

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 7 FEBRUARY 2007**

Present:- Councillor S Flack – Chairman.  
Councillors:- M A Hibbs, J P Murphy, S Schneider, A Wattebot  
and A C Yarwood.

Officers in attendance: - A Clarke, V Harvey, J Roos, and T Turner.

Also present:- Paul Bowers from Essex Fire Service.

**SC24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers, E Gower, D W Gregory, V Pedder and F E Silver.

Councillor S Flack declared a personal non prejudicial interest as a member of Essex Fire Authority.

**SC25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2006**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2006 were received and signed by the Chairman.

**SC26 FIRE SAFETY**

Paul Bowers from Essex Fire and Rescue made a presentation to the committee on fire cover, and community safety within Essex. Currently there were seven divisions within Essex and 51 stations. All six stations within Uttlesford were operated by retained staff and received support from other stations around the district. The approximate cost of operating a retained station for one year was £210,000 and a full time station stood at around £1 million per year. The fire stations within Uttlesford typically received the most activity during the very wet and very dry periods. Stansted Station was the busiest as not only did it have the Airport near by, but it also had access points onto the M11 and A120. Unfortunately around a third of calls were false alarms.

It was the aim of the Fire Service Agreement to reduce the number of accidents by 2010. Road Traffic Accidents were the most problematic within Uttlesford. However 90% of the traffic travelling on the M11 was transient, therefore targeting a reduction in the cause of accidents was a national task.

The Fire Authority held a mutual agreement within Essex and surrounding counties to call upon resources, with a pre-determined attendance from the two nearest counties.

There were currently a number of safety initiatives in force, with particular focus on the young and elderly. Exemplary schemes which Members were

familiar with were Crucial Crew and Motorwise. Essex Fire and Rescue also provided smoke alarms to any households that required them.

The airport posed significant development and high levels of activity with the movement of passengers, resources and cargo. A project was underway that assessed the risk and likelihood of managing resources as well as the strain on the transport link.

The growth of leisure facilities, warehouses, homes and businesses within the District would need more resources, including the number of retained fire fighters. Work with employers was underway to encourage releasing their staff to undertake training.

A review of station locations, including Saffron Walden was underway, as the target time of five minutes in which to reach the station was not always possible.

Members noted the presentation and Councillor Flack would inform members upon the results of the reviews.

SC27

## **LEBANON EVACUATION SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Councillor Yarwood presented to the committee the lessons learnt since the Lebanese evacuation crisis. The recently set up Working Party had tried not to duplicate any work already carried out by officers. The data gathered had focused on demobilisation, officer response, and services offered. It was found that these had worked well, as had the ongoing officer and member support.

The lack of funding from central government and no central co-ordinator were identified as negatives. Problems also arose when enrolling children in schools and providing furniture and food for the evacuees. Social Services were not helpful during the early stages and when the flights arrived the Red Cross were not allowed airside.

Members were appalled that central government had not provided any financial reimbursement. They also wished to find out if BAA had received payment from the Government from aircraft landing fees.

In preparation for a future emergency within Uttlesford the three stages of response, stabilisation and business as usual would need to be analysed further. As part of this the council would be setting up accounts with hotels, to avoid going to the limit on the organisation's credit cards, as had happened.

At present a draft report was being prepared as well as an emergency simulation for training purposes.

Councillor Hibbs said that during the early stages the Housing Officers were under resourced and were not made aware that they could receive emergency cover until three weeks after the occurrence. He further added that in the later stages when transporting items was necessary there was no

organisation to utilise council vehicles and that was why a co-ordinator was necessary.

Current policy stated that Members should not get involved in an emergency until the later stages. However, Members felt that this needed to be altered as they were a useful resource within the community.

Members agreed to return to this at the next Scrutiny meeting.

SC28

## **CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REVIEW REPORT**

The Energy Efficiency Surveyor presented to the committee the final report that the Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation Group had researched. The group had reviewed a wide range of reports and news articles, sought out good practice from other Councils and interviewed Council officers.

During the 11 meetings, the Climate Change Scrutiny group looked at best practice, and research had indicated a 90% certainty that humans were responsible for climate change.

With the expected change in climate East Anglia could expect milder wetter winters and hotter drier summers; but overall each year would see less rain. The Council were already buying green electricity and was starting to embed a culture of reduce, reuse and recycle. The Government was working towards certifying carbon offsetting schemes, but the investigation group indicated priority should be on avoidance. There were a variety of policy drivers including the EU building requirements, the UK Climate Change Programme, air quality and the Local Government White Paper 2006.

At present the council emitted 2554 tonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2005/06. 7,600 tonnes of CO2 equivalent was emitted from waste to landfill collected by the Council in 2005/06, however, this was expected to improve in the present financial year as the council had recycled more in the first three quarters, than it had in the whole of the previous year. The Energy Surveyor indicated that there was currently good commitment at senior level within the council and this now needed to filter throughout the organisation.

The cost of energy was expected to rise by 70%. Excellent fleet management was already underway by reducing emissions as well as staff travel planning.

The Energy Efficiency Surveyor reminded members that the following resolutions had previously been agreed and recommended. That the council:

- 1 Use recycled paper products wherever possible.
- 2 Ensures that the new day centre being built at Vicarage Mead is an exemplar of sustainable, low-carbon construction.
- 3 Support this by providing developers with guidance, advice and information on how they may achieve these requirements.

Members were keen to see improved measures in place to cut CO2 emissions within the district.

RESOLVED that the committee endorse the report and recommended to the Council that it:

- 1 Adopted the objective of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from Council operations as quickly as possible and practical, with the long-term objective of reducing them to zero.
- 2 Sought to achieve the above objective by using the 'sustainable energy hierarchy'; avoiding unnecessary energy use, pursuing improved energy efficiency, installing 'low carbon' technologies, switching to lower-carbon fuels and carbon offsetting, in that order of priority.
- 3 Adopted the objective of reducing emissions of Green House Gases from the district as a whole in line with national targets.
- 4 Created a climate change strategy describing how it will achieve its objectives in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change impacts. The strategy would have annual and five-year emissions reduction targets for the Council and a separate target for the district as a whole. The strategy would include a programme of measures describing how it would achieve its targets, and be refreshed periodically and indefinitely. The strategy would be established in consultation with the public and key stakeholder groups, such as Uttlesford LA21.
- 5 Follows the ISO 14001/BS 8555 standard throughout the preparation and implementation of its climate change strategy, to allow for possible EMAS accreditation in the future.
- 6 Maintains and reinforces the role of Climate Change and Sustainability Champion, which is to be held by a member of the Scrutiny Committee (a role currently held by Cllr Pedder). This role would primarily involve responsibility for overseeing development and implementation of the climate change strategy. This member champion would report on Council Green House Gas emissions and progress each year to full Council.
- 7 Form a climate change strategy group consisting of officers and members that was responsible for development and implementation of the Council's climate change strategy. The group would consist of key staff, a senior manager and one or more Councillors, including the Climate Change and Sustainability Member Champion.
- 8 Gave the Scrutiny Committee the duty to supervise development and implementation of Climate Change Strategy, and pass developed policies on to full Council for approval. The Committee

would also examine decisions, Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation – Final Report UDC policies and operating practices generally to make sure they are consistent with the Council's objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- 9 Experiment with reducing paper use and member travel using the Scrutiny Committee. This would involve measures such as greater use of electronic data retrieval (lap-tops, data projectors) and communication (e-mail, video conferencing). The Council would then expand successful measures to all committees.
- 10 Include a 'sustainability check' on all committee reports and ensures that the environmental impacts of all decisions are considered and mitigated where possible.
- 11 Provide training to key staff on how to complete a sustainability check in a satisfactory manner.
- 12 Establish a 'green' procurement policy that minimises the environmental impact created by the goods and services the Council purchases.
- 13 Establish an energy management policy in accordance with best practice standards. This would also include a water efficiency policy.
- 14 Give the ultimate responsibility for energy management and achieving energy and emissions savings to the Director of Finance or equivalent.
- 15 Create and appoint someone to a 0.3 FTE (full time equivalent) senior level post of Senior Energy Manager. This person would have responsibility for commissioning and supervising energy efficiency and renewable energy improvement work. This person will report to the Director of Finance or equivalent and would have the delegated responsibility for achieving energy and emissions savings in council buildings.
- 16 Create an energy management subgroup of the climate change strategy group; consisting of the holder of the Senior Energy Manager role, relevant facilities management staff, the Energy Manager and Energy Efficiency Surveyor, an accountant and a representative of the stewards. This group would work together to achieve energy and emissions savings in council buildings.
- 17 Establish an ongoing programme of energy efficiency improvements with 'pump priming' finance to continually increase energy efficiency in its buildings in line with the overall target set in the climate change strategy.
- 18 Invest in low carbon energy technologies (solar, wind, biomass, combined heat and power) for generation of heat and electricity for its buildings.

- 19 Establish a financial mechanism to recycle cost savings resulting from reduced energy use in order to make longer term investments in reducing the carbon footprint of council buildings.
- 20 Increase staff participation in management of energy and water through training and incentives plus regular updates on performance.
- 21 Join the pan-European 'Display' campaign and labels its buildings in advance of the EU requirement, displaying an energy rating and information on planned energy management improvements in a clear, easy to understand format.
- 22 As part of the climate change strategy, establishes a formal target and plan of action for reducing the running costs and Green House Gas emissions from Council housing and adapting them to predicted climate change impacts.
- 23 Establish a programme of installing appropriate low carbon technologies in all council housing.
- 24 Raises awareness of these programmes among tenants and educate them on how they can save energy through behaviour changes.
- 25 Put additional resources into increasing the energy efficiency of the existing private housing stock and achieving the Council's 2010 HECA target, paying particular attention to listed buildings.
- 26 Investigate new measures (for instance offering grant incentives) to increase the uptake of low carbon technologies in existing private housing by introducing licensing policies.
- 27 Ensures the car lease and loan scheme provides incentives for people to choose low emissions vehicles, links reimbursement to emissions rate, not engine size and creates incentives within the system for staff to car-share for business travel.
- 28 Investigates establishing a pool of low-emissions vehicles for essential car users.
- 29 Reduces the emissions of council fleet vehicles, initially by use of 5% bio-diesel, but in the longer term migrating the fleet towards lower emissions vehicles and fuels and investigate vegetable oil.
- 30 Renews efforts to implement the staff travel plan including the recommendations already approved by Resources Committee on 18-11-2004.
- 31 Demanded increasing standards of sustainable construction from developers by introducing requirements specifying code

level 3 such as sustainable homes through the LDF and SPD process relating to energy, water, building materials, waste, wildlife, local amenities and transportation.

- 32 Introduce a 'Merton Rule' for a minimum 10% of energy needed for a site to be provided by on-site renewable energy. This rule will apply to all developments larger than 1000 square metre floor area or five dwellings.
- 33 Require a contribution by way of a Section 106 agreement for every tonne of projected annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from the development. The money would be put in a fund used to provide grants and incentives for people to reduce emissions from existing housing in the district by investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- 34 Reviews existing planning and conservation policies and advice to ensure visual issues and conservation values are appropriately balanced with the need to reduce GHG emissions in planning decisions.
- 35 Supports community initiatives that have similar objectives to the Council's climate change strategy.
- 36 Runs a continuous programme of community engagement to raise awareness of climate change and sustainability issues and encourage them to reduce their environmental impact.
- 37 Assists local businesses and other organisations with reducing their Green House Gas emissions and environmental impact and with adapting to climate change.

SC29

## **DECISION LISTS**

Members noted the decisions lists from the Environment, Operations and Community Committees.

The meeting ended at 11pm.