

**EXTRAORDINARY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 19 SEPTEMBER 2007 at 5.00 pm.**

Present: - Councillor A Dean – Chairman.  
Councillors D Jones, R Lemon, D Sadler and S Schneider.

Officers in attendance: - M Cox, A Stewart and T Turner.

**SC8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Yarwood and L Wells.

**SC9 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR WICKEN HOUSE REVIEW**

The Chairman explained that the Committee was considering this issue following many representations that had been received against the closure of Wicken House. These had suggested that it was a very well regarded public amenity that could not effectively be relocated to other centres owned by Essex County Council. The representations contained allegations that the closure process had not been satisfactorily and the reasons for closure were not correct.

Members considered proposed terms of reference for the review. These set out what it would be looking at, what it hoped to achieve, the information that would be needed, the evidence to be gathered and the potential witnesses and consultees. The timescale for the review envisaged issuing a report by the end of October.

The Chairman suggested that a Task Group should be established in order to consider this matter in greater detail

RESOLVED that

- 1 the terms of reference be agreed.
- 2 a Wicken House Review Task Group be established comprising Councillors A Dean, S Schneider and D Sadler.

**SC10 PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE AND DISCUSSION**

The Chairman said that this meeting was an opportunity for individuals to express their views about the proposed closure. Statements were made by the following individuals.

Ray Gooding ,Renee Joyce, Julian Whybro, Tim Young, Heather Salvidge, Jenny Gibson, Sarah Lewis, Meg House, Catherine Shepherd and Madeleine Newman. A statement was read on behalf of Peter Damary-Homan.

A full transcript of the points, annexed to these minutes, would be forwarded to the Task Group and form part of its further consideration of the evidence.

The presentations highlighted a number of questions that would need to be followed up by the Task Group.

- 1 Clarify the nature and the extent of the consultation.
- 2 Obtain access to all documents produced by Essex County Council. –
- 3 Obtain full details of the financial reasons for the decision, the definite cost of the closure including the effect on other budgets. Clarify the actual shortfall and compare with the other county centres. Obtain details of the use and viability of Wicken House.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said that he would try and keep them informed of the progress of the review.

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm