

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 28 NOVEMBER 2007 at 7.30 pm**

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

Also present:- Mr M McFrederick, representing the Princess Alexandra
Hospital Chair.

Officers Present:- J Mitchell, C Roberts, T Turner and A Webb.

SC20 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Mr M McFrederick to the meeting.

SC21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers, G Sell,
L Wells and A Yarwood

Councillor A Dean declared a personal interest in item 5 on the agenda as he
was a Non executive Director of the Princess Alexandra Hospital at Harlow.

SC22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2007 were received, confirmed
and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following
amendments:-

deletion of “for his reasons for call-in” in the penultimate line of the
second page;

deletion of “was” in the penultimate paragraph of the third page

SC23 UPDATE ON RECENT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATIONS – WICKEN HOUSE

The Chairman updated the Committee regarding the matter of Wicken House
which had been considered at the previous meeting. He informed the
meeting that he had written to Councillor Tracy Chapman, but had received
no written reply yet. He had had a conversation with Lord Hanningfield,
however, and had agreed to meet him, Tracy Chapman and another to
discuss what it is intended to do to replace the Wicken House facilities.

The Director of Planning informed the meeting that consultation would shortly
start on relevant planning matters.

SC24

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL NHS TRUST – CONSULTATION ON FOUNDATION TRUST'S STATUS

The Committee received a presentation by Malcolm McFrederick on behalf of the Chair of the Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust. Mr McFrederick explained that he was a member of the Hospital Board of Governors. He circulated a consultation document and summary document regarding the ambition of the hospital to become an NHS Foundation Trust. He described this process as similar to that of becoming a mutual society or public benefit corporation, necessitating a demonstration of the organisation's future and current financial competence and greater accountability to local people and staff. The advantage of such a change would be that the Hospital Board would have greater discretion to spend hospital funds as it wished. The project envisaged representation on the Council of Governors of two elected public from Uttlesford and one partner member from the councillors of the Uttlesford District Council.

Mr McFrederick asked for the Uttlesford District Council support for these proposals and asked the Council to leaflet its staff encouraging them to become members of the organisation. Mr McFrederick answered Members' questions regarding this project.

RESOLVED that the Council supports the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow in its ambition to become a NHS Foundation Trust into 2008.

SC25

JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL FOR WEST ESSEX PCT

The Director for Communities informed the meeting that the Chairman, following the conversation with the West Essex Primary Care Trust, wished to pursue an idea of forming a joint health scrutiny panel with Harlow and Epping Forest District Councils; the members reporting back to their own scrutiny panels. The Chairman understood that Rochford District Council had wrested back the function of health scrutiny from the Essex County Council to its own district and that a document was going around about the "LINX" network (Local Involvement Networks) of people with an interest in health. The Director for Communities said that in principle it would be worth pursuing this idea with a view to establishing a joint panel.

The Chairman of the Committee suggested that staff support might be obtainable to explore the idea.

RESOLVED that this idea be agreed in principle and a further report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

SC26

SCOPING SCRUTINY REVIEWS FOR PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND HIGHWAYS COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Acting Chief Finance Officer about the provision, use and maintenance of council provided conveniences. It was noted that the Review Group, comprising Councillors A Wattebot and S Schneider with Adrian Webb were happy with the terms of reference set out in

the report. Adrian Webb explained that the Group was considering closing times and the question whether public conveniences should be provided, whereas previously they had been considering organisational re-engineering aspects of this area. He added that the clerks of the Saffron Walden Town Council and the Felsted Parish Council had been consulted as to which public conveniences should be inspected. Currently, there were no charges except at the "super loos" when this was a condition of the rental agreement. The Acting Chief Finance Officer asked for the support of the Committee to continue the investigation and review.

It was noted that no further progress had been made with the scrutiny review for highways communications. Members noted that there were communication problems with Highways and that the organisation appeared to be taking on responsibilities which had been those of the police. It was noted also that maintenance of street signs and replacement of kerbstones had become less timely since the move of the Highways Area Office to Harlow. The Director of Planning agreed to raise these concerns with the Area Highways Office.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted

SC27

DECISION LISTS

Members noted the decision lists from the Environment, Finance and Administration and Community Committees. Members wished to record their pleasure that the noise monitoring equipment at Takeley was to be replaced and the Chairman asked that a note be also made of the Council's appreciation for the use of Stansted School for the Lebanese evacuation which was also appreciated by the Essex County Council's relevant committee.

It was suggested that the Scrutiny Committee should try to become a paper free committee and Members decided that this should be attempted at the next meeting. In addition, the Chairman asked that Members' appointments should be listed in their electronic diaries automatically with a two day reminder.

RESOLVED that the above suggestions be investigated and put into effect if practical.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.