

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

Present:- Councillor A R Row – Chairman.
Councillors D Corke, M A Gayler, A J Ketteridge
A Wattebot and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- I Orton and C Roberts.

S1.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R T Harris and E Tealby-Watson.

S1.2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2004 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the name of Councillor R J Copping in the list of those attending the meeting.

S1.3 UTTLESFORD PCT – PRESENTATION

The Chairman of Uttlesford PCT, David Baron and the PCT's Chief Executive elect attended the meeting to provide further information on current issues and to answer Members questions.

Mr Baron provided details concerning the restriction of entry of patients into Saffron Walden Community Hospital due to concern about the level of clinical staffing. He stressed that it had not been necessary to turn patients away.

Mr Baron added that there had been no problems with the actual working of the new GPs' contracts.

Members asked questions about the impact of the refurbishment plans on patient care, and about pressure on health services arising from the planned new runway at Stansted Airport.

S1.4 PRESENTATION ON THE WORK OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ESSEX

The Committee was given a presentation by Carole Ware on the work undertaken by the Rural Community Council of Essex. She spoke about planning, community projects such as affordable housing and the advantages of projects such as village appraisals. There were funding difficulties for village appraisals since the Countryside Agency had recently withdrawn support and therefore sponsorship was being encouraged whenever possible.

Some Members expressed enthusiasm for the concept of village appraisals, but another member stressed the view that Parish Councils should precept, rather than seeking grants for projects.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Ware for her interesting presentation which had provoked useful debate.

S1.5 **FORWARD PLAN OF SCRUTINY I COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report, which detailed suggested items for discussion at each of the Committee's five scheduled meetings. In this context Members agreed to consider also the report on the Committee's Work Programme which appeared later on the agenda. Members discussed these matters at length and arrived at a number of priorities as follows.

Members asked the Performance Manager to assess relevant topics arising from the work of the Primary Care Trust may take, and to schedule such topics to the two visits to the Committee.

They wished the Committee to consider few or ideally only one major issue at each meeting.

They asked that all Members respond swiftly and fully to questionnaires seeking information about the role of Members on outside bodies.

Specific subjects they mentioned for consideration were :-

The role of Members on outside bodies, their function, frequency of meetings and of reports, and whether new areas should be included. It was suggested that a questionnaire would be useful in this context.

Comparative data to be provided by officers about performance of neighbouring PCTs, with particular reference to stoppage of services, eg chiropody.

Data to be provided by officers to enable the Committee to assess the value and the cost of the CPA process .

Services to the disabled (information and figures to be provided by officers).

Emergency Planning Services (information and figures to be provided by officers).

Affordable housing (information and figures to be provided by officers).

Expenditure (£50,000) on community support officers (information and figures to be provided by officers).

The Performance Manager informed the meeting that it would be possible to receive an update on the Contracts Management Review, and on outcomes from the Corporate Plan, at the Committee's meeting in September.

RESOLVED that the Performance Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee prepares a draft programme for circulation to Committee Members for final observations before adoption at the September meeting of the Committee.

S1.6 REPORTS FROM INTERNAL AUDIT TO BE CONSIDERED DURING 2004/05

The Committee received details of reviews to be carried out by Internal Audit during 2004/5

RESOLVED that Members be provided with the papers arising from these reviews for information.

S1.7 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING 2003/04 & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TARGETS 2004/05

The Committee considered the report of the Performance Manager on Performance Management results for 2003/04 and Performance Targets for 2004/05. The report included details of changes to the methods of collecting and reporting performance during 2004/05.

The Performance Manager informed the Committee that the Council's sickness figures were among some of the best in the country. The Council was setting itself a very high target in that respect. Councillor M A Gayler asked to receive the recovery plans for this item. He also asked that graphs showing performance indicators of nearest neighbours be included in the next performance management report.

It was noted that the information in the Comments column about percentage of planning applications determined within the Government's new target, was a misprint and should be deleted.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Performance Outturns for 2003/04 are noted
- 2 the Rescue Recovery Packages for the 9 Red Indicators are noted.
- 3 the additional performance measures for 2004/05 are noted
- 4 the Traffic Light System is changed to Amber for on Target or within 4% tolerance: Green for 5% above Target and Red for 5% below Target.

S1.8 MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES REPORT

Following consideration of this matter at Minute S1.57 above, Members added that a questionnaire should be sent to individuals and to Chairs of the policy committees so as to establish how useful the contacts with outside bodies were to the Council and how much they cost. A copy of the questionnaire should also be sent to each Member representing the Council on any organisation, with the name of that organisation on the questionnaire.

Members asked that a draft of the questionnaire be provided to Committee Members by e mail before being sent to their colleagues.

S1.9 SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Members received a report that, as part of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan a project to *Conduct a formal review of the democratic structure of the Council* would be carried out. The project would be completed by 31 December 2004. Part of the process would involve seeking the views of Members on ways to strengthen the democratic process within Uttlesford. The report outlined possible other models of scrutiny systems.

Members expressed the wish to consider the possibility of two Scrutiny Committees, one aimed at policy and the other at performance. They were concerned about the impact of political balance in these circumstances.

RESOLVED that a further report be submitted and the arrangements for Scrutiny and Overview be reviewed in the light of the report.

S1.10 MATTERS ARISING FROM HEALTH AND HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEES

The Committee received the action lists from the Health and Housing Committee held on 27 May 2004 and the Community and Leisure Committee held on 25 May 2004.

(In this context Councillor A J Ketteridge declared an interest in so far as he was a Member of the Saffron Walden Town Council).

The meeting ended at 9.45 p.m.