

18 November 2013

Dear Councillor

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will be held at the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden on Tuesday 26 November 2013 at 7.45pm or at the conclusion of the question and answer session whichever is the earlier.

Yours faithfully

JOHN MITCHELL

Chief Executive

Commencing at 7.30 pm, there will be an opportunity of up to 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions and make statements, subject to having given two working days prior notice

A G E N D A P A R T I

- 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the meetings held on 15 October (attached) and 11 November 2013 (when available).
- 3 Business arising.
- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision (standing item).
- 5 Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee (standing item).
- 6 Scrutiny work programme.
- 7 Cabinet forward plan.

- 8 Airport related parking.
- 9 Tenant Regulatory Panel update.
- 10 Rural broadband.
- 11 2014/15 Budget Planning
 - Financial Outlook and 2014/15 Budget Strategy report.
 - Budget consultation 2013.
- 12 Statutory service.
- 13 Planning process (to follow).
- 14 Any other items that the Chairman considers to be urgent.

To: - Councillors G Barker, P Davies, I Evans, **E Godwin**, S Harris, S Howell,
D Morson, E Oliver, J Rich and D Watson.

Lead Officer: Adrian Webb (01799 510421)

Democratic Services Officer: Rebecca Dobson (01799) 510433

MEETINGS AND THE PUBLIC

Members of the public are welcome to attend any of the Council's Cabinet or Committee meetings and listen to the debate. All agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed on the Council's website www.uttlesford.gov.uk.

Members of the public and representatives of parish and town councils are now permitted to speak or ask questions at any of these meetings. You will need to register with the Democratic Services Officer by midday two working days before the meeting. An explanatory leaflet has been prepared which details the procedure and is available from the Council offices at Saffron Walden.

A different scheme is applicable to meetings of the Planning Committee and you should refer to the relevant information for further details.

Please note that meetings of working groups and task groups are not held in public and the access to information rules do not apply to these meetings.

The agenda is split into two parts. Most of the business is dealt with in Part 1 which is open to the public. Part II includes items which may be discussed in the absence of the press or public, as they deal with information which is personal or sensitive for some other reason. You will be asked to leave the meeting before Part II items are discussed.

You are entitled to see any of the background papers that are listed at the end of each report.

If you want to inspect background papers or speak before a meeting please contact either Peter Snow on 01799 510430, Maggie Cox on 01799 510369, or Rebecca Dobson 01799 510433 or by fax on 01799 510550.

Agenda and Minutes are available in alternative formats and/or languages. For more information please call 01799 510510.

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If you are deaf or have impaired hearing and would like a signer available at a meeting, please contact Peter Snow on 01799 510430 or email psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 15 OCTOBER 2013**

Present: Councillor E Godwin – Chairman.
Councillors G Barker, P Davies, I Evans, S Howell, D
Morson, E Oliver and D Watson.

Also present: Councillor J Ketteridge (Leader of the Council),
Councillors S Barker and J Redfern.

Officers: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services), R
Dobson (Principal Democratic Services Officer), R
Harborough (Director of Public Services), J Pine
(Planning Policy/Development Management Liaison
Officer), A Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and
Building Control), V Taylor (Business Improvement and
Performance Officer) and A Webb (Director of Corporate
Services).

SC24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harris and Rich.

SC25 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2013 were received confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SC26 BUSINESS ARISING

i) Minute SC16 – Clinical Commissioning Group

Councillor Evans asked for an update. Members discussed responses given by the CCG and expressed concern at the lack of specific responses. Councillor G Barker reported that at a recent meeting of Essex GPs about the CCG which he had attended, the collective view was one of dismay at the funding gap and an issue regarding administration of the CCG's banking arrangements.

It was agreed to write a further letter to West Essex CCG to seek more specific replies and to enquire about the outcome of the consultation.

ii) Minute SC17 – Highways Strategic Partnership

Members asked for confirmation of the number of miles of highway treated per year. The Business Improvement and

Performance Officer said figures had been supplied by the Highways Strategic Partnership for 2012-13 showing that of 388,000 km of network, 7,500km (representing 5% of the total) had received major treatment.

Members were informed that the Local Highways Panel received reports on structural resurfacing programmes. Councillor Howell said he was interested to know how long a road survived, and asked how many miles of roads were resurfaced each year rather than defined as “major works”.

Councillor S Barker declared an interest as a member of Essex County Council. She said the figures were published regularly and much information was supplied to Local Highways Panels. Major roads were capitalised. There had been an audit committee decision at ECC to review the work of the strategic partnership. Whilst a proportion of minor works were getting done, unfortunately implementation of major works was now not possible before winter.

iii) Minute SC18 – Highways Planning Consultation

Councillor Godwin declared an interest as a member of the Planning Committee. She said the Committee had noticed an improvement in the level of information from Highways being supplied in reports during the last month.

iv) Minute SC19 – Planning Performance Review

Councillor Watson said he was pleased performance was improving but he was concerned that targets were still not being met. He said there were cases where Planning Committee was not being given the most up to date or accurate information. He referred to a recent application where health and safety information had been omitted which had had quite serious implications. There were instances where the new pollution formula was not included in applications and was only commented on after the event. He proposed that scrutiny of planning performance be undertaken.

Councillor Howell said Performance and Audit Committee, of which he was Chairman, had looked at the overall performance of planning. The Committee had monitored through benchmarking the planning service’s performance regarding major applications and the Council’s success rate for appeals, and there was clear evidence the service was improving. He did not see the point of looking at the planning function in duplicate.

The Director of Corporate Services said Scrutiny Committee could only look at process, not individual applications.

It was agreed to include scrutiny of the planning process in the Committee's work programme, to be timetabled by officers in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

v) Minute SC22 – scoping report rural broadband

Councillor S Barker asked about the value of considering a full report on this matter now that the roll-out programme had been announced. The Chairman said it was right to look at rural broadband as there was confusion about the type of service to be supplied to some areas.

SC27

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members agreed the planning process review would be included initially as a scoping report at a future meeting, the date of which would be agreed by officers in consultation with Councillors Godwin and Morson.

Councillor Howell said he wished to add two items to the work programme: in view of the large numbers of housing planned for this district, the Committee should question Essex County Council to ensure it was taking all necessary steps to ensure sufficient school places were planned; and he would like the Committee to be supplied with a list of the functions the Council had a statutory duty to deliver and those which it delivered but which were not part of any statutory duty.

Councillor Godwin declared an interest as a school governor at Birchanger Primary School. She said there was always consultation between the County, schools and the Education Department regarding school places, but she was concerned the schools did not request sufficient places.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said consultation was triggered by applications for 12 or more dwellings and that pupil projection numbers were considered. If capacity was insufficient then planning permission would always require a financial contribution or land. The delivery of these places was not within this Council's control, but with Essex County Council.

It was agreed to invite the ECC infrastructure delivery manager to report to the Committee before the end of the year when the planning process scoping report was considered.

Councillor Oliver asked that the discrepancies in the North Essex Parking Partnership information supplied to the Committee should be scrutinised. He

referred to areas where he had concerns, in particular reference in the reports to use of reserves.

The Director of Corporate Services said this issue was one which was being examined by internal auditors across Essex, including this Council's own Internal Audit Management team, and he questioned whether the Committee wished to scrutinise this matter in parallel with them.

Councillor Evans said she shared Councillor Oliver's concern.

Councillor S Barker said over the last year Epping Forest District Council had been introduced into the NEPP and this change had had an effect on NEPP's dynamics and finances. The finances were complicated by the fact that NEPP was responsible for both on- and off-street parking. Finances for on-street parking were managed by ECC, and the money was not all in one pot.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said there was a drawdown at the end of the year from reserves, and from this year going forward on-street parking had to be cost-neutral; if not, then each council would have to pick up the tab. For off-street parking the Council paid a management charge, which was less than when the Council operated it in-house.

It was agreed to discuss these issues when the scoping report was available.

SC28

CAR PARKING TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

Councillor Godwin thanked Councillor Evans and Jeremy Pine for an excellent report.

Councillor Evans said she too was very grateful to Mr Pine and to her fellow members of the task group, Councillors Davies and Watson. She presented the report, highlighting the Task Group's terms of reference, evidence obtained and the recommendations.

Members commented on the report and it was proposed and seconded for recommendation to Cabinet.

Councillor Ketteridge said he shared the task group's disappointment at the low level of response from Saffron Walden businesses. He asked whether weekend parking at these offices had been taken into account. He asked also whether the task group had looked at car parking tariffs in neighbouring districts. He felt many of the responses to the questionnaire indicated a need to educate people as to what was in fact provided in terms of parking in Uttlesford.

The Planning Policy and Development Management Liaison Officer said use of the Council's office car park had been taken into account although had not

featured much in responses to the survey. In relation to charges, people were reasonably happy with the levels charged, but inevitably always wanted cheaper parking; regarding free 30 minute parking the range of tariffs was fairly limited, so this proposal could be looked at.

Councillor Evans said the timescale and limited resources available for the task group had prevented undertaking benchmarking outside the district.

Councillor G Barker reminded members that the 4 hour tariff at The Common in Saffron Walden had been introduced as a result of a petition from customers of a particular hairdressing salon who wished to have a longer duration of time available. This and some other caveats on the recommendations should be looked at carefully, including the rationalising of discrepancies such as the reference in one place to income of £500,000 and in another to income of £900,000. There was an impression that car parking income was a “cash cow” for the Council. Otherwise he supported the recommendations.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said the recommendations mainly comprised management issues, so only three main elements needed to be recommended to Cabinet: tariffs, 30 minute free parking and pay by phone. Cabinet had already agreed the latter and input for progressing this scheme was expected soon from NEPP.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said the limited response of the business community gave the Council the opportunity to engage with them again.

Councillor Redfern said for businesses based outside Saffron Walden town centre the survey had not seemed relevant.

Councillor S Barker said it was surprising that a recommendation was made for facilitating a shoppers’ parking charge rebate scheme in Stansted Mountfitchet without such a scheme being made also for businesses in Dunmow. She asked for the recommendation to be extended to include Dunmow. She suggested also that it was important to print information about such schemes on the parking tickets themselves, or to provide an official sign for businesses to display.

RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet that officers should explore all the recommendations set out in the report before Scrutiny Committee.

SC29

POLICE CRIME COMMISSIONER MEETING

The Chairman gave a verbal update on the recent public meeting held by the Police Crime Commissioner. She said it had been disappointing in that the Police Crime Commissioner himself had not attended, so the meeting had

taken place with his Deputy. Only eight Members from this Council had attended. Further, the responses which had been given to questions had been unsatisfactory. These issues had included the following:

Q: What level of police cover was in place for rural areas?

A: Cover depended on the type of crime being reported. Cover was provided by six individuals who were not qualified police officers.

Q: Was performance data available, in particular regarding border responsibility?

A: The service operated across borders, depending on which police were nearest.

Q: What measures were taken to assist rural areas where police station closures had taken place?

A: Rural crime was attributable to a small number of repeat offenders.

Members discussed whether there was any advantage to be gained in inviting the Police Crime Commissioner, or as an alternative, a senior police officer, to attend before the Committee, when answers were likely to be given along the same lines as answers to written questions. It was also suggested the Committee should ask the Police Service to provide regular updates.

It was agreed that officers, together with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, should identify a representative from the Police to attend a future meeting of the Committee and provide regular written updates.

