

**COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 18 FEBRUARY 2010**

Present:- Councillor A D Walters – Chairman
Councillors E C Abrahams, K R Artus, H J Asker, S Barker, E L Bellingham-Smith, C A Cant, R H Chamberlain, R P Chambers, J F Cheetham, J E N Davey, A Dean, C M Dean, C D Down, K L Eden, E J Godwin, E W Hicks, S J Howell, J E Hudson, D M Jones, A J Ketteridge, J I Loughlin, J E Menell, D J Morson, D G Perry, J A Redfern, H S Rolfe, D J Sadler, J Salmon, G Sell, R D Sherer, A M Wattebot, L A Wells, P A Wilcock, and A C Yarwood.

Officers in attendance:- J Mitchell (Chief Executive), T Cowper (Principal Accountant Technical), R Harborough (Director of Development), S Joyce (Chief Finance Officer), A Knight (Principal Accountant Services), M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive), C Rockall (Interim Change Manager), P Snow (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager) and A Webb (Director of Central Services).

C57

MEMBERS' QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Councillor Morson asked the Chairman of the Environment Committee two questions about the consultation on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. First, he asked for clarification about the degree of influence the consultation outcome would have on the nature of the Council's pre-submission. Second, he asked about the criteria to be used to determine the judgements to be made by the Council. For example, would the majority view of respondents to the consultation necessarily prevail or might different criteria apply?

Councillor Barker said that she had not been involved in putting the documents together and could not comment but would either reply in writing or ask the Director of Development to respond on her behalf. Mr Harborough then said that the Council would have to wait to see what representations were received. The officers would then advise Members on the weight to be attached to particular factors.

Councillor Sell asked the Leader whether any events were planned to mark the 65th anniversary of the ending of World War II? The number of veterans was fast diminishing and he suggested a reception in conjunction with the Royal British Legion might be an appropriate way to recognise the efforts of British forces in that conflict. The Leader said that he would talk to Councillor Sell about this matter after the meeting.

Councillor C Dean asked the Leader if he would respond in writing on the question of benefits to the district arising from the 2012 Olympics. She said that the Community Partnerships Manager had responded to a question at the South Area Forum meeting by saying that Uttlesford was engaging with other councils and that a meeting of the Olympics Working Group was planned in the near future. The Leader confirmed that he would do so.

Councillor Wilcock asked the Leader about the content of a leaflet issued by the Government on the role of local authorities in tackling anti-social behaviour. The Leader said that he had no knowledge of this document but confirmed that the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Officer remained proactive in monitoring behaviour of this nature and that the resources at the Council's disposal were considered to be sufficient.

He then drew attention to a survey undertaken by a civil campaign group indicating that Uttlesford had a total of 32 officers with authority to enter homes without permission and that this number was greater than for other councils. At the invitation of the Leader, the Assistant Chief Executive said he could not recall the exact number of officers with such authority but the number was lower than indicated in the survey quoted by Councillor Wilcock. The Council had responded to a recent Freedom of Information request on this subject.

C58

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anjum, Clover, Foley, Gower, Knight, Lemon, Miller, Schneider, and Smith.

Councillors Ketteridge and Sadler declared their personal interest as members of Saffron Walden Town Council.

Councillor Yarwood declared a personal interest in item 7ii on risk strategy and corporate risk strategy.

Councillor Chamberlain declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 16 as he had relatives employed by the Council. He would leave the room prior to the discussion of that item.

Councillor Eden declared a personal interest in item 17 as a member of the Saffron Walden Museum Society Limited.

Councillor Barker declared a personal interest as a member of the County Council and of the Essex Fire Authority.

Councillor Chambers declared his interest as a member of the County Council and as Chairman of the Essex Police Authority.

C59

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2009 were received.

Councillor C Dean said that the reference to her question about the decision to offer free parking in the pre-Christmas period in the first paragraph on page 344 of Minute C45 was ambiguous and asked that it be clarified. She said that she had welcomed the proposal but had been disappointed to have first heard about it via the local press.

Councillor Jones wished to clarify his comments as reported in the second paragraph of Minute C52 on carbon reduction measures. The reference in the

Minute did not fully convey his concerns about the need to track the impact on the Council's carbon footprint of any future transactions such as the sale of the former Council Offices in Great Dunmow by taking and considering relevant advice at that time.

Subject to those corrections being noted, the Minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C60

BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute C45 – Members' Question and Answer session

Councillor Wilcock said that he was still awaiting a list of properties empty for more than 12 months. He asked whether such a list was available and in the public domain?

Councillor Chamberlain responded that there had been discussion about long term empty properties at the Community and Housing meeting on 21 January and he hoped that further information would be available at the next meeting.

In relation to the same Minute, Councillor C Dean asked whether a report would be considered by the Environment Committee to determine the success of the outcome of the pre-Christmas concessionary parking policy? Councillor Barker said that she was prepared to consider such a report if meaningful figures could be produced.

(ii) Minute C51(ii) – Change to the Council's constitutional arrangements

Councillor Wilcock referred to a note issued earlier in the week setting out proposed consultation arrangements on the possible change to an executive model of decision-making. The note had referred to a preferred model and he asked whether anything had changed since the last meeting?

The Leader confirmed that nothing had changed. The Assistant Chief Executive said that the Council was required to consult on the principle involved rather than on the detailed options available. If so agreed, a proposal would be submitted to the Secretary Of State in due course.

(iii) Minute C52 – Options for progressing carbon reduction for the Council estate

Councillor C Dean asked about what plans there were to fill the post of Energy Efficiency Surveyor once Jake Roos had left? The Chief Executive confirmed that Mr Roos remained in post for a short period. Future plans would be made clear in due course.

(iv) Minute C54 – Towards a new management structure

Councillor Wilcock asked when the costs of the restructuring set out in Minute C54 would be available. The Chief Executive said that costs would be available either at the next meeting or the one after that.

C61 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed Members that he had received an anonymous donation of £1,000 for his nominated charity of ACCURO and that he was most grateful.

C62 MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEES

(i) Community and Housing Committee on 21 January 2010 – Minute CH58 – Use of growth area funding to secure affordable housing

Councillor Chamberlain proposed the adoption of a recommendation from the Community and Housing Committee to purchase sites for the Stansted Area Housing Partnership development programme (SAHP).

RESOLVED that:

1. the Council purchase the sites for affordable housing in Harlow for the SAHP development programme, subject to the District Valuer's valuation, provided this was satisfactory for affordable housing development, and to claim back the payment from Harlow Renaissance, the holders of the Growth Area Funding;
2. the Council agree to transfer the sites to Moat Housing Group for a nominal sum, as the SAHP delivery partner for this scheme.

(ii) Performance Select Committee on 2 February 2010 – Minute PS60 – Risk Management Strategy and update

Councillor Rolfe proposed adoption of a recommendation from the Performance Select Committee to adopt the Risk Management Strategy. He expressed his gratitude to Councillor Yarwood for the expertise and help he had provided during the preparation of the strategy.

Councillor Wilcock endorsed these remarks. He said the report was excellent and would provide a challenge to the Council in embedding risk management. The Leader extended his thanks to the officers involved in the production of the strategy.

RESOLVED that the Risk Management Strategy be adopted.

C63 PRESENTATION OF THE ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT – AUDIT COMMISSION

Ian Davidson of the Audit Commission spoke about the Council's performance against the Audit Commission's organisational assessment in 2008/09. He said

that the Commission had examined the Council's own priorities and how it had performed against those measures. Uttlesford was improving generally and had been awarded a Managing Performance score of 2, regarded as adequate. The Council had a top performing waste and recycling service and its streets were clean. It had pioneered a scheme to increase access to energy efficiency improvements to all its residents. Housing services were good with 151 more affordable homes provided during the year.

However, results in the areas of planning and the administration of housing benefit claims were more mixed and improvements were needed in these services.

The Council's performance in the Use of Resources was regarded as adequate. In the context of the previous year, he was pleased to see that the Council had made progress. In terms of costs and budgets, the Council was operating in a difficult financial climate in the public services and local government in particular.

