

**PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME 2006/7**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) providing an annual report on the Performance Select Committee 2005/06 as well as setting out the work programme for 2006/07.

An amended version of the report was tabled and the Chairman of the Committee asked that the Committee approve the work programme and the amended version of the report for submission to the next meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED that the revised annual report on the Performance Select Committee 2005/06 and the work programme for 2006/07 be approved and submitted to the next meeting of the Council.

Annual reports, like annual general meetings, rarely attract a wide readership or mass attendance. This may be because they deal largely with history and procedure rather than what livens up our daily lives. In writing this first annual report for a performance committee I am conscious that a recitation on tables of performance indicators would be a triple turn-off!

Gwyneth Dunwoody, MP, epitomises the image of a parliamentary select committee chair that fearlessly holds to account ministers and managers of transport. Uttlesford's select committee has not yet operated in the same inquisitorial mode seen at Westminster; but it is early days.

This is called an 'annual report', which is an exaggeration coming from a performance select committee whose existence has been shorter than 6 months.

It has been a busy and productive few months. Four meetings were held between January and April to conduct business on the best value plan, risk management, the annual audit report and letter from the Audit Commission, internal audit reports and the staff appraisal system. A set of local performance measures from the past has been superseded by a set that is more outward looking and probably more understandable to the customers of the council. They will need to be developed further in consultation with our customers before Uttlesford can claim to have performance measures that really matter to local people.

It is expected that a spur has been given to risk management and there will be further monitoring of this later in the year to ensure progress in an important performance technique that has been slow to be understood at Uttlesford.

The annual audit letter generated a series of recommendations that were accepted by the Council. The most significant of these were aimed at clarifying officer and member responsibilities and accountability, including the appointment of champions for key corporate policy areas.

Later in the year the committee will be examining the 2006-plus corporate plan and the 2005/2006 financial accounts.

It is early days for the performance select committee. Similar committees, sometimes called audit committees, are becoming more common in local government as our sector catches up with the rest of the public sector and the private sector. The advent of a new performance regime for local government in coming months should mean that Uttlesford DC is well placed to demonstrate that Councils can take charge of their own performance in closer dialogue with local residents rather than being burdened with the heavy hand of central government and perpetual external inspection.

Councillor A Dean