SC30

AIRPORT RELATED PARKING SCOPING REPORT

Members discussed the information they wished to see in the report. Members felt it should include the inconvenience to local residents of cars left parked in their streets by airport users; parking by airport workers; unauthorised businesses operating unofficial car parks on land outside the airport, and whether there was an issue of suppressing commercial alternative parking, although members said conditions made at the time of the planning permission required commercial parking to be kept within the confines of the airport.

Members emphasised their wish to look at the airport's policy regarding drop-off arrangements. These arrangements were seen as unfair and inconsiderate both to the airport's customers and to local residents, and were also inconvenient for the elderly and disabled. The difficulty in obtaining the local residents' concession and poor publicity for its availability should also be examined. Similarly the "hotline" offered by the airport for people to report parking problems was not well publicised.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said the data on historic enforcement action should be looked at. The reasons for the confining of

airport related parking to within the airport boundary were based on the principles of protection of the countryside.

SC31

MANAGEMENT OF FOUL DRAINAGE FROM RURAL PROPERTIES

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Public Services on management of foul drainage from rural properties.

The report stated that there was one area currently requiring specific action which was the Petlands Plant. The Council was requiring the suppliers to resolve an issue regarding compliance with the plant's discharge consents.

Councillor S Barker suggested a proactive approach to replacement of tanks and treatment plants. She suggested identifying properties which might be suitable for replacement of systems, and where private owners might contribute to the cost.

The Director of Public Services said the Council asked each year the owners of private properties which were connected to a Council owned tank to indicate whether they wished to make changes. However there would be a substantial cost which private owners were often not willing to take on.

Members questioned whether weekly checking the treatment plants by a Council employee was a necessary measure.

The Director of Public Services said the Council had one dedicated operative checking the treatment plants on a continuous cycle. The facilities being inspected were generally larger than the average domestic septic tank. If a water course were to be polluted, there would be environmental consequences, and therefore this issue was one of the more significant risks for the Council, because of the reputational damage. In 2005, when the Council had found itself facing a significant backlog of work associated with these systems, it had considered a programme for replacing all its plants but discovered that the costs were prohibitive. It determined that having a dedicated inspection operative would in practice be the most cost-effective approach.

RESOLVED to note the report.

SC32

TRADE WASTE CONTRACTS AND PRICING

Councillor Redfern declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as a trade waste customer of the Council and left the meeting.

The Chairman invited Members to consider a scoping report on trade waste contracts and to identify information to be included in the full report.

Councillor Morson said he was concerned at the obligation on the Council to publish its trade waste service figures, which could then be undercut by what in his view were sometimes predatory traders. The Council had recently faced this situation in that the Leader had had to make a decision affecting the price charged to one of its customers. He would like the report to explore the following issues: whether there were any measures the Council could take to prevent a recurrence of this situation; whether it was legal to publish a list of prices and then reduce those prices for only one customer; whether there was scope for reducing the price for smaller customers; and whether the Council should privatise the trade waste service.

Councillor Howell said he agreed with most of the points Councillor Morson had made. He did not wish to pre-judge the findings of the full report, but welcomed a discussion on the financial viability of the provision of this service. Companies offering better rates than those published by the Council would only do so if these were indeed competitive, so he would not describe this behaviour as “predatory”. The Council was not the only provider for trade waste collection, and councils possibly faced constraints which other providers did not.

The Director of Corporate Services said the management team had already agreed to start looking at the viability of provision of the trade waste service in its current form, and whether there were opportunities to grow the business.

Councillor Evans said she agreed with what Councillor Morson had said and asked whether there were any strategies or guidelines for local authorities when dealing with their customers, and how rates charged for services were set.

The Director of Corporate Services said prices were set as part of the annual budget.

Councillor Evans asked about rules for provision of discounts for trade waste collection.

The Director of Public Services said prices were dependent on the size of the containers provided and serviced. There was a question of investment costs if efficiency savings were to be made to ensure competitive pricing. He confirmed that the council had a statutory obligation to make arrangements to collect trade waste if requested to do so by a business in its area.

Councillor G Barker asked that the report include a list of the Council's statutory obligations.

Councillor Watson said the report should address whether the trade waste service was profitable and whether the Council should use another provider.

The Chairman thanked all for their contributions and said officers would bring a report to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm.

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 11 NOVEMBER 2013**

Present: Councillor E Godwin – Chairman.
Councillors G Barker, P Davies, S Harris, S Howell, D
Morson, E Oliver and D Watson.

Also present: Councillor S Barker (Portfolio Holder for Environment),
Councillors C Cant, R Chambers, A Dean, E Parr, V
Ranger and J Redfern.

Officers: J Mitchell (Chief Executive), R Auty (Assistant Director
Corporate Services), R Dobson (Principal Democratic
Services Officer), R Harborough (Director of Public
Services), M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive-Legal), A
Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and Building Control)
and A Webb (Director of Corporate Services).

SC33

CALL IN OF DECISION MADE BY CABINET ON 1 NOVEMBER 2013

Councillor Godwin welcomed all present, and in particular those members of the public who had registered their intention to speak, Mr Matt North of Uttlesford United Residents and Mr Nick Baker of Henham Parish Council.

The Director of Corporate Services said this meeting related to the call-in of the recent decision of Cabinet on 1 November 2013 in relation to the consultation on additional site allocations for the Local Plan, in order to scrutinise the changes that had arisen since the last Local Plan update to the Scrutiny Committee. He said that in the interests of public inclusion, a procedure to enable the registered public speakers to put questions to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment had been agreed with the Chairman prior to the meeting. The speakers would have the opportunity to ask supplementary questions following her reply. The Director of Corporate Services said the possible outcomes of this meeting were that the Committee decided to refer the called in decision with recommendations back to Cabinet as the decision-making body, or to refer it, again with recommendations, to Full Council, or to endorse the decision, which would then be effective as from today's date.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evans and J Ketteridge.