In summary, the Council had made a good recovery from the position it was in and had a good platform from which to improve

C64

CORPORATE PLAN 2010-15 – CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Leader proposed the adoption of the Corporate Plan subject to minor editorial changes. The achievements of 2009/10 were listed under each of the four corporate priorities of finance, partnerships, people and environment. The plan set out what the Council wanted to achieve in the future. He proposed that the corporate risk register be noted.

Councillor A Dean expressed the view that the corporate plan should have been available earlier than this meeting so that it could be considered during the recent cycle of committee meetings. He asked a number of questions about the Council's performance as raised in the organisational assessment. He asked whether the concerns raised about delays in re-letting were being addressed? He asked about the highlighted fluctuations in planning performance. On the subject of vulnerable people, he asked why there was no refuge available in Uttlesford for the benefit of women at risk of abuse? He asked about concerns raised about the capacity to manage training as there was no resource available to do this under the HR partnership with Essex County Council. Finally, he asked for confirmation that staff sickness and turnover had reduced.

The Chief Executive replied that re-letting procedures had been discussed at the recent Performance Select meeting. The same meeting had considered a report about the performance of the planning service. On Councillor Dean's third question, access was available to refuges located outside the district. On the matter of training, he acknowledged there was a need to address the workforce strategy and more work was needed in the area of Member training. On the final question raised, he confirmed that rates of staff turnover and sickness were decreasing. The corporate plan would be considered by all policy committees during the next year and there would be more engagement with partners.

Councillor Wilcock queried why words had been added to the text relating to Stansted Airport noting its role in the regional and local economy, as this diluted opposition to Airport expansion. In relation to the street scene, he felt that litter was becoming an increasing problem.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there had been no change to the Council's approach on Stansted Airport. On the question of litter, he felt that Uttlesford was one of the tidier districts generally and this was not a major concern. He referred to the concerns expressed by residents about the need to address health inequalities and thought the original question in the questionnaire had been badly phrased. The Council would have to address how to deal with the concerns raised. This could be achieved through strategic partnerships and would be supported through relevant workstreams.

The Leader endorsed all of these comments. The Council was not complacent about litter and could always do better.

Councillor Sell stated there was no formal workplace strategy in place and asked what the partnership with Essex County Council was achieving? He referred to the statement about the introduction of a cabinet system of government after the 2011 elections and asked how that would encourage more community participation?

Councillor A Dean said there was no reference in the document to work previously being undertaken on conservation areas and urged that this should be reinstated. He also drew attention to a reference to Stansted Airport in the risk register and asked for an improvement of logic in the wording about opposition to the second runway.

On the subject of conservation areas, Councillor Cheetham said that reviews had been undertaken and would be considered by Development Control.

Councillor Wilcock asked for a separate vote on the corporate plan and on the risk register and this was conceded by the Chairman. On being put to the vote, both proposals were agreed.

RESOLVED that:

1. the corporate plan for 2010-15 be approved, subject to minor editorial changes;
2. each responsible committee be invited to determine the measurement and targets of the corporate indicators for approval by the Performance Select Committee, with monitoring starting in April 2010; and
3. the corporate risk register be noted.

C65

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Councillor Chambers proposed the approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the motion was duly seconded.

Councillor Sell referred to the various workstreams set out on page 14 of the MTFS. He said that transferring the Museum to the Town Council in accordance with the devolution workstream might be perceived as good for council taxpayers in Stansted but not for those in Saffron Walden. Equally, increasing the car parking tariff in Great Dunmow might be viewed as damaging to the town centre. In relation to workstream 4, he wondered whether it would be possible for the Council to make hard decisions such as to cease making discretionary payments to fund services such as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

Councillor Chambers responded that the Council must consider the various strategic solutions coming forward and he was confident that it would be possible to achieve the target savings of £1,383k by 2014/15. Indeed, he hoped that it would be possible to exceed the target figure.

He confirmed there was no present intention to transfer the Museum service. On car parking, he accepted there were limited options to increase income. On the funding of PCSOs, he said that every district had the right to withdraw funding. However, as one of the Council's main priorities was home safety, it was unlikely that such funding would be withdrawn. The country had a major debt problem and some cutbacks were inevitable to get back to financial stability.

Councillor Wattebot asked whether the estimates were realistic given that some parishes may not wish to accept a transfer of services, as evidenced by the refusal of Thaxted Parish Council to take responsibility for the public toilets.

