

Committee: Council Meeting
Date: 20 April 2004
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: Organisational Restructure
Author: Alasdair Bovaird (01799) 510400

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to:

- Advise members on the current progress of the organisational restructuring;
- Propose some changes to the proposals agreed by the Council on February 10 as a result of some changes in circumstances; and
- Update members on the costs incurred so far, and the current projected future costs to the council of its revised management structure.

Background

The Council has considered reports on the restructuring on two previous occasions: agreeing the outline of the new structure on December 16, 2003 and agreeing a more detailed proposal for the initial structure on February 10, 2004.

The Council on 16 December:

RESOLVED that the proposed new management structure be approved in principle as a basis for further consultation with managers and staff and a further report be made to the Council meeting on 10 February 2004.

In making my recommendations below, I was also mindful of the following statement of intent contained in the report made to council that day:

The new structure with eleven Executive Managers should be reduced by natural wastage over time to eight in total, but at a time and when deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive in consultation with Members.

The report also set out the objectives of the proposed restructure: the first three are set out below:

1. *Maximise the deployment of physical, financial and human resources and their ability to deliver the best services possible within the available resources;*
2. *Strengthen the organisation's ability to work in partnership with other organisations in Uttlesford and with organisations beyond the District's boundaries;*
3. *Provide a delayed management structure that reduces hierarchy, improves the transparency and accountability for decision-making and which improves both corporate working and working in partnership with elected Members;*

It was also clear from members' statements at that meeting, and on subsequent occasions that the council wished to proceed to the new structure while avoiding the need for compulsory redundancies.

Following these decisions, and my taking up the post of Chief Executive on January 5, a further report was brought to council on 10 February where it was resolved:

RESOLVED that

The proposed new management structure be agreed.

The Chief Executive be authorised to take all necessary steps to implement the structure as agreed subject to:

- *progress reports to Council and/or Resources Committee*
- *consultation as appropriate with Group Leaders*
- *any significant variation from the outline to be agreed by Council in advance of implementation.*

The minute of the meeting contains the following statement:

The Chief Executive emphasised that this was an initial structure that would evolve over time, as the Council became more customer focused and worked in a more dynamic and creative way.

As this report makes clear, I am recommending that due to a change in circumstances there should be a significant change to the structure as agreed on February 10, and therefore I am seeking council's approval for such a change.

Appointment of Executive Managers

The Development Centre envisaged in the earlier reports took place at the Danbury Park conference centre on March 25 and 26. This consisted of a two-day residential programme in which the participants undertook a series of tests, exercises and discussions designed to identify their own strengths and weaknesses; their preferred ways of working and to enable participants to identify their own needs for further development. I gave consideration to the best available deployment of the ten individuals into the eleven available roles over the weekend of 27-28 March in the light of the experience of the development centre (of which I was also a participant) and previous discussions with the individuals concerned.

In a series of one to one interviews with the individuals concerned on Monday March 29, I offered each of the ten staff one of the Executive Manager portfolios. One of the ten decided not to accept the role offered. A paper later in the agenda addresses the consequences of that decision for the Council and for the individual concerned. This left the portfolio which had been offered – that of Community and Culture – without an Executive Manager and necessitated my rapid consideration of how to proceed.

Current proposals

Given the council's published intention to reduce the number of Executive Managers over time from the original eleven to eight, the circumstances which now arise give an earlier than hoped for opportunity to begin that process. In reaching my view on the recommendations now before the council, I was aware that any new recruitment to fill the gap would increase the risk of compulsory redundancy for Executive Managers at some future date given the council's resolution to reduce numbers.

This report therefore recommends that, rather than putting a temporary arrangement in place or seeking an external appointment for the post of Executive Manager (Community and Culture), we should redistribute the functions of the Community and Culture service – with some consequential further balancing of workloads among the other Executive Managers – to enable the new Executive Management Team to establish new managerial and service arrangements as quickly as possible.

It should be noted that none of the new units are identical in composition to the old departments – and therefore there is no individual whose responsibilities remain unchanged as a result of the restructure. All Executive Managers will be expected to work to a corporate agenda and have a collective responsibility to deliver the Quality of Life Corporate Plan as well as their own service or project portfolios.

Distribution of Community and Culture roles

The table below sets out the proposed distribution of the main blocks of the Community and Culture service, and identifies the benefits that the relocation will bring to service delivery. However, there are a number of areas of the intended Community and Culture service which will require further consideration before the final location can be determined – some of which were signalled in the February 10 report as requiring further consideration at this point. The Chief Executive and the Executive Managers concerned will undertake this consideration in consultation with staff and members so that the final deployment of staff and management structures will be determined in advance of the June 1 implementation date.

Specifically, questions have been raised as to the future location of Tourism Development and the Tourist Information Centres, Road Safety activities, Day Centres and Community Centres and the Grants and Funding Officer. In all cases the purpose will be to locate service units in a way that best fits the achievement of the overall objectives of the council. The intention is to improve services not to reduce them, and the achievement of financial savings does not feature in the agreed objectives of the restructuring.

The main blocks would be distributed as follows:

Section	Activities	Proposed location	Comments
Community Development			
	Uttlesford Futures; Community Safety Partnership; Community Development; Partnership Working	Strategy and Performance	This will allow the LSP and other major partnerships to be developed in a way that is closely integrated with the core strategic purpose of the Council. It will allow the corporate development of our relationships with main partners
Leisure Services			
	Leisure PFI contract; Sports Development; Youth and Arts Development; Cultural Services; Gardens and Local Amenities	Environment Services	Bringing together the management of our two major contracts – the Leisure PFI and the Refuse Collection, will present opportunities for greater co-ordination of the expertise we have in contract management and the potential – over time – to see all contract management carried out within a single part of the council structure. The second point is that there are synergies – and therefore economies – to be gained in bring together the work of the environmental maintenance teams with the management of some of our other open spaces and local amenities – allowing a more co-ordinated approach to the management of the function, reducing wastage, double-handling etc.
Saffron Walden Museum and Uttlesford Museum Services			
		Environment Services	The Museum is a self-contained management unit, but locating it within the Environmental Services section will retain links with existing colleagues. Member responsibility for this service, as with others, will remain with the Community and Leisure Committee.

Car Parking

The management of Car Parking is currently located within the Community Services section of the Community and Leisure Department. This section has major work to do to deal with the approach of decriminalisation of parking enforcement and accompanying operational issues. I propose to ask one of the two Executive Programme Managers to oversee – as a project – the management of the ‘Decriminalisation’ initiative. One outcome of that project will be a clear recommendation as to the future organisational location of the strategic and operational aspects of parking management.

Workload balancing

The consequence of some of these proposed changes may impact on the expected workload of some parts of the organisation. In fact that was a matter for review if we had been proceeding with eleven managers. The February 10 report made clear that there were areas of our activity which required further consideration, and that while the basic structure was agreed there would be need for consideration of the detailed implementation of the changes.

A particular issue now is that the Environmental Services section is somewhat larger than was originally envisaged. I therefore propose to consider whether there is any scope for the transfer of some of the activities currently within Environmental Services to other parts of the

structure. I have already had some informal discussions with officers and Committee chairs about these possibilities – one suggestion being that there may be advantages to the function of licensing activities being transferred to the Corporate Governance portfolio since some are of the view that the more judicial report required for dealing with licensing issues would fit well in that part of the organisation.

Members and officers have also suggested that there may be a need to examine whether the organisation as a whole has the skills and capacity required to deal with all the external issues: airport, M11 growth etc. that we are aware need to be dealt with. We should also consider whether – if that capacity exists – it is located optimally within the structure.

All these detailed considerations need to be undertaken with the involvement of the staff concerned and in consultation with members.

Future changes of structure

In the report that members agreed on 10 February, I stressed that the structure set out was an initial structure, which would change over time. Changes to the structure will be of various types:

Opportunistic	In response to changes in circumstance (e.g. the departure of a member of staff), allowing us to reconfigure responsibilities or operational management to maintain delivery of the council's agreed policy
Strategic	As a result of a change in policy or priority agreed by the council.
Operational	As a result of the judgement being reached that the current arrangements for operational management are not delivering all that we expect and need to be changed, whether that failing is individual or systemic.

Although structural change cannot be 'reversed' since you can never return entirely to the position as it existed before any change, the organisation must be capable of reviewing its operations, structures and policies and taking action to correct any diversion from its intended course of delivering services and the Quality of Life Corporate Plan

In most cases, the necessary actions will be within managerial responsibilities. 'Operational' changes clearly fall on that side of the line. 'Strategic' changes will be instigated by members, with officers' advice and consideration, and managerial consequences of those changes will be flagged up in advance by officers and implemented according to the advice and decisions of the elected members. 'Opportunistic' decisions need to be handled sensitively. The organisation needs to understand where it wants to get to, and be able then to respond swiftly to the opportunities that arise. The need to involve members, officers and partners in these discussions will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the scale of the decision, the available time and other factors.

Committee roles

The proposal to remove the Community and Culture portfolio from the structure does not impact on the structure and responsibility of the Community and Leisure (or any other) committee. There will be an identified lead officer for the Community and Leisure Committee – the Executive Manager (Environmental Services), and the priority actions identified will remain the responsibility of relevant officers to deliver – whether those priorities arise from the Quality of Life plan, the service plans or from other decisions of the committee. The Executive Manager will carry the overall responsibility for the coordination of the officers' responsibilities to the committee. Other lead officer roles are as follows:

Environment and Transport Resources Health and Housing	Development Services Finance and Assets Housing Services
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Licensing	Environmental Services (subject to workload balancing issues discussed above)
Development Control	Development Services

Update on costs

It is now possible to give members an updated picture of the costs of the restructuring exercise. These are set out in the table below.

The report to Council on 16th December estimated an annual saving of £63,000. It is now projected that this saving will be £78,800 per annum.

The new senior management structure of the Council will now cost approximately £728,000 per annum compared to the current cost of £806,000.

Basically, the removal of 2 Director posts and one expected Executive Manager post results in a gross saving of approximately £213,000 pa, but this is offset down to £78,800 through the creation of the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance), the finalisation of Executive Manager grades, the earmarking of a sum for Learning and Development on an ongoing basis, and some additional pension costs.

Were the eleventh Executive Manager post not to be deleted this would added back costs of approximately £54,000 pa, reducing the ongoing savings from £78,800 to £24,800.

The one-off costs can be updated as follows:

	16/12/03	Actual/ projected
	£	£
Redundancy and Pension strain	145,325	120,165
Executive Coaching		5,000
		5,000
Assessment Centre for EM's	20,000	10,000
Independent Job Evaluation		
Grading for EM posts	2,000	1,000
Recruitment Costs	3,000	3,000
Total	175,325	139,165

The anticipated ongoing savings in management costs has not been budgeted for on the basis that it would have been imprudent to anticipate the saving at the time the budget was considered. The Executive Managers are required to establish new management and operational structure such that the overall cost to the council remains at the same level or is reduced. A report will be brought to a later meeting of the council – after June 1 – with options as to how the resource released in this exercise could best be deployed or whether it needs to redeployed. The Executive Manager (Finance) will be discussing with members over the coming months their views on the possible uses of this resource: with a view to promoting the council's capacity to deliver the Quality of Life plan and meet other obligations.

Recommendations

1. That the proposed outline distribution of services is agreed;
2. That the Chief Executive be instructed to determine the detailed division of operational responsibilities between the Executive Managers' portfolios in consultation with staff and members subject to:
 - ⇒ Appropriate consideration of the overall workloads associated with Executive Management portfolios;
 - ⇒ The need to maintain at all times robust arrangements for secure service and Quality of Life Corporate Plan delivery;
3. That the Chief Executive continues to keep the overall service structure under review, make such adjustments as necessary (in consultation with members and officers) and to report periodically to council on opportunities to improve service delivery and the arrangements for the management of services and the Quality of Life Corporate Plan.

Committee: Council Meeting
Date: 20 April 2004
Agenda Item: 8
Title: CHARTER FOR TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS
Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510 402 & Cllr Martin Savage

Summary

- 1 Objectives of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan include *Closer Contacts with Town and Parish Councils, Encouraging Town & Parish Councils, who so wish, to achieve the Quality Council Status and implementation of a Town and Parish Charter*. A draft copy of the Parish & Town Council Charter is attached.
- 2 The report recommends that the Council agree the adoption of a Charter for Parish & Town Councils and that the opportunities flowing from the Charter are reported back to Members on a regular basis.

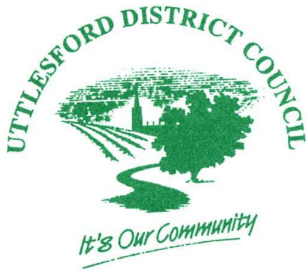
Background

- 3 The Government Rural White Paper that was published in 2000 launched the concept of Charters to provide service level agreements between District Councils and Town & Parish Councils.
- 4 Attached is a draft copy of the Uttlesford District Council Charter for Parish & Town Councils. The Charter aims to provide a framework for the District, Town & Parish Councils to work more closely together to improve the economic, social and environmental fabric of the area. The Charter has been developed using Government guidelines, versions currently in use by Braintree and Gloucester shire Councils and the comments of Members, Council Officers of Essex County Council. In addition the Rural Community Council of Essex have advised on both process and funding opportunities to support Town and Parish Councils delivering Charter Status.
- 5 The Charter is split into two sections. The first part of the Charter applies to all Town & Parish Councils in the district. This section outlines a series of principles of working together and includes statements such as:
 - Uttlesford DC recognizes the importance of Town & Parish Councils as the grass roots of local democracy, that Town & Parish Councils are heavily reliant on volunteers and good will. The District Council will hold regular liaison meetings with Town & Parish Council
 - Town & Parish Councils will encourage participation in its work from across all age groups; it will identify local needs and consult with local communities. It will provide information on the profile of the Parish or the Town and share this information with the District Council

- 6 In addition to the principles the in first section the Charter outlines other areas where District, Parish and Town Councils will assist each other including:
- Consultation – carrying out joint exercises and sharing information
 - Improving communication via the provision of IT support and the use of plain English
 - Notifying details of planning issues, information management and telecommunication issues
 - Training and other District Council facilities to be offered to Parish & Town Councils at the same costs as district departments
 - Assisting with financial, code of conduct and other issues
 - Providing details of services that Parish or Town Councils could manage either with or on behalf of the District Council
- 7 The second section of the Charter refers to those councils that have achieved Quality Council status. Once a Parish or Town Council has achieved Quality status they will be able to work with the District Council to develop an Area Plan. Uttlesford DC will take account of these Area Plans when implementing the Community Strategy as it affects the local area concerned.
- 8 To promote the concept of Parish & Town Charters the District Council will co-ordinate four meetings per year with Parish and Town Councils. These meetings will be integral with the current meetings that will be held each year as part of the Best Value Planning Review. These meetings will be an opportunity for Town & Parishes to learn more about the Charter and Quality Awards and opportunities such as Village Appraisals and Parish Plans, training and best practice.

RECOMMENDED that Council

- 1 Agree the implementation of Parish & Town Charters throughout the district
- 2 Agree that open meetings will be held four times a year to increase communications with Town and Parish Councils
- 3 That progress with the implementation and working with Parish & Town Councils is regularly reviewed and reported to the appropriate Committees of the Council



Uttlesford District Council

Charter for Town & Parish Councils

Background

The Government Rural White Paper that was published in 2000 launched the concept of charters to provide service level agreements between and District Councils, and Town & Parish Councils.