Councillors G and S Barker declared their respective disclosable non pecuniary interests as they were married to each other, each having a dispensation in respect of that interest.

Councillor S Barker also declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as a member of Essex County Council.

Councillor Rich asked why there were different procedures for public speaking at this meeting. The Assistant Chief Executive-Legal said that the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules provided that the Committee could invite others to address it. The decision to adopt different procedures this evening had been taken in the interests of transparency, given the role of the Committee to scrutinise decisions of the Council.

The Chairman said the changes had been agreed with her consent and that of the Vice Chairman, Councillor Morson.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

Mr North made a statement and asked questions as follows:

'For 18 months Uttlesford District Council had worked on the draft Local Plan based on 3,300 households. In October the Council announced a new plan based on new demographics with a dramatic increase in housing numbers. Residents had been told housing numbers were mandated, but nothing had changed since the publication of the local plan. The question Cabinet should have considered on 1 November was therefore "What was the most sustainable way of meeting all Uttlesford's housing needs, not just the additional numbers?" Members have said time constraints were a factor, but I believe Uttlesford has a duty to do its best to consider housing needs, and not to take the fastest or most convenient way forward. I believe it was not possible that the right decisions were made by Cabinet on 1 November 2013.'

Councillor Rich asked the Chairman if he could question the speakers. Councillor Godwin said public speakers could not be questioned at this stage in the meeting.

Mr Baker made a statement:

"I am Chairman of the Joint Parish Councils Steering Group. The process on 1 November was hurried. The Local Plan Working Group ("LPWG") voted 7:3 then reported to a 7-member strong Cabinet. How can this be right? This is a complex process. Before embarking the Scrutiny Committee should ask Cabinet to look again. The methodology is based on the 2010 census; many authorities are using the 2011 local government households projections, which are more up to date. Why base the recommendation on 2010 figures when the result of doing so indicates we need higher housing figures?

Why does the consultation period cover 20 years when the requirement is to plan for 19 years? Why would you not use 1,669 as a base, not the 2,680 as in the consultation paper? The Elsenham site was opposed. Now there is a

huge development proposal for that village when it has already been allocated 500 houses in other applications. It is nearly as big as Option 4 in 2007. It is a new town by any measure, and not sustainable. ECC accepts that the roads infrastructure can't cope. Option 4 was removed from the Local Plan and the Planning Committee refused permission for 800 homes. It has now been forced through by a small group of district councillors.'

The Chairman invited members of the Committee to ask questions.

Councillor Morson said the Scrutiny Committee had to be satisfied that the decision of 1 November was sound; if not, the Committee could refer it. He proposed to refer the matter to Full Council for two reasons: first, the decision had been made with undue haste. On 1 November the LPWG had met in the morning, and the Cabinet had endorsed its findings later that day. How could information recommended in the morning be endorsed on the afternoon of the same day? On the LPWG were four Cabinet Members, one of whom was the Leader. Scrutiny Committee members had an obligation to ensure all councillors had a say in an issue which affected all wards. He had seen the minutes of the Cabinet on 1 November, but not minutes from the meeting of the LPWG on that date. He considered there was insufficient information about what was discussed. The other reason he felt the matter should be referred to Full Council related to documentation. The consultation paper policy documents were known about, but the numbers had been controversial, and members needed more time to look at those in more detail. If it was proposed to look at more sites then members needed to look at more reports to the LPWG regarding additional housing sites. Why were only four sites identified? What was the methodology for selecting the SHLAA sites? Reasons were given pro and con for each, but the problem was that without any debate on which sites were best, the list was put forward with not enough consideration given to alternative sites. Therefore he proposed the matter be referred back to Full Council.

Councillor G Barker asked Mr North to explain who he represented.

Mr North said he was a member of the public speaking on behalf of Uttlesford United Residents ("UUR"), which was a non-political group representing concerned residents. UUR sought more transparency and openness in Planning within Uttlesford. Members of UUR did not believe the decisions of 1 November were valid.

Regarding a comment by Mr North which was questioned by Councillor G Barker, relating to notice required for putting questions at the meeting, the Assistant Chief Executive advised that whilst it was right that no notice had to be given to members of the public regarding member questions, it was not for members of the committee to question the public speakers, but the other way round.

Councillor Watson then seconded the motion put forward by Councillor Morson.

Councillor Watson made a statement. He said it was not in dispute that the Government had set figures requiring a lot more houses. However he questioned whether the Cabinet should continue with the existing plan by tacking additional sites on to it. He therefore questioned the process. In his view the only answer was a single settlement: he did not know where it could go as he did not have enough information. The Council should be discussing with neighbouring authorities the suitability of any large scale plan. He referred to Poundbury and Port Sunlight, which he said were examples of successful and attractive developments. The reality in Uttlesford was that masses of houses would destroy its character. Saffron Walden's medieval streets made it an unsuitable site for development. Officers should look for something bigger and better. The issue should be debated in public in Full Council. He therefore seconded Councillor Morson's proposal.

Councillor Rich said the LPWG process was transparent and longstanding. On the one hand people were speaking about undue haste, but in *The Observer* he read of delay and confusion in the process. This was a process that the Liberal Democrats had refused to participate in. The Council had produced these new plan proposals, which represented some sadness for Uttlesford, but had put forward some sensible sites. However the coalition government had imposed new numbers. The Council was at a crossroads. He was very concerned that some councillors wanted to see all development in one site. The only site which had been worked up was one north east of Elsenham. He had attended a planning appeal last week caused by the lack of a Local Plan. He was concerned for the sake of the district in this situation. The process was not unduly hasty; if anyone was putting forward a genuine alternative then he would like to hear it. The important thing was genuine deliverability. He acknowledged the impact of that application on Councillor Morson's ward but he did not feel the matter should be referred to Full Council.

Councillor Morson said he had hoped to avoid introducing politics into this debate, but in view of Councillor Rich's comments he had to respond. He asked where the original Option 4 had come from, and on what planning grounds. He said in 2007 officers had recommended Option 1 but Option 4 had emerged at the Environment Committee meeting two weeks later, but there were no planning grounds for Option 4. What needed to be questioned was whether the process had been rushed, and whether it was right. He asked whether the four sites being recommended were justified on any planning reasons, but were merely chosen because something had to be done quickly. Regarding the Great Chesterford site, the reason given for not pursuing it was because 'not enough information is known'. He felt it was a political not planning decision.

Councillor Rich said he wished to respond. Councillor Godwin said he had already had his opportunity.

Councillor Howell said Mr Baker had raised questions, and he considered the debate should be confined to addressing those at this point.

Councillor Watson said he was a member of the Local Plan Working Group. He had never suggested a specific site and was offended at any suggestion that he had pressed for the site at Elsenham. He had never heard any reference to co operation with any other local authorities and until that was done no one could say where a single settlement should be.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Dean said he wished to ask two questions. The first related to confusion over the target this Council had to meet, which had caused a degree of distrust in the community. Regarding housing numbers, why was it that from the last Planning Committee on 23 October the annual housing target figure that was used in analysis was based on 523 yet the only thing that had happened was that the Council had put out a press release?

He too had attended the planning inquiry last week regarding the Taylor Wimpey appeal on the application at Bentfield Green at Stansted, at which there had been considerable confusion as to what the Council's target was. The Planning Committee reports on 2 October had claimed the Council had only 5 years' housing land supply, that is, 1612 houses. Following the meeting on 23 October the reports claimed there were 2295 houses in the five year supply. It had subsequently been confirmed to him by email from the Chief Executive that the difference in the figures was 683. He questioned why the number of new approvals in housing had been stated to be 501 when only 182 houses were approved at the meeting on 2 October.

Councillor Morson said he too had a question about the Planning Committee meeting of 2 October. He said the Planning Committee on that date had rejected an application for 800 houses in Elsenham. Therefore why were 2100 houses deemed appropriate in the Local Plan? Had the Planning Committee got it wrong?

Councillor G Barker said Dunmow had also taken significant new development. The reason the Council had opted for dispersed development was so that affordable housing could be easily accessed for local people throughout the district.

Councillor S Barker then responded to the questions that had been asked. She said it was true that for 18 months the policy had been worked on; yes the housing numbers were mandated; yes Members had made a mistake in thinking they could set a lower annual building rate.

Regarding Option 4, there had indeed been a great deal of opposition to it; that option had come from her; she was not ashamed about that choice; and the Council had agreed to take it forward.

She appreciated Mr North was representing different areas. What he had said were fine words but he had not said how he would have done things. He had not been elected to take this decision, and it was the Council's Members who had been elected so as to make this kind of difficult decision.

Regarding process, there had been more meetings of the LPWG than she could list. After the ECC Highways study the Working Group had met several times in quick succession. Members had been told that if they did not put forward robust plans that their draft local plan would be rejected at an early stage. Members had got on with working on this Plan, and the length of time it had taken was normal for a local authority working on a local plan. Yes, there had been delays, because it had taken months to get the Highways Agency's report.

Regarding the 20 year period, the reason why the Plan had been drafted to cover 20 years was because the Council needed to plan for a long time.

Regarding the recent planning application at Elsenham, she was not a member of Planning Committee, but this site had not been recommended for refusal.

Regarding the withdrawal of Option 4, this was because the Council was looking at a lower number of homes at that time.

Regarding timings of decisions made on 1 November 2013, yes, the Cabinet had to decide on a recommendation made by the LPWG earlier that day. It was open to all Members of the Council to attend the LPWG. There were some members who did not come to the meetings and some political groups did not attend. At the meetings, Councillor J Ketteridge had invited any Member to comment, whether they were appointed to the Working Group or not. The LPWG was there to inform Cabinet, and did so after its meeting of 17 October. The Inspector was going to be inundated by local authorities' draft local plans, and if this council's plan was dealt with in 2015 it would be lucky.

The proposed consultation was about additional sites. All sites available for development identified in the SHLAA had been looked at by officers, but there were not many big sites which were deliverable. Consultation had taken place on, for example, land for a new settlement at Great Chesterford, but there had been no response from the landowner. How were officers meant to discuss sites for development where sites were not being promoted? The only sites they could discuss were those put forward by developers.

There were 1200 houses deliverable in some villages, so the draft plan would still have been 1500 houses short. The benefit of big sites was that they could bring new schools.

Regarding Councillor Watson's reference to current significant development, it was impossible to put the cork back in the bottle. Many applications were now gaining planning consent, and the Government was intent on increasing the supply of new homes.

Regarding Councillor Watson's comments on talking to neighbouring authorities, yes, the Council had a duty to co operate. The Working Group had received regular reports on how it was meeting this duty. The Leader and Deputy Leader had recently been to East Hertfordshire to discuss the impact on this district of major developments in that area. All local authorities were facing large developments. If the Council did nothing it would have the Government pushing for increased housing numbers in the district.

Regarding reference to developments such as Poundbury and Port Sunlight, this council had built some good quality homes, such as Forest Hall Park, which was popular with its residents. Of course the numbers were difficult. The preparation of the plan had been a long running process, but the numbers were a moveable feast. Members had to make judgments on facts as they were at a given point. The extra year on the plan period would deliver a new secondary school

In the course of co-operation meetings with other authorities, no one had put forward a single settlement to jointly address housing needs.

Regarding comments made by Councillor Dean, it was true that the housing supply situation changed. This was inevitable as planning applications were determined. Live planning applications, however, were not a matter for the Scrutiny Committee.

Regarding reference to development at Dunmow, even under Option 4 houses had been proposed there. No Planning Inspector would accept a plan that did not provide for affordable housing across the district. Some villages had, and would, come forward with development proposals, and there was nothing to prevent them doing so.

Councillor Godwin asked if there were any further questions for Councillor S Barker.

Mr North asked whether an overall change in spatial strategy had been considered. He asked whether at the meetings on 1 November the option of building two new settlements had been discussed, and if not why not.

Councillor S Barker said at the LPWG there had been discussion around whether to start all over again or stick with the draft local plan. Many of the

sites put forward had already been committed, and this could not be undone, as that course of action would be totally unreasonable.

Mr Baker asked for his specific questions to be answered.

Councillor S Barker said that a 20 year plan rather than 19 years was something that the public could readily understand. Regarding specifics, officers would be able to supply information.

Councillor Morson said he did not wish to ask Councillor Barker to comment on live applications, but he wished to know what planning principles were applied for putting 2000 houses on a site where 800 had been refused, and what were the benefits of a new school when at the same time the area had to take a massive settlement.

Councillor S Barker said she had not been at Planning Committee, and was not able to comment on any live planning application.

Councillor G Barker asked if the draft Local Plan were to be abandoned and a new plan drawn up, how long that would take.

Councillor S Barker said it would take quite some time, and she would guess it would take about two and a half years.

Councillor Rich said the scenario recommended by the LPWG to Cabinet was one where all the work had been done and the sites were well known. He apologised if he had offended Councillor Watson. He had not intended to imply that he had suggested that Elsenham was appropriate as a new settlement. However what he was arguing was that those sites had come forward and others had not. He asked what evidence was available about alternatives.

Councillor S Barker said all papers had been presented to every meeting of the LPWG and were available to all Members of the Council. She referred to Option B. Site after site had been identified, some were very small. Officers believed only 1200 houses could be delivered. There were lots of sites that could be built in Felsted, and the school there was full. If housing was dispersed it was far less sustainable than if it was located on larger estates that could deliver related facilities. If all sites were very small ones ECC as the education authority would not be able to secure financial contributions to school capacity. If the Council adopted every site under that option there would be many more people in Uttlesford who were unhappy with the education facilities.

Councillor Dean questioned whether the National Planning Policy Framework required the Council to choose a number which was evidence based. His understanding was that annual housing provision of 415 previously chosen was based on job growth prospects. The SNPP took into account migration

and the implication was that there would be too few new jobs. He questioned whether that evidence had been ignored. He asked what evidence justified such a precise figure as 523 homes a year. The NPPF expected local planning authorities to assess national population projections.

Councillor S Barker agreed the figures had to be evidence based. The number of 415 was based on the economic scenario using national projections. Using revised projections had increased the figure to 415 from 338. The latest projections not constrained by job growth had indicated a rate of 500, but the rate indicated by the 2010 based SNPP was higher. The Government was clearly looking for the highest objectively assessed need projections to be used. If the Council argued for anything less than that, it would be difficult to justify. The Council could not go against planning officers' advice. Councils were being challenged on figures and if the Council did not go forward with a robust plan it would risk rejection.

Mr North said he was familiar with how models worked, and the ONS sub-national projection estimates were not a forecast. The Planning Advisory Service stated the SNPP was a useful starting point but councils could challenge the assumptions on which they were based. Regarding knocking off two years from the Plan, he had asked the Planning Inspectorate last year if the Plan could be backdated and could run for less than 15 years, and the Inspectorate had said it was not mandatory but strong evidence would be required to support a shorter plan. The Inspectorate had said the plan would need to last for 15 years from the date of adoption. If the SNPP numbers were mandatory, why was South Cambridgeshire choosing a number that exceeded its needs in line with the SNPP but less than the level of housing consistent with economic growth forecasts?

Councillor S Barker said she did not know the reasons for South Cambridgeshire's growth as she did not represent that area.

Councillor Ranger made a statement. He said he represented Dunmow, he was chairman of the Housing Board, a member of the LPWG and was Deputy to the Portfolio Holder for Housing. He did not have a vote at Cabinet, but at LPWG he had voted in favour of the recommendation. Extensive numbers of reports had been considered at the LPWG representing vast amounts of officers' time. These reports had been pored over and scrutinised by the members of the LPWG, and all these reports had been available to every member. He had stood for election to make a difference. In its election campaign, the administration had committed itself to planning for the minimum number of new houses, but the goalposts had moved which was frustrating. The Council had approved a dispersal strategy on land identified as deliverable. It could only look at sites which were put forward for development. Members had had to put aside personal preferences and act for the good of the district. To abandon the draft local plan would create development hell. The draft plan had enhanced planning policies, and developers were waiting to hear the outcome. If the Council abandoned the

plan then it would end up with housing but without the improvement of amenities and infrastructure. Development would be allowed on appeal, and the Council would not have the relevant up to date policies to require 40% affordable housing. He asked the Committee to consider all the salient facts. Cabinet had had no option but to approve the recommendation.

Councillor Howell said this had been a very informative evening. He was grateful to Councillor S Barker and to the public speakers. He represented a rural ward which would not be subject to significant new housing, but he did understand this was an emotive and distressing subject. However nobody went into local politics to be popular. Planning was not his specialism, but he was conscious of the challenges this council faced. Uttlesford was one of the top 10 growing areas mainly due to migration. It was a commuter area within the influence of London and Cambridge. He had initially supported a single site as a member of the Environment Committee. In 20 years he had seen piecemeal development which brought nothing with it. The district was growing faster than anybody would want. However, it had become apparent that it would leave the Council open to challenge if development did not take place in all the main settlements of the district. Much work had gone into the LPWG, and all had hoped for the smallest possible requirement of new homes but he was satisfied that officers had properly advised members. Based on information and guidance officers had had to come up with he was satisfied the figures were robust, unhappy though he was that the Council was obliged to do this. It would take perhaps two and a half years if the Council were to start again, and although it was uncomfortable contemplating development on all those sites, he would be voting against Councillor Morson's proposal.

Councillor Harris said she represented Felsted, which was also not featured in the local plan. She echoed Councillor Howell's comments about the level of housing numbers which exceeded what people wished to see for the district, but elected representatives had to make unpopular choices. She believed the Cabinet had to move ahead. Fitch Green was a community whose growth had been determined through successive appeals to its detriment. In considering 19 years versus 20 years for the Plan, the latter was more prudent as it gave breathing space. She supported the Cabinet decision.

Councillor G Barker said delay would mean the district would become victim to predatory development. He acknowledged the appearance of haste by holding two meetings on the same day, but members could not start again from scratch. They had tried to get away with the lower figure.

He was unhappy with the way the recommendation to Scrutiny Committee was drafted, as with different wording members might have had a different view.

Councillor Oliver said he too represented a rural ward, and was a member of the LPWG. He was not a Cabinet member. He had seen the effects of

predatory development in his ward and had spent time before Planning Committee arguing against such development. Objectors had on occasion succeeded at Planning Committee but not on appeal. In Clavering the school was full. Deferring the production of a local plan for two or more years might open the way to more predatory development. The district needed a degree over control over the process, and provision of schools and health amenities. Whilst he was unhappy at the prospect of any development, it was necessary to look at affordable housing for young people. He therefore opposed this motion, but with a heavy heart.

Councillor Rich said he too was unhappy with the way the decision was called in to Scrutiny Committee. No one was happy about what the district had to do, but the decision should not be referred back to Cabinet or onwards to Full Council. He had been very concerned when Option 4 had first been suggested. He accepted that what was now coming forward looked like Option 4. He had been in favour of the dispersed strategy which gave villages a certain amount of development. The coalition government required robust numbers to be put forward, and chiselling these numbers down was not an option because that would result in open season for developers. He too had last week attended the planning appeal regarding Bentfield Green, and that had been an unedifying process. The Cabinet had identified certain sites for development, and the district should not be exposed to loss of control over that development. Therefore he would not be voting to refer the decision for further consideration.

Councillor Watson said the decision on the local plan was the most important one the Council was ever going to make. Its effects would be irrevocable. Every councillor should have the right to say what they thought about the plan. At the moment it did not feel like a process in which all councillors had the ability to comment. There was no need to rush it and the Council owed it to those they represented to allow every Member to speak. The matter should therefore go to Full Council.

Councillor S Barker said the decision which was the subject of tonight's call in was the consultation, and the adoption of the local plan would be a matter for Full Council.

Councillor Godwin asked Councillor Morson if he had further comments.

Councillor Morson said that Councillor Watson had already said what he was going to say. He was not casting aspersions on the hard work which had been done. This decision was extraordinarily important to everyone. Members were not local government officials implementing what central government dictated. This matter would affect all wards. He was not asking to suspend the local plan for two and a half years or open up the district to much more predatory development. In his view this was a decision which should be taken and owned by the whole council. If adopted by Full Council he would accept the decision, and if the arguments were sound there was

nothing to be frightened of. Everyone on Full Council should have the opportunity to consider it.

Councillor Godwin read out Councillor Morson's proposal, that the Scrutiny Committee refer the called in decision to Full Council in order to enable all members to participate in this major decision.

The motion was put to the vote and was rejected five to three, with one abstention.

The Assistant Chief Executive-Legal said the Committee had considered whether to refer the called in decision, and as it decided not to do so, the decision of Cabinet took effect automatically.

SC34 **SCOPING REPORT – DOG FOULING**

The Committee considered a report seeking terms of reference for substantive report on the issue of dog fouling.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said the two aspects to be considered were strategy and enforcement and clarity on what information members required would be helpful to officers.

Members suggested the report should include further information on the following aspects:

- The rationale of the current service;
- Costs analysis including assessing whether there were more effective ways to deliver the service;
- Supply and demand analysis of the supply of dog bins;
- whether a consistent policy of payment for the service by either the district or parishes should be applied;
- How best to support the role of the Dog Warden, how much that post cost;
- What priority was being given to prosecution;
- The best way to balance education and enforcement; ensuring facilitation for dog owners to pick up after their animals rather than enforcement;
- Signage

SC35 **SCOPING REPORT – SWIMMING POOL PROVISION**

The Committee considered a report seeking terms of reference for a full report on the issue of swimming pool provision

Suggestions for further information to be obtained on the following were:

- Information on the many providers throughout the district should be collated;
- The possibility of encouraging independent providers to offer swimming lessons to the public should be explored;
- The PFI pool provision should be reviewed in light of more development since those agreements were entered into;
- Which areas were served and which areas lacked pools, referring to the background study for the Local Plan on figures for pool provision.

The Chairman thanked all officers and members.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.