Councillor Chambers accepted that the Parish Council had declined to run this service. As a result of this decision, charges would be introduced for the car park in Thaxted.

The Leader confirmed that not all of the proposals to generate income or save costs would be introduced but it was the Council's duty to examine all of the options identified over the next five years.

Councillor Sherer pointed out that the reference to target savings in the MTFS should not be stated in £M and it was agreed to amend the reference accordingly.

In referring to assumptions listed on page 21 of the document, Councillor Wilcock said that the Council's structure was small and getting smaller. He took the view that overheads should be cut at the same time as services were being transferred, so that the management structure would reflect the size of the Council.

In response, Councillor Chambers confirmed the intention to look closely at entering into further partnerships but with the strong intention that Uttlesford would remain as an independent council. He agreed it was necessary to examine the capacity of the organisation to ensure the resilience was in place to deal with the services being provided.

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that he would put some additional narrative in the MTFs to reflect changes in the level of contractual indexation, as this was expected to taper off to the target of 2% by year three.

Councillor A Dean commented on the improved presentation of information in the document. He thought that there should be a process through the committee system to allow for the stated public priorities to be taken into account. This should include discussion about the purpose of the increase in reserves and a clearer understanding of what those reserves were for.

In summing up the debate, Councillor Chambers said that the budget priorities were clear and this was reflected in the presentation of the report which was a vast improvement on previous documents. He said that the Council's reserves had disappeared very quickly three years ago and it had been necessary to build them up to an acceptable level. Some of the reserves were earmarked and some were contingency sums for unforeseen events. A sound level of reserves was important to a small council such as Uttlesford. Next year would be very difficult and he anticipated the possibility of a 10% cut in the level of funding in local government. The Council's reserves would help us to ride out the expected financial storm.

In endorsing these comments, the Leader said that the MTFs set out clearly the purpose of the reserves and the calculation of the working balance.

The motion was put to the vote and carried by 23-0.

RESOLVED that the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.

C66 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2010/11

Councillor Chambers proposed approval of the Housing Revenue Account for 2010/11, and associated rent increases.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Housing Revenue Account 2010/11 Original Budget be approved;
2. dwelling rents be increased by an average of 1.5%;
3. garage rents be increased by 1.5%; and
4. other charges be increased in line with costs incurred.

C67 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10 TO 2014/15

Councillor Chambers proposed approval of the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED that the Capital Programme for 2009/10 to 2014/15 be approved.

C68 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

Councillor Chambers proposed approval of the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators be approved.

C69 **ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES**

Councillor Chambers proposed approval of the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves.

Councillor Wilcock questioned the level of reserves proposed in the report. He thought there should be more explanation provided about the need for the level of reserves being recommended.

Councillor Chambers said that the reserves were an estimate of what was needed for the coming year. The report was a living document and could change from month to month.

RESOLVED that:

1. the minimum safe contingency level for 2010/11 be set at £1,181,000;
2. the risk assessment relating to the robustness of reserves be approved; and
3. the Council take account of advice in the report from the Section 151 Officer when determining the 2010/11 General Fund budget and Council Tax.

C70 **GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX 2010/11**

Councillor Chambers proposed acceptance of the Council's budget for 2010/11. He said that the Administration had had to deal with difficult financial circumstances since 2007 as a result of the previous administration's inability to deal with proper financial management within the authority. Great strides had now been made in providing financial stability and ensuring a good service to residents.

He made no apology for the underspend this year and wished to thank all members of staff for their hard work and especially the Section 151 Officer for his support and guidance.

The Council would continue to seek the views of the public on their priorities and pursue the sharing of services which might result in future partnerships with other authorities. It was also the Administration's aim to support voluntary organisations. There was a clear linkage between the budget and the Corporate Plan and he commended the acceptance of the proposed 2.9% increase in Council Tax.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Godwin.

Councillor Wilcock proposed the following amendment:

"The Liberal Democrats Group notes that from the previously agreed Corporate Plan that Council Tax Payers may be assured that the council finances are sound, and that the Council will prioritise helping those in hardship caused by the current recession.

