

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 29 NOVEMBER 2006**

Present:- Councillor S Flack – Chairman.
Councillors D W Gregory, S V Schneider, A M Wattebot, M A
Hibbs and J P Murphy

Officers in attendance: - A Clarke, V Harvey, A Stewart and T Turner

Also present:- Catherine O'Connell and Caroline Skinner from West Essex
PCT

SC17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers, E
Gower, V Pedder, F E Silver and A Yarwood.

A declaration of interest was received from Councillor Flack as a Member for
Essex County Council who as a result would not chair agenda item 7, Street
Lighting.

SC18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2006

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2006 were received, confirmed
and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SC19 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute SC10 – Public Library Speakers

Saffron Walden Town Council had made a written representation to
Essex County Council and had received an acknowledgement of
receipt, but no substantive response as yet.

(ii) Minute SC16 – Scrutiny Update

Councillor Flack was to meet with Simon Walsh and senior officers
from the Fire Authority to receive an update.

SC20 WEST ESSEX PRIMARY CARE TRUST

Catherine O'Connell the interim Locality Director for Uttlesford at West Essex
PCT and Caroline Skinner the Senior Health Improvement Specialist updated
the Committee on the restructure of the PCT and answered questions on
subjects which the Committee had previously identified.

An apology was received from the Chief Executive of the West Essex PCT,
Aidan Thomas, who hoped to meet the Committee at a later date.

Catherine O'Connell presented the structure of the PCT, which was built around the three old localities. The new structure had tried to keep a local focus, whilst aiming to achieve economies of scale.

The Locality Director was the main point of contact and would be the key representative in partnership working. This post was yet to be filled and would be advertised nationally. The person to fill this permanent post might not be in post until spring 2007, which was why Catherine O'Connell was holding the post during the interim.

The Head of Primary Care Commissioning post would commission general practice and independent contractors. They would work with the NHS to provide services and commission services for Uttlesford within the locality. The role would also incorporate attracting new practices and managing existing ones.

The Head of Locality Commissioning would be the key link with practice based commissioning and would support plans. They would also purchase health care on behalf of the population. The PCT held a joint responsibility with local practices and would decide where services were provided and by whom. The Director of Strategic Commissioning would take a strong role in strategy and communication for the locality.

Catherine O'Connell explained that a board was still in operation and decisions would still pass through there.

The overall structure of the PCT was slimmer, although the locality structures were slightly larger. The core functions had been devolved to the localities. In effect three functions had merged into one. The target had been met on savings, principally on the reduction of management costs, but more would be made with redundancies.

The PCT would continue to support Local Strategic Partnerships across the PCT area.

The financial position held mixed news. The underlying financial position for West Essex PCT was good. Uttlesford and Harlow had managed to bring the balance in line and Epping Forest had made a £2.5m surplus. However this surplus had been taken by the Health Authority to help the overall East of England position. The Department of Health would make one large financial allocation per annum and additional ones as identified. However a shortfall in allocation of approximately £1.4m resulted in a number of initiatives being held back.

Councillor Hibbs drew attention to the increasing unsuitability of the sheltered housing offered by the Council and asked if the West Essex PCT would consider a meeting to discuss reviewing these facilities. Catherine O'Connell said the PCT were reviewing services to elderly people and intermediate care and when this had been undertaken was willing to enter into discussions.

Members had concerns over the future of the Saffron Walden Community Hospital and sought reassurance. Catherine O'Connell informed the Committee that the aim of the PCT was to provide services in the best location for local residents. It was likely that it would be heavily involved in

step down services to aid people when they left hospital and undertook rehabilitation within the community.

A review of Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow was underway for acute services. The mental health provision would not change and most of the team had remained the same.

Breast screening was due to restart in Uttlesford in February starting in Stansted and going on until April. Saffron Walden would see screening in the months of July to November and Dunmow in November 2007 to March 2008. The delay in service had been due to a shortage of radiographers and an incident at a unit.

A new NHS dentist would open in Saffron Walden in December. The nearest major NHS orthodontist was based at Epping Forest. The level of funding within West Essex was in line with national funding. The purpose of NHS dentistry was to ensure the oral health of the population was accessible and affordable.

Councillor Gregory wished to know the latest position on the proposed health centre for Stansted. He was told that the position had not yet changed. There were still large financial problems, although the need was recognised and development would go ahead, but this would take time. He further asked about the provision of a surgery in Felsted and Little Dunmow, which was needed with the development of Oakwood Park. Catherine O'Connell would report back when she had the information available.

Catherine O'Connell rounded up by saying that all partnerships would continue and the existing effectiveness of programmes would be looked at. Members asked to receive quarterly feedback from West Essex PCT and the Chair invited them to attend the April meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

SC21

SCRUTINY CLIMATE CHANGE INVESTIGATION

Councillor Hibbs updated the Committee on the climate change investigation. The work of the Working Party was nearly complete, it had produced a draft report and hoped only to meet one more time to finalise the work. He reported that valuable meetings with officers had been of great use and found a lot of good work was undertaken within the Council. He thanked officers involved and especially the co-operation of Jake Roos, the Energy Efficiency Officer for his hard work and dedication.

The draft report identified that a holistic approach by the Council into making decisions should be a top down approach. The task group had come up with a set of recommendations which had been wide ranging. If taken on board, a methodology would be needed to ensure it was carried forward. It was essential that sustainability be mainstreamed throughout the Council.

Members recognised that sustainability was on going and requested that the Constitution Task group be asked to give guidance as to which policy committee this should be reported to.

SC21

LEBANON EVACUATION

A meeting to discuss the evacuation had taken place and Members were presented with a précis of issues identified at the meeting.

Overall it was agreed that the Council had made a good response to the initial crisis. However concerns were held over the response of outside agencies as there was little co-ordination between them. Some of the areas agreed as successful were:

- Accommodation
- Transport
- Uttlesford District Council Officer and Councillor Response
- Local Community
- Multi Agency Response
- Reception presence at the airport
- Media Coverage
- Evacuees involving themselves within the community.
- Provision of additional services

Some areas that could have been better were:

- No central co-ordination
- Dealing with and planning the media response
- Effect upon Uttlesford District Council departments and councillor awareness
- Appreciating that each individual family unit need was different.
- Money provisions
- Using local knowledge
- Airport not supportive in all areas
- Communications
- Accommodation needs
- No forward planning
- Information for evacuees

The next stage would be to identify what to do with the data and consult all agencies that should be involved. Members of the Committee felt that Councillors had been an untapped resource and should have been more widely used.

SC22

STREET LIGHTING

The Strategic Partnerships Manager updated the Committee on a report by the Institute of Street Engineers on the reduction of street lighting.

The four main towns affected were opposed to the proposal of switching off some street lighting; however rural parishes were generally in favour of switching off the lights to save on light pollution.

One problem that had been identified was the adequacy of remaining light for CCTV to operate efficiently. The police were unwilling to comment on the

situation. Councillor Murphy drew attention to the Farringdon Study which he had circulated at a previous meeting which had proven that switching off street lighting increased crime.

Members viewed the proposal as having discrepancies and discussed the possibility of seeking legal advice. The Strategic Partnerships Manager suggested that the district along with the four main town councils and parish councils sought some form of legal advice as to the implications of switching off street lighting. Members further added that they were not against reducing light pollution and sustainability, and supported the suggestion.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to Full Council that they proceed to a judicial review, but are not opposed in principle to energy saving and sustainability, however, they considered that the present scheme was not well thought out. Therefore they requested that the legal department prepare a judicial review on the grounds that the proposal was ill thought out and inadequate consultation had been carried out. The review to be sought on the grounds of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

SC21 **ROAD SAFETY STATISTICS**

Members viewed the KSI statistics for Uttlesford which it was proposed to send to Area Panels in future and asked that future statistics differentiate between daytime and night time figures.

SC22 **DECISION LISTS**

Councillor Flack was surprised to see that the Environment Committee endorsed a report by LA21. She was informed that the report had been thorough, and endorsed in principle the recommendations of the bus survey in Saffron Walden.

Members held concern over the number of items that were being discussed at multiple committees and the lack of decisions being made. Members suggested that in future the Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the decision process and channels of reporting.

SC23 **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

The February meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would consider:
Final Climate Change Report
Lebanese Evacuation
Airport Fire Safety
Scrutiny Processes
Value for Money

The meeting ended at 10.05pm.