

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 7 DECEMBER 2010**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)
Councillors S Anjum, G Sell, and A C Yarwood.

Officers
in attendance: R Harborough (Director of Public Services), S Martin
(Divisional Head of Customer Support and Revenue
Services), L Lipscombe (Emergency Planning Officer),
L Milns (Project Officer), C Roberts (Democratic Services
Officer), B Tice (Project Officer).

SC18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D M Jones,
H S Rolfe, and S V Schneider.

SC19 MINUTES

The minutes of the scheduled meeting held on 28 September 2010 and the
extraordinary meeting held on 1 November 2010 were received and signed by
the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following alterations suggested
by the Chairman and agreed by the Committee:-

In Minute SC11 – CCTV, immediately after the fourth paragraph, the insertion
of the words “The Chairman questioned whether CCTV had assisted crime
detection because there was no hard evidence that it had.”

As a replacement for the last paragraph of that minute, the insertion of the
words “Members had mixed opinions on whether CCTV in Uttlesford provided
value for money and advised (i) that performance measures should be
introduced as soon as possible and (ii) that best practice in the use of CCTV
should be employed at all locations where there is CCTV.”

In the resolution to Minute SC13 – Scrutiny Review of Uttlesford Day Centres,
replacement of the word “noted” by the words “not accepted in its current form”,
and in Minute SC17 paragraph 13 replacement of the words “The Dunmow,
Takeley and Stansted” by the word “Some”.

SC20 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute SC10 – 2012 Olympics

Councillor Sell asked for an update on the Olympic Task Group’s activities and
the Divisional Head of Customer Support and Revenue Services agreed to
provide Scrutiny members with further information.

(ii) Minute SC11 – CCTV

Councillor Yarwood felt it was important to have a cost benefit assessment of CCTV since there was no evidence of its effect on crime detection, only its crime prevention effect.

(iii) Minute SC13 – Scrutiny Review of Uttlesford Day Centres

The Chairman thanked all who had participated in this review which he regarded as a job well done.

SC21 LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT/ACTION LIST

The Committee considered the report of the Divisional Head of Customer Support and Revenue Services. The report contained an updated work programme and an action plan which showed all actions as complete or assigned to future dates in the committee calendar.

At the Chairman's request the Divisional Head of Customer Support and Revenue Services agreed to add the Day Centre review to the list of completed actions.

The progress shown in the committee action list was noted.

SC22 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH – UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered an update report from the Community Safety Officer on Neighbourhood Watch activity.

The report showed that improvements to Neighbourhood Watch coverage had been achieved over the past six months. There remained a minority of small wards where there was not any coverage. Councillor Yarwood added information about the future role of the Watch Administrator.

Members asked for a further report on this matter before the May elections.

SC23 EMERGENCY PLANNING – STATUS REPORT

The Committee considered a report from the Emergency Planning Officer which described plans, projects and training workshops in operation throughout the District.

Members felt the Strategic Management Board should discuss how management and staff could be encouraged to attend emergency planning training and be more committed to the response teams, and they asked that this be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive.

The Chairman also asked officers to consider how relevant the Impact and Risk boxes in reports were in the case of the Scrutiny Committee.

SC24

SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Public Services which set out:-

- the legal basis for entering into agreements under s 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and limits upon the content of such agreements,
- the Uttlesford District Council policy governing such agreements,
- provision under statute for councils to charge a community infrastructure levy and
- details of contributions received by way of community infrastructure levy but not as yet expended.

The Director of Public Services added that the chief questions were whether the Council was:-

- optimising the opportunity to make such agreements,
- ensuring that the obligations created by the agreements were being discharged,
- collecting agreed funds and using them for the intended purpose (not having to return them to the fund provider due to lapse of time).

Councillor Yarwood expressed concern about the inefficiency of not using funds.

Councillor Dean noted that affordable housing contributions were proposed to be used in parishes other than the one in which the contributing development was located.

The Director of Public Services commented that if on site provision had been made instead of an off site financial contribution, the nominations would normally have been allocated through choice based letting arrangements to those in greatest housing need on the waiting list regardless of where they currently lived. It was therefore not necessary for affordable housing contributions to be used in the same parish as the contributing development.

He further commented that under the community infrastructure levy and new homes bonus arrangements, contributions from all developments would be pooled and used to provide infrastructure that would benefit a wider area than a particular community, apart from the neighbourhood element to which recent ministerial statements had referred. The Council would need to develop new policy frameworks to deal with these issues.

Councillor Dean suggested that the Environment Committee be asked to address the implementation of a community infrastructure levy in developing the core strategy.

Councillor Yarwood said that to enable proper scrutiny it was necessary to have details showing what the money in each scheme was being spent on.

Councillor Dean asked what supervision the funds normally received and the Director of Public Services explained that the question how money was used was one for the relevant policy committee. Councillor Dean suggested that the policy committees should therefore monitor the use of the money.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- 1 the Environment Committee be requested to ensure that the question of the infrastructure levy will be taken into consideration when considering the core strategy,
- 2 the Community and Housing Committee reviews the Council's holding of £2,673,253 arising from the Stansted Airport s106 agreement, and ensures that it has a plan for its appropriate use,
- 3 discussions be commenced between the District Council and relevant Parish Councils regarding the use of money not yet fully allocated which has arisen from agreements made in connection with development at Foresthall Park Great Dunmow and at Bell College Saffron Walden and
- 4 all policy committees be asked to agree to be responsible for the effective deployment and monitoring of section 106 funds arising in connection with developments in their sphere of influence.

SC25

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF BRIDGE END GARDENS – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members considered a report from the Project Officers in connection with the transfer of responsibility for Bridge End Gardens and respective equipment, materials and assets to Saffron Walden Town Council.

As part of the transfer agreement it had been resolved that, for the duration of the tapering funding, an annual report be made to the Scrutiny Committee by Saffron Walden Town Council.

A draft set of terms of reference had therefore been prepared for the Committee's approval to be communicated to Town Council officers to inform the basis of their review.

Members considered the draft and agreed it subject to two minor amendments to wording.

RESOLVED

That the terms of reference for the review of Bridge End Gardens are approved subject to agreed minor amendments and are communicated to the Saffron Walden Town Council to form the basis of their review.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.