The Group is therefore proposing tonight that this council in line with the aims of the Medium Term Financial Strategy reduce this year's net council tax income from an increase of 4.6% to 2.9%. This will reduce the net budget requirement from £8.965m to £8.885m, a savings target of £80k which will help towards achieving the overall MTFs savings.

It is proposed that the saving of £80k be realised by limiting the overall budget for salary increases (pay award and increments) to 1% of pay costs, with any excess being met from vacancy management.

The effect will reduce the overall Band D Council Tax increase from 2.9% to 1.2%, from £147.42 to £145.00, and assist the council tax payer with the current recession."

The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the amendment was effectively identical to one that had been proposed and lost at the Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 9 February 2010 and was therefore contrary to Procedure Rule 12.2. The meeting would have to agree to suspend Procedure Rules under Rule 19.1 to enable the amendment to be considered at this meeting.

A motion to suspend Procedure Rules was put to the meeting and carried.

Councillor Sell then seconded the amendment. He said that many people would not receive a 2.9% rise in earnings this year. A 1.2% increase in council tax income would reflect the difficult financial climate and contribute towards meeting the Council's stated savings target.

The Leader said that the amendment amounted to tinkering and would remove £80k from the tax base. It would be financed by limiting the increase in the total pay bill to 1%. As the proposed budget allowed for incremental rises, a limit of 1% would impose a reduction to be met by vacancy management. Any pay award this year would thus cause financial difficulties.

The Council was still taking money out of earmarked reserves to balance its budget. The officers' recommendation of a 2.9% increase was sensible. Any change would undermine the budget strategy and would prove a huge mistake.

Councillor Barker agreed and referred to the effect of new houses coming on stream, all of which would receive services and would have the effect of reducing the Council's net income.

Councillor A Dean asked the Chief Finance Officer whether the proposed budget assumed a zero allowance for job vacancies.

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed this as correct. In the event of any vacancies arising, it was assumed that a temporary resource would be procured. This had been a change initiated in last year's budget and it would not be prudent to budget for job vacancies.

Councillor A Dean took this as confirmation that there was spare money in the budget which was being taken by the Council and banked.

The Leader said that there were now 80 fewer posts in the Council than had been the case in 2006, and consequently far less scope for holding vacancies. There was no spare capacity so that any vacancies must be filled to meet the workload. It was wrong to believe that vacancy management was an option.

Councillor Rolfe asked that the vote be now put.

Councillor Chambers urged the Council to reject the amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost by 23 votes to 10.

The Leader then spoke to the substantive motion. He said that notable progress had been made and this was reflected in the upgraded Use of Resources score. Thanks were due to the Strategic Management Board and the finance team for producing a prudent and measured budget. It was important to consolidate the progress made and not return to the unfettered and imprudent spending of previous years. The Council's spending was now £1,063k less than under the failed budget of the previous administration. This had been achieved mostly by reducing staffing costs.

Reserves were now at the minimum level judged to be safe by the S151 Officer. Many challenges lay ahead but it was important to keep to the disciplines of the MTFS.

However, the progress made was not acknowledged by every Member. He referred to what he termed as misleading press statements and blatant propaganda issued by members of the Liberal Democrat group, particularly Councillor A Dean. He said that Councillor Dean had been unable to acknowledge the extent of the budget deficit under the previous administration and questioned whether his views were those of the group as a whole.

In summary, the Leader asked the Council to distance itself from the practices of the past and support the recommended budget.

Councillor Godwin congratulated everyone concerned on the work of the last three years. She supported the comments of the Leader and said that if the measures taken had not been put into place the future would be very bleak.

Councillor Wilcock said that he would not respond to the comments made by the Leader but wished to remind Members that he had proposed a reduction in Council Tax last year of £140k and yet the budget figures showed a £1m saving had been achieved.

The three parts of the recommendation were put to the vote separately and were agreed by votes of 23-2, 23-5 and 23-5 respectively.

RESOLVED that:

1. the General Fund budget requirement of £8,964,513 be approved, as detailed in full in the report;
2. the District Council Tax precept of £4,853,361 be approved, representing an increase of 2.9% on Council Tax; and
3. the 2010/11 Council Tax Resolution be approved, as now updated to take account of the Essex Police Authority's rise of 3.02%, and as set out in full in Appendix H of the revised report.

