

**CPA TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.30 pm on 5 AUGUST 2003**

Present: - Councillor A Dean – Chairman.
Councillors E J Godwin, R T Harris and A M Wattebot.

Officers in attendance:- R Haylock and I Orton.

CPA17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R J Copping, B D Perkins and J B Dickson.

CPA18 MATTERS ARISING

The Performance Manager reported that the first edition of the monthly CPA newsletter had been sent out. It had been distributed to all Members, staff and partners. Councillor Harris suggested that in order to reach a wider audience it would be a good idea to distribute the newsletters to external organisations such as libraries and doctors surgeries.

CPA19 CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Performance Manager tabled a draft self-assessment by Elizabeth Forbes which considered the 10 key lines of enquiry.

(i) Ambitions

The Group felt that the Council's ambitions had been set out in the Community Plan. Members considered the comments from Elizabeth Forbes on political rivalry and agreed that they were irrelevant to the new Council.

(ii) Prioritisation

Members agreed that the Council's priorities had been clearly defined in the Quality of Life Programme. The Group felt that in order to improve in this area external communications needed to be improved. However, examples of improvement in this area had already been demonstrated through the forthcoming District Open Meetings and the establishment of Focus Groups.

(iii) Focus

The Group considered comments from Elizabeth Forbes regarding the strength of the Council in relation to big issues such as the airport and development issues, and agreed with these comments. However, Members did not agree that distractions caused by political tensions had resulted in decisions being based on point scoring instead of real policies.

(iv) Capacity

The Group considered comments from Elizabeth Forbes regarding the Council's capacity for change. Members found this section to be outdated and irrelevant to the new Council. Councillor Harris suggested that this section needed to be rewritten in order for a more accurate assessment to be made. The Group felt that scrutiny training would be very beneficial to Members of the two Scrutiny Committees.

(v) Performance Management

The Performance Manager reported that a performance management system would be implemented by 1 October 2003. He informed Members that he was building on an existing system. The Group discussed the possibility of creating a "reward culture", which they believed would help to enhance the performance of individuals within the authority.

(vi) Achievement in Quality of Service

The Performance Manager reported that Uttlesford had scored variably according to national indicators. The Group agreed that the quality of service was not particularly related to Council priorities, therefore this area needed strengthening. The forthcoming surveys in the autumn would provide the Group with more community information and a clearer picture.

(vii) Achievement of Improvement

Members agreed that progress had been made in this area, but in order for further development the Council needed to show that it had used the Best Value Reviews in a constructive way.

(viii) Investment

The Group agreed that this was a strong area for this Council. The Performance Manager emphasised that Uttlesford had retained its status as a debt-free authority. Members hoped that Uttlesford would continue to improve in this area and anticipated that the appointment of the new Financial Services Manager would be very beneficial to the Council.

(ix) Learning

Members noted the comments from Elizabeth Forbes. However, the Group felt that since the document had been drafted significant constructive changes had taken place. These included supplementary planning workshops and an increased Member training budget. The Council had also improved by sharing learning on specific projects throughout the authority through the distribution of the monthly Performance newsletter.

(x) Future Plans

The Group agreed that plans for the future were reasonable and had steadily improved in clarity and focus. The role of the new Interim Director would be instrumental in this process.

CPA20 UPDATE ON PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

The Performance Manager outlined the progress with the Open Space diagnostic review. He indicated a draft copy of the Open Space review would be available for the next meeting of the Task Group.

CPA21 UPDATE ON BALANCED HOUSING MARKETS ASSESSMENT

The Performance Manager outlined the progress with the Balanced Housing Markets diagnostic review. He indicated a draft copy of the Balanced Housing Markets would be available for the next meeting of the Task Group.

CPA22 TRAINING FOR MEMBERS AND STAFF

Members discussed the possibility of meeting with Councillors from a district council that had recently been the subject of a CPA. North Norfolk District Council, which constituted of a Liberal Democratic majority and had similar challenges to Uttlesford District Council, was considered to be a good choice. The Group proposed a trip to North Norfolk in September. It was hoped that this would be beneficial in providing Members with guidance and advice.

CPA23 TIMESCALE

The Performance Manager tabled a document which provided Members with key dates for the remainder of the CPA process. He reported that the draft paperwork for the IdeA Peer Challenge would be ready by the end of October.

CPA24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

4 September 2003 – 9.00 am.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm.