organisations of our community, youth organisation initiatives, sport and cultural endeavours to the combined value of £525,000.

CSP The Council's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has seen successful collaborative working over a wide range of social issues. The Council continued and expanded funding to support the work of PCSOs across the district. CSP launched "Drinks with Community Links" an opportunity for residents to engage with CSP partners on an informal ad hoc pop up basis at coffee shops and similar places across the district. The CSP work programme is updated and commented upon regularly by partners.

LSP The Council's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) continues to look closely at the effects that all of the pressures of modern living is having on all sectors of our community, The LSP Forum in 2017 focussed on social isolation and requests have been received for help in continuing the pilot work in other parishes. The three main strands of LSP work are community partnerships, digital smart technology and mental wellbeing. Our vision of 21st Century living will be the focus of the LSP Assembly in November.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING The Council has adopted the LiveWell branding. The H & WB board is working across a multitude of concerns with a work programme that concentrates on 5 priorities; Obesity, Physical Activity, Ageing Well, Social Isolation & Winter pressures. I am keen to see the Council adopt a **HIAP (HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES)** approach. A large proportion of the Council staff are Dementia Friends and it is the aim of the Council for all staff and members to receive Dementia Awareness training. There is an opportunity in the near future, 23rd May to be precise. Please contact Angi Greneski to book your session.

ACTIVE UTTLESFORD Dunmow Park Run launched successfully earlier this year and Active Uttlesford was pleased to be able support this venture as part of the Active Essex framework. The Council has also published a Walks in Uttlesford information brochure encouraging everyone to take advantage of the many varied opportunities available.

FOOD BANK The Uttlesford Food Bank has now gained independent charity status and the holder of this Portfolio is a Trustee. It is hoped that successors will also take up that post as long as we need the Food Bank, which does recognise that this Council and our generous community are aware that for whatever reasons families and individuals can fall into crisis and have need of assistance.

HOSC I regularly attend the County Health Overview and Policy Scrutiny Committee monthly meetings at County Hall on the Council's behalf. The world of health and care provision is complex and the essential work of this committee is to ensure that the outcome for the patient is at the forefront of service providers policies and action plans.

FLOOD I also attend the County Flood Board meetings on the Council's behalf. Although flooding is not a major concern across our district we do have some problem areas and I can report that there is a good level of interaction between our planning teams, the County Council and the relevant Water Authorities.

GARDEN COMMUNITIES I want to take this opportunity to make everyone aware that as we enter into negotiations with the promoters and developers of the new Garden Communities, the creation of effective and sustainable communities is at the forefront of that work.

THE UDC COMMUNITIES TEAM

A one page summary of the year is not nearly enough space in which to record the debt this Council owes to all of the staff that work in London Road, in Shire Hill, in Newport, in Dunmow and in our out-reach information points in Libraries. They serve the public that we are elected to represent.

Nor is one page enough for me to record the efforts of the dedicated and hard - working team of officers that make up our Communities Team; a team it is my privilege to spend a lot of time with.

The team is based at our own in-house hub, currently within the Housing department, where issues and problems are tabled and worked on and from where our team and our partner organisations reach out into the community to help, to support, to encourage and enable those in need of aid, assistance and reassurance. It is essential to create and maintain cohesive, inclusive, supportive, tolerant and vibrant communities and I am pleased to be able to conclude this report by noting that it is that ethos Uttlesford District Council is embedding into the planning of our new settlements.

CLLR VIC RANGER

Economic Development Portfolio – Annual report for council 2018

Saffron Walden Business Improvement District preparations are well under way with the BID team finalising the business plan that will be voted on by the participating businesses. There is a ballot starting on 1st June running till 29th June 2018, with the result being announced on 2nd July 2018. If successful, the BID company will start operating from 1st December 2018. We will also be looking at other schemes to support business in Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet.

We issued our Business Support Booklet with the annual business rates bills in March which provides essential guidance on many topics including help with sources of funding and business expansion plans.

The finalists for the Uttlesford Business Awards have been shortlisted and the awards will be presented at the Gala dinner on the 14th June 2018.

The Car Park strategy is nearing completion and once finalised, this will enable the officers to maximise the efficiency of the day to day running of the districts car parks.

UDC is investing £ 500,000 for Broadband infrastructure with Superfast Essex enabling our chosen partner, Gigaclear, to roll out Superfast Broadband around our the district. Their fibre optic product to the premises will be revolutionary, with broadband speeds up to 300 mbps. This project starts in Birchanger during the third quarter 2018 and aims to bring coverage up to 98% of the district by 2019. This will bring incredible benefits to residents and businesses alike. In addition Gigaclear is also investing their own money to add another 4,000 premises to the network.

We are also working with Buzzcom/ Fibre WiFi who will be increasing their WiFi broadband coverage from the High Garrett tower to reach residents who currently cannot receive a cabled service.

ClIr Howard Ryles

May 2018.

HOUSING PORTFOLIO – ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL

Reynolds Court, Newport

Phase 1 was completed last summer delivering 15 new high quality supported home and communal areas.

Phase 2 will provide a further 26 homes and is well underway and on target to be completed and handed over on 26 October.

Hatherley Court, Saffron Walden

The re-modelling commenced in May last year and is on target for phase 1 to be completed and handed over on 21 June.

The Scheme is being re-modelled to a high standard and once complete will provide 26 spacious flats. There will also be two new one bed flats added, a new ground floor day room with conservatory overlooking the common and a new entrance area.

Walden Place, Saffron Walden

Options for Walden Place have been explored and it is now being marketed with Savills for a joint venture partner.

Sheds Lane, Saffron Walden

This site is progressing well – it provides 2 x 2 bed houses and 1 x 3 bed wheelchair adapted bungalow. Completion and handover is expected 29 June.

Newton Grove, Gt Dunmow

Planning approval for 2 x 2 bed houses and 2 x 1 bed flats. Also new parking area for adjacent council owned flats. This contract is awarded to Fosters and will start on site at the end of June.

Frambury Lane, Newport

Planning approval for 4 x 2 bed houses and associated parking. This site was tendered as part of Newton Grove project and Fosters will be starting on site here too at the end of June.

The Moors, Lt Dunmow

This site is for approximately 16 dwellings but is having revised drawings after consultation with residents and PC. We are also waiting to carry out bat survey.

Walden Road, Radwinter

8 new build properties on a S106 site were purchased. All have been handed over and are now occupied.

Hill Top Lane, Saffron Walden

Planning for one property was granted and this plot is to be sold on the open market with a local agent.

In addition to the above over 150 affordable homes were delivered in 2017/18. Of this total 98 were affordable rented and 53 shared ownership. This includes one, two, three and four bedroom homes as well as one and two bed bungalows.

Cllr Julie Redfern