

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN on 11 JULY 2007 at 7.30 pm.**

Present: - Councillor A Dean – Chairman.  
Councillors D Jones, D Sadler, G Sell, S Schneider, A Wattebot and  
L Wells.

Officers Present: - Tracy Turner and Ellen O'Malley.

**SC1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Anjum, R Chambers,  
R Lemon and A Yarwood.

**SC2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2007**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2007 were signed as a correct  
record by the Chairman.

**SC3 MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman and the Director for Communities, Tracy Turner, explained that a  
summary of the achievements and progress with the Lebanon Evacuation and  
Climate Change Scrutiny Reviews carried out by the previous Scrutiny Members  
would be reported later in the meeting.

**SC4 DECISIONS LISTS**

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

**SC5 SCRUTINY REVIEW TO DATE**

- (i) CLIMATE CHANGE. SCRUTINY REVIEW**
- (ii) LEBANON EVACUATION. SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Lead Officer, Tracy Turner gave a short presentation on the reviews carried  
out by the previous Scrutiny Members on Climate Change and the Lebanese  
Evacuation. She distributed a copy of the slides from both presentations and  
asked Members to note what stage they had reached, and the achievements that  
had been made. Tracy Turner also distributed scoping documentation for the  
previous reviews as an example of a useful format that could be used in the  
future. She asked Members to consider the importance of using external

witnesses and bodies, who could provide expert knowledge when carrying out the next Scrutiny reviews.

Councillor D Jones asked whether a full report of the Climate Change, Scrutiny Review could be issued to him for information and it was agreed that this would be arranged.

Members requested that a detailed report and action plan from the Climate Change review be presented to Members at the next meeting in October. It was also pointed out that the recommendations from the Climate Change review had been worked into a 2011 project.

RESOLVED that a progress report on the 2011 sustainability project would be brought to the next meeting.

## SC6 **WHAT NEXT – WORKSHOP TO BUILD AN OUTLINE REVIEW PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS FACILITATED BY THE CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY**

Gareth Wall gave an introduction to his organisation, the Centre for Public Scrutiny. He explained that it had been set up to give advice and support to Scrutiny Committees and that 70-80% of its work focussed on local authorities.

Gareth Wall presented to the Committee the CFPS four principles of good scrutiny:

- (1) Effective scrutiny should provide a critical friend/challenge to other bodies.
- (2) Effective scrutiny should enable the voice and concerns of the public to be heard through different forms of engagement.
- (3) Effective scrutiny should be led and owned by independent minded governors.
- (4) Effective scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services.

Members commented that these principles could be easily incorporated into Uttlesford's Scrutiny Committee. Gareth Wall gave the details of relevant training courses that Members might consider. He said that the University of Birmingham; Local Government Studies held an excellent course on questioning skills and RADA also held a specific training session for Scrutiny Committees on questioning skills. Gareth Wall gave Members an insight into past reviews carried out by other District Councils. He then distributed a worksheet to all Members of the Committee. This gave a relevant framework for Members to use when selecting a potential scrutiny topic.

Members were asked to suggest items to add to the Scrutiny Work Programme and the following items were raised:

- (i) The communications of Essex County Council Highways department
- (ii) The new West Essex PCT
- (iii) Migration in Uttlesford
- (iv) The availability of public conveniences in Uttlesford
- (v) Education – How is this service delivered in Uttlesford?
- (vi) The role and function of the Environment Agency
- (vii) The function of the water authorities, in relation to sewage
- (viii) Member/Officer relations
- (ix) Parish engagement
- (x) The decision process – are all decisions that are made by Committees actually followed through?
- (xi) Members representing outside bodies – how effective is the representation?
- (xii) Area Panels, White Paper and Community Engagement – Can it be improved?
- (xiii) Economic benefits of the Airport
- (xiv) The image of young people

It was decided that some of these items could be worked upon immediately as they easily passed the selection test that should be applied for every potential scrutiny topic.

Members decided that the communication between Uttlesford and Essex County Highways could be worked upon immediately, and that there might be an opportunity for cross authority work with other districts.

Members decided that Area Panels and Community Engagement were timely issue around the new Government legislation, Community Call For Action but agreed that this would need to be discussed with the new Administration to avoid duplication.

Members decided that access to public conveniences was an issue that could be solved quickly and would not require a large amount of resources.

Members decided that they would like to look at the issue of Migration, but they required a progress report on the joint project with Braintree and East Herts to review at the next Committee, as they did not want to duplicate other work.

Members suggested that the whole Council's views should be sought as to what they would like the Scrutiny Committee to review.

RESOLVED that Councillors Sell and Jones would lead a review into the communications made by ECC Highways. Councillors Wattebot, Schneider and Yarwood would lead a review into the access and availability of Uttlesford's public conveniences. Tracy Turner would organise a Migration progress report for review at the next Scrutiny Committee in October. The Chairman would talk to Tracy Turner on how to move forward and achieve momentum on each of the agreed scrutiny items.

SC7 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

**(i) A Change of Image**

The Chairman explained that he wanted to initiate a positive image of Scrutiny in Uttlesford and that he wanted Scrutiny to become a Member led process. The Chairman commented that the workshop had helped initiate new ways of approaching Scrutiny and Members thanked Gareth Wall for conducting the workshop.

**(ii) Venue for the Next Meeting**

Tracy Turner suggested that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee could be held at a venue relevant to the Scrutiny issues suggested at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm