

5 December 2005

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING

A meeting of the Council will be held at the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, on Tuesday 13 December 2005 at 7.45 pm, or at the conclusion of the question and answer session, whichever is the earlier.

Yours faithfully

ALASDAIR BOVAIRD

Chief Executive

Commencing at 7.30 pm, there will be an opportunity of up to 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions and make statements subject to having given two working days prior notice.

A G E N D A P A R T I

- 1 Fire and Rescue – presentation by Paul Bowers and Steve Couch – Essex Fire Authority.
- 2 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members Allowances.
- 3 Members' question and answer session (up to 15 minutes).
- 4 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.
- 5 To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2005 (attached).
- 6 Business arising.
- 7 Chairman's communications.
- 8 Leader's communications.
- 9 Matters arising from Committees
 - (i) Licensing Committee 29 November 2005 – Licensing Policy.
 - (ii) Extraordinary Environment Committee 29 November 2005 – Waste Strategy
- 10 Report on implementation of new constitution.
- 11 Report of the Returning Officer (oral report).

12 To Review the Political Balance on the Council.

The Council is asked to allocate seats on its main and other committees to the three political groups.

13 Appointments of Committees

To appoint the following Committees, Area Panels and Task Groups

Policy Committees

- Operations (14)
- Environment (15)
- Community (15)

Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees

- Development Control (14)
- Licensing (11)
- Review and Petitions (8)
- Performance Select (11)

Other Committees

- Standards Committee – 4 Members (1 from each political group and one other member)
- Staff Appeals – 7 Members
- Emergency Committee – Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairman of the Council and Chairman of Operations Committee
- Internal Audit Partnership Joint Committee (to include Chairman and Vice Chairman of Operations Committee)

All Committees to then appoint their Chairman (except Standards and Emergency Committee) and Vice-Chairman (except Staff Appeals).

Task Groups, etc

- Asset Review Task Group – 3 Members
- Bridge End Gardens Task Group – 5 Members
- Community Achievement – 6 Members
- Constitution Group – 6 Members
- *Corporate Procurement Group – 3 Members
- Corporate Support Group – 3 Members
- *CPA Task Group – 6 Members
- Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement Task Group – 6 Members
- Homelessness Task Group – 4 Members
- Housing Strategy Working Group – 4 Members
- IT Working Group – 5 Members
- Local Joint Committee – 3 Members
- Local Service Agreement Working Group – 6 Members

- Museum Management Task Group – 4 Members (including Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Community Committee)
 - Museum Resource Centre Project Team – 6 Members
 - Risk Management Group – 2 Members
 - Saffron Walden Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme – 4 Members
 - Stansted Airport Advisory Panel – 12 Members
 - Strategic Development Advisory Group – 15 Members
 - Uttlesford Transport Forum – 4 Members
 - Waste Strategy Project Team – 6 Members
- (*Officers consider that these Task Groups do not need to be reappointed)

14 To approve the Timetable of Meetings (attached).

15 Area Panels – Support.

16 Members' Workshops – future arrangements.

17 Stansted Airport Interim Master Plan – Response to consultation.

18 Notices of Motion.

(i) Regional Government

To consider the following Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Jim Ketteridge and seconded by Councillor Jackie Cheetham

“That this Council writes to the office of the Deputy Prime Minister with a copy to our Member of Parliament to express our dismay at the continual undermining of our local services in order to facilitate regional government by subversive means. As examples, we include:

The Government’s stated desire to set what amounts to new regional health authorities abandoning existing Primary Care Trusts which here in Uttlesford have done much to focus on our local needs.

The Government’s desire to amalgamate Police authorities into much larger units. Essex Police Authority has made it clear that it does not support being amalgamated with other police forces. Consultation with the public on this is to be short and clearly meaningless.

Now on top of these very recent developments comes the deliberately leaked letter from David Milliband, Minister for Communities and Local Government, to John Prestcott, stating in essence that the time has come to create Unitary Local Authorities and again is a clear steer towards the Government’s desire for Regional Assemblies”.

If we sit back and do nothing this Government will have achieved its objective without the necessity of referendums as they learned this lesson in the north-east.

(ii) Education and Local Democracy

**To consider the following Notice of Motion proposed by
Councillor David Morson and seconded by Councillor Mark Gayler**

This Council notes the launch of the Government's Education White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All", on 25 October.

This Council supports:

- A high quality local school for all pupils
- The importance of working with schools and others to improve educational standards and to raise the attainment of pupils
- Collaboration among schools where this helps to deliver improved outcomes for children.
- Avoiding unnecessary tinkering with structures for the delivery of schooling.
- School autonomy, including Heads and governors setting their own budgets, choosing which staff to employ and deciding on matters to do with teaching and learning in the classroom.
- The importance of understanding and of seeking to meet parental aspirations
- The right of all pupils to be treated equally over school admissions.
- The role of democratically elected local authorities as champions for children, young people and families to hold schools to account, including over ensuring that autonomy does not work against the interests of any young people in the area.
- Funding of schools through local taxation rather than Whitehall's nationalising of school funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- Decisions on the funding of schools remaining with democratically elected local authorities rather than transferring to school forums
- The retention of a designated LEA as a well understood reference

This Council feels that the White Paper

- Is inappropriate for dispersed rural areas like Uttlesford. Geography dictates that the choice agenda is a phantom except for parents willing to go to expenses and inconvenience.
- The free transport officer (up to 6 miles) displays a ludicrous urban failure to comprehend rural geography
- Fails to resolve the key factor which undermines the viability of small schools, ie pupil led funding.

This Council is concerned that implementing the White Paper will create:

- An admissions "free for all" where schools will choose the pupils they want, existing fair admissions systems could be rendered worthless and hard to place pupils will suffer discrimination
- A commissioning role for local government handing over the powers to fulfil the role.

- Too many expensive and unnecessary additional school places when school rolls are falling.
- School closures of even good schools where “more popular” schools expand – and the parents of children in these schools nor their local council may have no choice in the matter.
- An even greater concentration of power in the hands of Whitehall bureaucrats through measures like the proposal for a new DfES Schools Commissioner and insisting that all new schools are trust schools or academies.
- An impossible timescale – 1 year – for turning round poor schools.

This Council calls for

- A statutory code of practice on admissions which is binding on all state funded schools whatever their status enforced by local authorities to ensure fair access for all – including hard to place children – and which recognises that a fair admissions policy cannot be delivered on a school by school basis.
- The status of the community school to remain for all schools who want it: for new community schools to open where this is what the local community wants them to stay open; and for local authorities not to be forced to close schools if the local community wants
- A recognition that education does not stop at the school gates. In particular, it is essential that there is a clear duty on schools to co-operate with local authorities in delivering the Every Child Matters agenda.
- The restoration of financial and planning powers to Local Authorities for 16–19 education to enable a coherent 14-19 education policy to be developed.
- Root and branch reform of local government finance so that more local government services can be funded through local taxation; with a corresponding reduction in the rate of national income tax.
- For all members of this authority to lobby local MPs to actively campaign for education services to remain accountable to local people through local democracy and to vote for this principle when the measures contained in the White Paper are debated in Parliament.
- These concerns to be put to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, to our Member of Parliament and to appropriate representative bodies in Essex.

(iii) Skateboard facilities

To consider the following Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Chris Bayley

Council Notes:

- 1 The commitment to support skateboard facilities in the Quality of Life Corporate Plan.
- 2 The proposals for a new skate park adjacent to the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, and the wide spread support for this project from all sections of the community

Council therefore resolves to provide financial support to the Saffron Walden Skatepark Association, and authorises the Community Committee to agree a capital grant subject to the completion of an operational management plan.

(iv) Advertising signs

To consider the following Notice of Motion proposed by Councillors Elfreda Tealby-Watson, Richard Freeman and David Gregory.

Uttlesford District Council believes

1. That the current stringent guidelines on the advertising of local community events put unnecessary restrictions on advertising events which benefit local community societies, fundraising and smaller enterprises such as farmers' markets.
2. That as advertising for such events is often only needed for a matter of days it should be treated differently from similar hoardings and advertisements relating to purely commercial activity or to permanent signage.
3. That in a rural community good quality banners and hoardings are a valuable way of notifying a dispersed population of forthcoming events which are, in these cases, to their own benefit.
4. That the increasing popularity of events such as farmers' markets are an essential funding plank for community venues hosting these events and that undue restrictions on advertising have a detrimental affect on attendance, which in the long term could result in their failure and subsequent loss of income to our community facilities. The same is true for amateur arts productions and local fetes and carnivals.

Uttlesford District Council therefore resolves to lobby the ODPM to review its guidelines and the legal requirements for advertising of local community events. The Council notes that electoral advertising is already exempt from many of the regulations and urges the ODPM to look at practical ways to extend these exemptions for short term advertising of events where the benefit is primarily to the community rather than commerce.

Uttlesford District Council further resolves to instruct its legal counsel to use its best endeavours to discover ways in which advertising signage may be erected for short periods without violating current planning law and that a report be made to the Development Control Committee, in the first instance, within six weeks from this date”.

19 Any other items which the Chairman considers to be urgent.

To: All Members of the Council.

Lead Officer: Alasdair Bovaird
Committee Officer: Mick Purkiss

MEETINGS AND THE PUBLIC

Members of the public are welcome to attend any of the Council's Committee meetings and listen to the debate. All agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed on the Council's website www.uttlesford.gov.uk.

Members of the public and representatives of parish and town councils are now permitted to speak at the meetings. You will need to register with the Committee Officer by 2.00 pm on the Friday before the meeting. An explanatory leaflet has been prepared which details the procedure and is available from the Council offices at Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

The agenda is split into two parts. Most of the business is dealt with in Part 1 which is open to the public. Part II includes items which must be discussed in the absence of the press or public, as they might deal with information which is personal or sensitive for some other reason. You will be asked to leave the meeting before Part II items are discussed.

You are entitled to see any of the background papers that are listed at the end of each report.

If you want to inspect background papers or speak before a meeting please contact either Mick Purkiss on 01799 510430, Maggie Cox on 01799 510369, Cathy Roberts on 01799 510434 or Peter Snow on 01799 510431 or by fax on 01799 510550.

FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Council Offices has facilities for wheelchair users, including lifts and toilets. The Council Chamber has an induction loop so that those who have hearing difficulties can hear the debate.

If you are deaf or have impaired hearing and would like a signer available at a meeting, please contact Mick Purkiss on 01799 510430 or email mpurkiss@uttlesford.gov.uk as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

FIRE/EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by Committee staff. It is vital you follow their instructions.

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts.
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings.
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building.
- Do not re-enter the building until told to do so.