

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 – COMMUNITY AND HOUSING held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on
21 JANUARY 2004**

Present:- Councillor A R Row – Chairman.
Councillors M A Gayler, R T Harris, S C Jones, A J Ketteridge
and E Tealby-Watson.

Officers in attendance:- R Chamberlain, R Goodey, S McLagan, I Orton,
C Roberts and R Secker.

S1.30 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Corke, Foley and
Wattebot.

S1.31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2003 were received,
confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

S1.32 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute S1.23 – Grants allocation policy

The Performance Manager informed the meeting that the Committee's
recommendation for an uplift in the maximum grant limit under the Leisure and
Cultural Grant Scheme had been accepted.

(ii) Minute S1.27 – Scrutiny training for Members

The Performance Manager gave an update on arrangements for Members to
receive scrutiny training. It was anticipated the training would be held on
Monday 29 March 2004.

S1.33 COMMUNITY SAFETY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a progress report on action being undertaken to
deliver the Uttlesford Community Safety strategy 2002-05.

Members noted in particular the vacant post which had recently arisen in
Emergency Planning. It was noted that the range of duties associated with
the post was being reviewed.

Public perception of crime was also discussed and the Performance Manager
reported that representatives of the Essex Police would be reporting to
Scrutiny 2 Committee on 31 March 2004 the work of the Police Community
Support Officers.

Members were also concerned that the Council's Youth Initiative activities be maximised with more activities and more updates to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the report with attached progress reports be noted.

S1.34 **COUNCIL HOMES REPAIRS PROCESS – WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was provided with information, flowcharts and a presentation about the operation of the Repairs Service. The work of the service was customer focused and operated within a very high profile and to extremely tight response times.

Members sought re-assurance about the remaining levels of asbestos within Council premises. The Head of Housing outlined the existing programme to manage this issue. Members were impressed with the expertise of the service and suggested that this expertise could be offered to other local authorities and RSL's.

Members asked questions about the complexity of procedures, use of e mail, communications with statutory undertakings and links with the emergency plans. Officers gave re-assurance about these matters and explained the call-down process for dealing with problems out of office hours. A Member asked for the new emergency planning officer to make a point of meeting local residents about local flood problems.

Members noted the excellent customer care statistics and one Member stated that she had witnessed the excellence of the repair team this year.

S1.35 **SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING – WORK PROGRAMME**

The Performance Manager informed the meeting that this report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee and to the Resources Committee.

S1.36 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The Committee considered a report on progress with the introduction of this system. A new layout was recommended for the reporting mechanism, with a process to resolve issues of under performance, and a recommendation that performance monitoring be reported to Scrutiny Committees who could refer issues to the appropriate Policy Committee.

The Performance Manager explained that a system was now in place to collect information about the performance of the Authority. The Council was showing good performance against its own targets but not against national benchmarking data. The Performance Manager explained that at the next meeting of Scrutiny 1 performance data and recommendations for improvements would be considered.

Members were pleased with the useful, concise, report and felt that the layout was very helpful, particularly the tables.

RESOLVED that

- 1 comments be sought from all Committees on the range of Performance Measures, Performance Targets and use of a Traffic Light System
- 2 it be noted that the Performance Review Data will be reported to Scrutiny Committees
- 3 any red indicator will have a Rescue Recovery Package from the relevant manager incorporated into the report.

S1.37 **BEST VALUE REVIEWS 2004/05**

The Committee considered a report providing details of the existing policy to deliver the requirements of the Best Value process.

The report outlined the main issues which had arisen to date from the Best Value process in Uttlesford, and set out a work programme for Members consideration for future action by the Committee in the field of Best Value.

The Performance Manager explained the process of joint discussion which had taken place between the Chairs and Lead Managers of the Best Value Reference Groups with a view to future processes.

Councillor Tealby–Watson stressed that each Group had approached its topic in a radically different way.

The Performance Manager confirmed that the process of reviews had to continue although any one review terminated with its particular inspection. He stressed that the Council should obtain something good from the process by way of learning which was transferable to other Sections to forward the improvement of the whole.

Members suggested that the comments of the Senior Management Team be sought on the points raised by Section 6 of the report.

RESOLVED that the comments of the Senior Management Team be sought on the points raised by Section 6 of the report and returned to the next meeting of the Committee.

S1.38 **UTTLESFORD PRIMARY CARE TRUST – WORK PROGRAMME**

The Performance Manager informed the meeting that regrettably the speaker from the Primary Care Trust had not been able to attend but David Barron of the Uttlesford PCT would be attending the next meeting of Scrutiny 1 on 10 March 2004

S1.39 HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE – 8 JANUARY 2004

Councillor Ketteridge expressed doubts about the removal of “No Parking” signs from the grassed area at Rowntree Way and the Performance Manager agreed to pass his concerns to the Housing Services Manager.

S1.40 COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE – 6 JANUARY 2004

Councillor Row expressed disappointment that the budget allocated for the Young Musician of the Year Festival had been re-directed, and Members asked that the Head of Community and Leisure Services write to explain precisely how the re-directed money would be used.

RESOLVED that the decision on Thaxted Festival Grant Request be referred back to the Community and Leisure Committee with an indication of the Committee’s disappointment that the Festival is not to take place, the suggestions of the Scrutiny Committee for reduction of the expense of the Festival and the offer of Councillors Harris, Jones, Row and Tealby-Watson to form a committee to assist with fundraising for the event.

The meeting ended at 9.27 pm