In December 2003 Uttlesford District Council launched the Quality of Life Corporate Plan, which included an objective to work more closely with Town & Parish Councils. A charter can help to deliver this objective. The aim is to create a framework for Uttlesford District Council and Town & Parish Councils to work in partnership to improve the economic, social and environmental framework of the area, while respecting their mutual rights as separate democratic bodies. It is hoped that, in due course, all of the Town & Parish Councils in the district will adopt this philosophy and sign-up to the charter.

The first part of this draft Charter applies to all Town & Parish Councils in the District. The second part applies to those Councils that have already achieved 'Quality' status. When a Town or Parish Council agrees to this charter a specific version will be produced. The charter for those Councils that have attained Quality status will include the relevant additional section 2.

Consultation with Town & Parish Councils has been undertaken during the process of drafting the Charter. Wherever possible changes have been made to take account of the views expressed.

A working group of Officers and Members from the District and Town & Parish Councils will monitor the effectiveness of the Charter, and implement ad hoc improvements. A formal review will be carried out annually.

Parish Charter (Part 1)

The Town/Parish Council of (*insert*) and Uttlesford District Council have agreed to a Charter that sets out how they aim to work together for the benefit of local people. This Charter is the result of local discussions to establish a new way of working and confirms existing good practice.

We agree to the following principle of working together.

Uttlesford District Council will continue to recognise the importance of Town & Parish Councils as the grass roots level of local democracy, and work with them to promote greater community involvement. It will provide information/briefings to ensure that District Council staff has a good understanding of the role and function of the Town & Parish Councils. Uttlesford District Council will produce an annual directory of information for all Town and Parish Councils.

The District Council recognises and understands that the work of Town and Parish Councils is heavily reliant on volunteers and good will. This understanding will include respecting the differences between smaller and larger Town and Parish Councils, in terms of ability to handle information and resources.

The District Council will hold regular liaison meetings with Town & Parish Councils on an annual cycle that provides both information and time for discussion.

(*Insert*) Parish/Town council will actively promote their work and achievements. It will encourage participation in its work from across all age groups and active citizenship. It will identify local needs and consult with local communities. It will provide information on the profile of their Parish to Uttlesford District Council, which will allow the provision of an up to date directory to be created.

Consultation

Uttlesford District Council will:

Consult (insert) Town/Parish Council on all issues that are likely to affect them.

- Allow six weeks for responses in normal circumstances. Explanations will be given when a faster turn-round is needed. (This does not apply to Planning applications which are covered in Appendix 1).
- Prepare a summary report of Uttlesford District Council consultations of more than four pages.
- Organise briefing sessions/workshops on complex consultation issues for groups of Town & Parish Councils.
- Have regard to the views of the (insert) Town/Parish Council when making decisions.
- Keep under review the level and quality of consultation.
- Circulate agendas for all Committee meetings to the clerks of Town & Parish Councils prior to meetings. The reports of these meetings will be available on request.

(Insert) Parish/town council will:

- Endeavour to take part in consultation exercises and respond within the given period.
- Notify Uttlesford District Council if they anticipate being late making a response.
- Work with Uttlesford District Council to seek the views of residents on issues that affect the Town, Parish and District Councils.
- Send copies of their agendas and papers to Uttlesford District Ward Councilors.
- Give Officers and Councilors of Uttlesford District Council the opportunity to speak at Parish and Council meetings on matters of mutual interest, if they request to do so.

Effective Communication

Uttlesford District Council will:

- Use information technology for quick and efficient communication.
- Allow extra time for communication sent by conventional mail so as not to disadvantage Town & Parish Councils not equipped with IT.
- Produce a regularly updated contact list of Uttlesford District Council Officers and Members.
- Assist with the provision of IT and produce regular guidance on the support available.
- Use plain English in written communication.
- Make every effort to attend Town & Parish Council meetings when invited.

(Insert) Parish/town council will:

- Use the available information technology to facilitate communication with Uttlesford District Council.
- Make every effort to attend Uttlesford District Council run meetings/events, in which they have an interest.
- Be able to use the District Council's formal complaints procedure, if they are dissatisfied with Uttlesford District Council's actions, their response to a request for information or their failure to consult.

Service Provision

Uttlesford District Council will:

- Provide prompt responses to requests for information from Town & Parish Councils.
- Provide comprehensive information to allow Town & Parish Councils to decide whether they wish to take on functions/services currently provided Uttlesford District Council.
- Allow access to Uttlesford District Council support services (e.g. printing, graphics/mapping, purchasing) at the same cost as they are offered to Uttlesford District Council departments.

(Insert) Parish/Town Council will:

- Make meeting places available to Uttlesford District Council for public, community or partnership issues in which they have an interest.
- Consider whether they wish to take on any delegated functions, presently carried out by the District Council, once they have achieved Quality status.

Training

Uttlesford District Council will:

- Give Town & Parish Councils access to training courses at the same cost as they are offered to Uttlesford District Council departments.
- Offer briefings on central and local Government Policies and initiatives which have an impact on Town & Parish Councils, in conjunction with Essex Association of Local Councils e.g. Best Value, Greater Partnerships and Codes of Conduct.
- Provide information and advice on the training available to clerks and Councillors.

(Insert) Town/Parish Council will:

- Encourage staff and Members to attend relevant training courses and briefings.

Standards Committee

Both Uttlesford District Council and the (insert) Town and Parish Council have adopted codes of conduct based on the national model code of conduct. Parish Councils will work with Uttlesford District Council Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. Uttlesford District Council has consulted, and agreed the following arrangements, with the Town and Parish Councils for the appointment of representatives to the Standards Committee.

The Composition of the Uttlesford District Council Standards Committee includes two Parish or Town Councilors from within Uttlesford District. At least one of those members must be present when matters relating to Town or Parish Councils or their members, are being considered.

The period of appointment of the Town and Parish Councils members is on an annual basis commencing with effect from each Uttlesford District Council Annual General meeting. The Uttlesford Association of Local Councils is invited to nominate the two representatives of Town and Parish Councils to serve on Standards Committee.

Financial arrangements

The financial arrangements between Uttlesford District Council and the (Insert) Town and Parish Council will be governed by the following principles:

- Ensure council tax bills in parish and non-parish areas, and between different Town/Parish Councils reflect value for money
- Ensure fairness in the provision of services (and access to them) by the Uttlesford District Council between different parts of the area.
- Keep administrative costs of operation and management to a realistic level
- Ensure transparency and present financial information in a manner, which is easy to understand.
- Democratic control and accountability – The District Council will let Town and Parish Councils, who have achieved Quality status manage additional services with additional expenditure while ensuring accountability to all those responsible for funding. This means distinguishing between funding by Uttlesford District Council (for a service carried out by a Town or Parish Council) and funding raised by Town and Parish Councils themselves (e.g. using their precepting powers).
- Where a parish takes on the provision of certain services, the level of funding will be agreed between Uttlesford District Council and the Town/Parish Council.

Quality Parishes and Services

Both Uttlesford District Council and (insert) Town and Parish Council will recognise the role of Essex Association of Local Councils in supporting and promoting the work of local Councils.

Uttlesford District Council will:

- Promote the achievement of the Quality Parish standards set out in the Rural White Paper. Support those Town and Parishes that wish to attain these standards by providing them with the necessary information and advice to achieve this goal.
- Town & Parish Councils will work with Uttlesford District Council's Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

Signed:

Chairman Uttlesford District Council

Signed:

Chairman to XXXXX Town/Parish Council

Date:

APPENDIX 1 – Planning Issues

Uttlesford District Council will:

- Consult Town & Parish Councils on all applications for Planning permission.
- Allow 21 days for the submission of representations by Town & Parish Councils (the statutory minimum is 14 days).
- Notify Town & Parish Councils of any significant amendment to a planning application, and allow a further 14 day period for representations to be made, before a decision is taken on the amended plan. (Significant amendments are those considered by the case officer to materially affect the planning application, but not to require a new application).
- Report the views of Town & Parish Councils in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation, or to the relevant Development Control Committee.
- Notify Town & Parish Councils of all planning decisions. When required, the District Council will provide details of reasons behind the planning decision.
- Provide Town & Parish Councils with copies of the Planning Committee agenda items on request.
- Allow a representative of Town & Parish Councils to attend and speak at the Development Control Committee in accordance with the Council's Procedure for Town & Parish Council Representatives and members of the public attending meetings of the Development Control Committee.
- Endeavour to make Officers available to attend meetings of Town & Parish Councils, to clarify the details of significant or controversial applications.
- Provide periodic training courses for local Councilors and/or Parish Clerks, to aid an understanding of the Planning process and matters, which have a material bearing upon the determination of a planning application.

(insert) Parish/Town Council will:

- Acknowledge that Uttlesford District will not be able to accede to their every request.
- Respond promptly in writing to all planning applications notified by Uttlesford District Council.
- Try to limit comments to planning grounds, while still giving full details of the reasons for an objection to, or support for, a particular application.
- Create a mechanism whereby the Town & Parish Councils can respond to any amended plans received from Uttlesford District.
- Assist Uttlesford District by reporting suspected or alleged local breaches of Town and Country Planning legislation.

- Keep themselves informed of planning law and the planning process by attending meetings, briefings and training sessions.

APPENDIX 2 - Information Management and Telecommunications Services

Uttlesford District Council's public website is available to view at www.uttlesford.gov.uk.

Uttlesford District Council will:

- Co-operate with the Town & Parish Councils to provide electronic joined up government for the public.
- Provide Town & Parish Councils with a line on Uttlesford District Council's switchboard providing connections are available from Ednet. This line would then operate like an extension on the Uttlesford District Council switchboard, offering free internal calls within the Council.
- Allow Town & Parish Councils to have an account on Uttlesford District Council's internal e-mail system. There is a cost to set up this service.
- Host websites created by Town & Parish Councils on Uttlesford District Council's website.

Please note:

- Internet access is available economically from commercial providers and the Council is unable to offer this service.
- Access to the Council's internal intranet will not be available to Town & Parish Councils for reasons of confidentiality and data protection.

Parish Charter Part 2

QUALITY TOWN and PARISH COUNCILS

In addition to the matters covered in Part 1, Uttlesford District Council has agreed to work in the following ways with those local Councils that are recognized as having attained the QUALITY standard.

Quality Councils

To qualify as a Quality Town or Parish Council the authority has to have in place certain criteria. These include:

- A Qualified Clerk
- Meet the Code of Conduct
- At least 80% of Town or Parish Councillors to have been elected
- To produce an Annual Report
- To have Audited Accounts

More information on achieving Quality status is available from Essex Association of Local Councils or Rural Community Council of Essex

Community Strategies

Where a Quality Council or group of Councils has prepared an area plan, Uttlesford District Council will take account of its proposals and priorities in developing and implementing the Community Strategy as it affects the local areas concerned. Uttlesford District Council will strengthen its links between these local Councils and the Local Strategic Partnership in order to improve delivery of local priorities.

Information and Access points

Uttlesford District Council are exploring ways of providing information directly to the community and one option is to make use of terminals in community buildings such as libraries and village halls. Quality councils could become part of this network. This would enable all communities to make use of shared council information, advice and payment facilities.

APPENDIX 3

Delegated functions

Town & Parish Councils that have achieved Quality status may wish to consider managing some of the services currently managed by Uttlesford District Council. The list below is the key services, which could be considered for joint management.

Control of Markets
Street Cleaning
Maintenance of highway verges, footways and footpaths
Litter collection and litter control measures
Street lighting (other than principal routes)
Recycling provisions
Street naming
Issue of bus and rail passes
Road Safety measures
Tree preservation orders
Some aspects of Development Control
Some aspects of leisure and tourism provision (e.g. Bowling greens, playing fields, issue of leisure permits)
Public conveniences
Allotments
Emergency Planning
Youth Issues
Lifelong Learning
Equality
Employment Issues

Further information is available from Ian Orton, Performance Manager, Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510 402 or iorton@uttlesford.gov.uk

Committee: Council Meeting

Date: 20 April 2004

Agenda Item: 9

Title: GENERAL SATISFACTION SURVEY 2000 AND 2003

Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510 402

Summary

- 1 As part of the Best Value process the Council is required to carry out a survey every three years that measures the % of citizens satisfied with the overall services provided by the Council.
- 2 The report contains details of the results of this survey in 2000 and in 2003. The information within the report compares service satisfaction in 2000 and 2003 and how Uttlesford has performed against other district councils in Essex.
- 3 A PowerPoint presentation will support this report to Council.

Background

- 4 Every three years the Council is required to carry out a General Satisfaction Survey that measures the % of citizens satisfied with the overall services provided by the Council. The survey was first carried out in the autumn of 2000 and a second survey was carried out in October/November of 2003. Other surveys measuring satisfaction with Benefits, Planning and Tenants have also been carried out and the results of these will be released in due course. Uttlesford joined a consortium of Essex authorities that used one contractor to carry out the survey and this approach produced both savings for the authority and access to comparative data. 1367 people completed the survey.
- 5 The importance of the General Survey is that it covers the services that affect everyone such as Household Waste, Litter, Recycling, Complaints Open Space and the Environment. Because the questions are broadly the same the Council now has some data to compare performance between 2000 and 2003 and to see how we compare against other Essex authorities.
- 6 The survey asked about issues such as Quality of Life within Uttlesford and the **5 most important issues to residents** are:

*Low Level of Crime/Health Services/Education/Affordable Housing/
Clean Streets*

- 7 The **5 things that most need improving** are:

Activities for Teenagers/Public Transport/Traffic Congestion/Affordable Housing/Road Repairs

- 8 There are 24 areas where a direct comparison between satisfaction in 2000 and 2003 can be measured. Of the 24 areas 17 were showing greater satisfaction and 7 were showing a decline in satisfaction.

The 7 showing a decline are:

- Museums: 51% in 2000 41% in 2003
- Environment Services: 68% in 2000 64% in 2003
- Planning Services: 31% in 2000 29% in 2003
- Culture and Recreation: 44% in 2000 35% in 2003
- Housing Services: 31% in 2000 21% in 2003
- Complaint Handled: 42% in 2000 30% in 2003
- Way the Authority Runs Things: 70% in 2000 64% in 2003

All other areas should as: Street Cleaning, Waste Collection, Recycling, Sports Events, Visiting Museum, Use of Parks and Number of Complaints all show greater satisfaction with the way the Council runs things.

- 9 Despite a decline in 7 areas the Council has performed well against the returns for other authorities within Essex. The details for all authorities will not be released until 30 June 2004 but authorities can compare best/worst results in Essex prior to the national results. Of the 24 areas that have been measured:

- Uttlesford had the best results in 11 of the 24 areas including at 64% most satisfied with overall services and perceived improvement during the last three years in fact the only council to register an improvement!
- Uttlesford came 2nd in areas like Satisfaction with Planning and Information to residents on Benefits
- But in line with comments about public transport Uttlesford had the greatest dissatisfaction with public transport – this is the only area where we are the worst district.

- 10 The PowerPoint presentation will concentrate on how the data will be used to improve service satisfaction within the Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council

- 1 Note the findings from the 2003 Best Value General Satisfaction Survey
- 2 Agree that Scrutiny Committees explore a range of options to improve the service areas that have declined in the last three years.