C71

STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS – UPDATE ON PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillor Chamberlain left the meeting before the consideration of this item, having already declared his prejudicial interest.

The Council received a report setting out the sequence of events that had occurred in relation to the proposed partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) since the meeting in December. It was now clear that there was no basis for an agreement to proceed with the arrangement for a revenues and benefits partnership as already agreed in principle by this Council.

The SCDC cabinet had decided on 11 February to request Uttlesford to guarantee the first £350,000 of any savings to be earmarked for SCDC, with the subsequent £175,000 savings allocated to UDC, and any balance apportioned in line with the partnership agreement on a 2/3, 1/3 split in favour of SCDC. This position had been recommended for approval to Council at SCDC.

For the reasons set out in the report, the Strategic Management Board (SMB) had decided that it could not recommend acceptance of these proposed terms. The Chief Executive had informed the leadership at SCDC that he could not advise UDC to enter into a partnership on the terms proposed as this Council would effectively be taking all of the risk in the early stages with none of the potential reward. Unsuccessful attempts were made to permit senior UDC Members to address SCDC Members, and for SCDC to defer consideration while a third party review of the robustness of the Business Case took place.

Such an arrangement did not materialise although SCDC had resolved on 28 January to refer the matter back to the cabinet. This referral resulted in the decision outlined in the third paragraph above.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the necessary condition of long-term confidence and stability between the parties did not exist and the Council could not be recommended to take the partnership any further. However, the need to address the shortfall identified in the MTFs still existed. While work was continuing on the other workstreams identified in October 2009, there was now an urgent need to consider how the revenues and benefits services would be delivered in the medium term. A report on this matter would be submitted to a future meeting.

The Leader said that he noted the position with regret as well as a source of great disappointment. He commended the way in which this Council had played its part in the proposals and confirmed that he had declined an offer to attend a Scrutiny meeting at SCDC to explore the abortive work undertaken.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Chambers thanked the Chief Executive, the Interim Change Manager and the Director of Central Services for the efforts they had made to secure the partnership.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Council notes with regret and disappointment the position of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
2. SCDC be advised that the Council would not enter into an arrangement to deliver revenues and benefits services on the terms proposed, and would seek to recover all appropriate costs;
3. the Revenues and Benefits Member Task Group be wound up with immediate effect; and
4. officers be asked to review the options available for future delivery of the revenues and benefits services, in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and report back to a future meeting.

At the conclusion of this item, Councillor Chamberlain rejoined the meeting.

C72

MUSEUM VAT AMENDMENT

Councillor Eden proposed approval of a recommendation to add VAT to charges for taught sessions for schools.

RESOLVED that the Museum's charges be amended from 1 April 2010 to add VAT for taught sessions for schools.

C73

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2010/11

The Leader proposed adoption of the timetable of committee meetings for 2010/11 subject to minor changes. He suggested that the area forum meetings on 5 and 7 October be amended to 12 and 14 October, and that the proposed Scrutiny Committee meetings on 7 December and 5 April take place on 2 December and 31 March respectively.

Councillor A Dean suggested that all Scrutiny meetings be held on the following Tuesdays – 1 June, 28 September, 7 December, 15 February and 5 April.

RESOLVED that the timetable of meetings for 2010/11 be agreed subject to the area forum meetings in October being changed to 12/14 October and Scrutiny Committee dates being revised to 1 June, 28 September, 7 December (as proposed), 15 February, and 5 April (as proposed).

C74 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that, under Section 100(l) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

C75 **SALE OF COUNCIL OFFICES AT 46 HIGH STREET GREAT DUNMOW**

Members were reminded that they had accepted an offer for the sale of 46 High Street, Great Dunmow at their meeting in July. The sale process had subsequently stalled for the reasons set out in the report. A revised offer had now been received from an unsuccessful bidder and it was recommended that this should be accepted subject to negotiation of conditions of sale.

RESOLVED that the offer received for the sale of 46 High Street, Great Dunmow be accepted and the Chief Executive be authorised to negotiate conditions of sale in consultation with the Leader and Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm.