

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 – COMMUNITY AND HOUSING held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on
22 SEPTEMBER 2005**

Present:- Councillors C A Cant, J F Cheetham, D W Gregory, R T Harris,
BM Hughes, and **A R Row**

Officers in attendance: - W Cockerell, V Harvey, J Roos, P Snow, and T
Turner

S1.45 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S C Jones, A J
Ketteridge, E Tealby-Watson, G Sell, and P A Wilcock.

S1.46 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2005 were received, confirmed
and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

S1.47 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) MINUTE S1.44 – LEISURE CENTRES

The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance updated the Committee
regarding the swimming pool timetables for Dunmow leisure centre. Gaynor
Bradley, Leisure Manager had supplied a copy of an A5 card, which was
being printed in colour by the leisure centre. Copies of the timetable were
circulated to Members at the meeting.

(ii) MINUTE S.44 UTTLESFORD LIFE

The Executive Manager (Strategy & Performance) advised that the
Communications and PR Officer had now returned to work, and it was
expected that a report on Uttlesford Life would be available to the next
meeting of the Committee. An issue of the magazine was currently in
progress of assembly, and the production schedules and method of
distribution were currently being looked at in a review.

Councillor Cheetham voiced concern over some residents in her ward not
receiving this newspaper, to which councillor Hughes added that parts of
Saffron Walden do not receive this paper either. The Executive Manager
Strategy and Performance said that a review of distribution was currently
taking place, with around 5 options being considered.

S1.48 UTTLESFORD PCT – PRESENTATION

The Chairman of Uttlesford PCT - David Barron, Melanie Walker (Chief
Executive), Sally Mills-Lewis and Dale Atkins attended the meeting and
updated the Committee on the proposed reorganisation of the NHS, dentistry
and prostate cancer and gave a presentation on Local Care for Uttlesford.

Melanie Walker started by discussing a new Dentistry scheme for NHS practices whereby they could take in patients within a 24 hours period if needed. There were to be 3 new charge bands to come into effect from April 2006. Councillor Cheetham addressed the issue of difficulty in finding NHS Dentists, and Melanie Walker responded that there were currently 2 dentists accepting NHS patients in Uttlesford, and that discussions were taking place on extra provision.

Sally Mills-Lewis discussed the increase in Prostate Cancer across the Uttlesford area, which was due to a nationally ageing population and increased awareness of the issue, rather than local factors. No national screening programme was available and this seemed unlikely to be introduced in the future. Tests were not reliable due to the nature of the cancer.

The topic of Breast Cancer was brought up by Councillor Row and Councillor Cheetham who asked why it was more publicised than prostate cancer. It was said that advertising campaigns were becoming more widespread, but as there were no symptoms there was no home testing men could do. A leaflet on this subject was circulated for information.

Melanie Walker then moved on to talk about the growing Uttlesford community. She would be attending a meeting on the growth around the M11 and A120 corridor and its effect on the Health Services. Members' attention was drawn to the annual meeting of the PCT on 28 September 2005 at 6.30pm in the Council Offices in Great Dunmow.

Councillor Cheetham addressed the temporary closure of the breast-screening unit at St Margaret's in Epping and asked when it would re-open. Melanie Walker said this was still unknown, but consultants and radiographers had been employed and were undertaking training. Councillor Cheetham expressed great sadness over this temporary closure, as it was one of the best units in the country.

Sally Mills-Lewis then presented on the Local Care for Uttlesford. There was an integrated agenda, which would improve patient care and become a more cost effective model. There was a need to impact on long-term conditions such as the increasing number of incidents due to the ageing population. Case management would minimise impact, increase support and avoid complications.

Core principles were:

- 1) Identification
- 2) Care plan developed
- 3) Early detection of trouble
- 4) Frequent person checks
- 5) Continuity of care
- 6) Hospital admission
- 7) Hospital journey
- 8) Case manager knowledge

Each stage of the above would be tailored to suit individual's needs.

Practice based commissioning would be working with General Practices and integrate more with the community.

The financial framework showed where and how the money was broken down. The PCT spent £76 million, which was £990 per head of population.

Commissioning	£644	65%
PCT Provider Services	£59	6%
General Practice	£129	13%
Prescribing	£139	14%
Other	£19	2%
Total	£990	100%

(Based on 2003/04 Accounts)

Councillor Cheetham enquired whether the prescribing costs were high. Sally Mills-Lewis replied that the Uttlesford costs were average.

Another concept to be adopted was Payment by Results (PbR). This could be described simply as Pay As You Go. This had been fully enforced at Addenbrookes but only around 50% at other district hospitals.

The NHS had been bad at following the patient journey. They were now looking vertically opposed to horizontally.

Emergency Reform focused on service that needed to be enhanced and avoided admissions to acute hospitals. A pilot would see 6 beds freed up, enhanced nursing skills and the provision of additional education and development programmes.

Councillor Cheetham asked if this was happening at Dunmow clinic. Sally Mills-Lewis said it was currently in place in Saffron Walden and would be in Dunmow soon but at a different venue.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions. Councillor Cheetham agreed that it was a good move forward and requested that more services be established in Dunmow. The response was that there would be scope to do more in Dunmow.

Councillor Cant stated that after illness it can take a long time to recover and it was good that the intervention was there to help.

Councillor Row asked about the extent of the PCT's debt portion. Sally Mills-Lewis agreed there would be challenges involved and that to be more cost effective high start up costs have to be incurred, which would involve more risk.

Councillor Gregory asked if details of publicity from the diabetes group could be fed to members through the PCT and this was agreed.

David Barron (Chairman of Uttlesford PCT) discussed the star ratings issued to PCTs. Recently Uttlesford received 3 stars (the highest given) but the star rating system was to change.

Melanie Walker discussed the changing structure of the PCT. Essex currently had 13 PCTs, Uttlesford being the smallest. By October 2006 the PCTs would be reconfigured. There were currently 3 options being reviewed. Option one, would involve one PCT covering the whole of Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock. Option two would involve two PCTs, one covering North Essex and one covering South Essex; and option three would give five PCTs each covering the catchment areas of one Essex District General Hospital – Uttlesford would be merged with Epping Forest and Harlow. Melanie Walker said that at present Harlow and Epping are most in favour of a West Essex PCT, which may also include Brentwood. She suggested this may not benefit Uttlesford, as there was a danger that most resources would gravitate to the more populated areas. The members considered the best option for Uttlesford would be to join with South Cambridgeshire and Bishops Stortford, as these areas were the most comparable; however, the government appeared to have ruled this out.

Councillor Cheetham could foresee many problems if Uttlesford were to enter a West Essex PCT. She agreed that the cross county PCT would be the most beneficial. She thought that it all seemed big and money driven. Melanie Walker's response was that the Government had put a lot more money into the NHS and they were frustrated that they had not seen changes and were pushing to move forward.

Councillor Hughes asked if the PCT were not the provider then who would be. There were two possible options. Firstly to develop GP services so that they could provide more and secondly to use existing voluntary sector organisations.

Councillor Cant voiced concern over the scheme being too global and there being a loss of local communication.

Members noted and endorsed the views of the Health and Housing Committee, as shown in the Decision List, and expressed particular concerns about the loss of local accountability.

S1.49

SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance asked for guidance on how Members wished to take consideration of this matter forward in the light of the current constitutional review, and whether they wished to proceed now, or wait until the likely reconstitution of the Committee in December. A draft terms of reference for the investigation had been produced following a meeting with Councillor Hughes (the lead member for the review) and Jake Roos.

The Energy Efficiency Surveyor made a presentation on Climate Change in the light of a recent Essex Partnership report on the subject. He reviewed the current scientific thinking on the causes and likely impacts of climate change and the likely impact on the district of Uttlesford. He looked at the activity being undertaken to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and how the Council could act as a community leader to encourage a reduction in CO2 emissions and prepare for climate change.

The proposed aim of the scrutiny study was to investigate the causes and effects of climate change and the possibility of the council adopting a CO2 reduction target in order to contribute to the delivery of government targets, fully integrating it into the governance arrangements of the council activities. An additional aim was to further the community's understanding of the causes of climate change.

The relevance of this wider perspective on the local community was that climate change affected everyone. Sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) presents opportunities for new businesses and economic development in the district.

Essex Environment Partnership has commissioned a report on climate change and was producing an action plan. The draft action plan included detailed consideration of climate change impacts on the whole of Essex and the appropriate actions rated as low or no risk. However, it does not include much detail on action to reduce emissions and or set a target for emission reduction. Therefore it would be useful for Scrutiny at Uttlesford to undertake such work, while capitalising on the Essex Environmental Partnership project where possible.

Evidence had been gathered from Cambridgeshire County Council, who ran a similar review, which led to a climate change strategy. There were also other authorities to be looked at and learnt from.

The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change was a public declaration of intent to reduce emissions and contribute to government targets, and would commit the Council to producing an action plan. It currently had 86 signatories and there was the option of signing jointly with Braintree and Chelmsford. Signing jointly would make Uttlesford eligible to get extra resource and PR from the Energy Saving Trust. The Energy Efficiency Surveyor proposed that Uttlesford DC signed the declaration soon as an important first step.

Councillor Cheetham stated she thought the work on climate change was a good idea and should be continued. She wanted to know if Uttlesford was looking at bio diversity fuels. The Energy Efficiency Surveyor confirmed that diesel vehicles could run on bio fuels and that this was 'carbon neutral' (i.e it did not contribute to climate change).

Councillor Hughes stated that we must stop getting our energy from under the ground.

The overall consensus of Members was to carry on with the project, as the work was beneficial to Uttlesford and to sign the Nottingham Declaration. Consideration would need to be given to the appropriate structures to take this work forward.

S1.50

USE OF WASTE AS FERTILIZER ON FARMLAND

The Principal Environmental Health Officer reported that a large number of complaints from the residents of Great Dunmow, Stebbing, Thaxted, Little Easton, Felsted and Manuden had been received concerning prolonged

periods of odour associated with the spreading of waste material. This year a new material derived from the production of paper had been used, known as paper crumble, and this had caused a significant increase in the complaints.

The use of animal manures on farmland was a common agricultural practice and in recent years sewage sludge has been applied. The new material, Paper Crumble was exempt from the requirements of the waste disposal licence regime if it could be shown that the material benefited the land and did not cause pollution.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 included powers to serve a notice if a statutory nuisance was caused by the smell arising on trade or business premises, but also offered a defence if the best practical means was being used to prevent or counteract the nuisance.

There was a likelihood this agricultural practice would continue to cause a high number of complaints. The mitigating actions were a better understanding of the long-term environmental benefits of reusing these waste products, thus resulting in a more tolerant attitude by the local community. The provision of information to the Environment Agency on the extent of the odour nuisance caused when exempt waste materials were used on farmland may result in tighter controls in the future.

Councillor Cheetham wanted to know whether Paper Crumble would come under control, to which The Principal Environmental Health Officer replied that it was a possibility if the Environment Agency could be persuaded that a nuisance from odour was being caused.

Councillor Harris thought there should not be a problem as Paper Crumble was non-toxic and safe. If it saved on landfill then it would be beneficial.

Councillor Hughes said that if local communities were not informed they might be worried the bad odour was toxic. More public education might reduce complaints.

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the Environment Agency asking for a review of the way the Agency exercises its control over the disposal of waste on agricultural land.

S1.51

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2005

Councillor Row asked if there were any questions arising from the Health and Housing Committee Meeting Decision List. Councillor Harris wanted to know if there was monitoring of air control in Dunmow. The Principal Environmental Health Officer confirmed there was a monitor in Takeley and that a before and after study on air quality had taken place along the route of the old A120.

Meeting ended 9.40pm