Work Programme 2013/14

Date	11 June 2013	3 September 2013	15 October 2013	11 November 2013 (call in)	26 November 2013	6 February 2014	29 April 2014
Standard agenda items	Consideration of any decisions called in	Consideration of any decisions called in	Consideration of any decisions called in	Consideration of any decisions called in	Consideration of any decisions called in	Consideration of any decisions called in	Consideration of any decisions called in
	Responses of the reports of the scrutiny committee	Responses of the reports of the scrutiny committee	Responses of the reports of the scrutiny committee	Responses of the reports of the scrutiny committee	Responses of the reports of the scrutiny committee	Responses of the reports of the scrutiny committee	Responses of the reports of the scrutiny committee
	Leaders forward plan	Leaders forward plan	Leaders forward plan	Leaders forward plan	Leaders forward plan	Leaders forward plan	Leaders forward plan
	Scrutiny forward plan	Scrutiny forward plan	Scrutiny forward plan	Scrutiny forward plan	Scrutiny forward plan	Scrutiny forward plan	Scrutiny forward plan
Agenda items	NHS England	CCG progress – update – Toni Coles Health and Social Care planning – Colette Ovens	Police Crime Commissioner Update from the public meeting	Call in – LDF	Tenant Scrutiny Panel update	Dog Fouling	East of England Ambulance Service
	East of England Ambulance Service Update Report & Presentation	Highways Strategic Partnership – written update from Peter Massie	Car Parking Task Group Final Report – Cllr Evans	Dog fouling – scoping report	Budget Process – Preparatory report and briefing (Stephen Joyce)	NEPP – Audit update and scoping report	NHS England/CCG
	Tenant Scrutiny Panel Introduction	Highways Consultation Responses – written update from Planning	Airport related parking - scoping report (verbal)	Swimming pool provision – scoping report	Rural Broadband	Budget (Stephen Joyce)	Essex Police Service
	Annual Report from the Leader	Planning Performance Review – written PI update	Septic Tanks – Roz Millership		Airport related parking.		2013/14 Scrutiny review and forward plan
	Update from Car Park Task Group Chair	Sewage Works - Scoping Report	Trade waste contracts and pricing – scoping report		Planning process – scoping report		Trade waste contracts and pricing
	Highways Strategic Partnership -	Rural Broadband - Scoping Report			Statutory Services List		

	Scoping report						
		Police Crime Commissioner - Invite questions for public meeting on 19 September					
		Car Parking Update – written Cllr Evans					

- Planning provision for schools and school places
- NEPP – sustainability and audit review outcomes
- PCC - email questions to PCC and invite a senior police officer to a future meeting

KEY DECISIONS

Key Decision	Decision to be taken in private? (reason)	Decision maker	Date of decision	Documents submitted to the decision maker for consideration	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
Local Plan pre-submission consultation	N	Cabinet	1 November		Cllr Barker	Assistant Director Planning and Building Control ataylor@uttlesford.gov.uk
Sheltered Housing Management	N	Cabinet	5 December 2013		Cllr Redfern	Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services rmillership@uttlesford.gov.uk
New Build	Yes Commercial information (para 3 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)t	Cabinet	5 December 2013		Cllr Redfern	Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services rmillership@uttlesford.gov.uk
2014/15 Local Council Tax Support &	N	Council	10 December		Cllr Chambers	Assistant Chief Executive-Finance sjoyce@uttlesford.gov.uk

Key Decision	Decision to be taken in private? (reason)	Decision maker	Date of decision	Documents submitted to the decision maker for consideration	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
Council Tax discounts						
Localism Act 2011 Community empowerment	N	Cabinet	on-going		Cllr Rolfe	Chief Executive jmitchell@uttlesford.gov.uk

OTHER DECISIONS

Non-Key Decision	Decision to be taken in private? (reason)	Decision maker	Date of decision	Documents submitted to the decision maker for consideration	Portfolio Holder	Contact officer from where the documents can be obtained
Wendens Ambo Conservation Area Appraisal		Cabinet	5 December 2013		Cllr Barker	Assistant Director Planning and Building Control ataylor@uttlesford.gov.uk
New lease for Turpins Bowls Club	N	Cabinet	5 December		Cllr Chambers	Director of Public Services rharborough@uttlesford.gov.uk
Bridge End Garden Culvert	N	Cabinet	on-going		Cllr Chambers	Director of Corporate Services awebb@uttlesford.gov.uk
LBLC and adjoining land to rear of the Skate Park	N	Cabinet	on-going		Cllr Chambers	Director of Corporate Services awebb@uttlesford.gov.uk
Essex Energy Consortium	N	Cabinet	On going		Cllr Redfern	Director of Public Services rharborough@uttlesford.gov.uk

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 26 November 2013

8

Title: Airport related parking

Author: Michael Perry and Jeremy Pine

Item for decision:
No

Summary

1. This report has been requested by members of this committee to enable the committee to understand issues relating to airport related parking.

Recommendations

1. For information only.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Background Papers

3. Minutes from Scrutiny Committee meetings 2012/13

Impact

4. At its meeting on the 15 October 2013 this committee requested a report dealing with airport related parking covering:
 - § Unauthorised businesses operating unofficial car parks outside the airport boundaries.
 - § Whether there was an issue of suppressing commercial alternative parking
 - § Historic data regarding enforcement.
 - § The inconvenience to local residents of on street parking by airport users and airport workers.
 - § What the airport's policy is regarding drop-off arrangements.
 - § What the take up of the local residents concession has been, how is this being promoted and who is this available to.
 - § To determine if the Airports dedicated complaints line is successful or if more publicity is needed.
5. A report was presented to this committee on 4 December 2012 which dealt with the issue of airport related parking in some detail. Members are referred back to that report for its content. In the absence of specific concerns

regarding the issues raised therein it is unnecessary to set out the detail again in this report. The report included historic enforcement data from the formation of the Enforcement Team in 2006 to the date of the report.

6. At the time of the last report there were 7 current enforcement investigations into suspected airport related parking operations. In 3 cases compliance with planning legislation was achieved by negotiation with no formal action being necessary. Enforcement notices were served in respect of 2 sites. An appeal was lodged in respect of 1 and was dismissed. No appeal was lodged within time in respect of the other. Both notices are therefore effective.
7. 1 case was closed on the basis that it was not expedient to enforce. The land in question here was within the airport boundaries and therefore parking was not contrary to policy. However there was also some evidence to show that the use had probably been on-going for more than 10 years and that it was probably immune from enforcement in any event.
8. In the last case the owner applied for a certificate of lawful use on the basis that the use had been continuous for more than 10 years and after consideration of the evidence the certificate was granted.
9. Since December 2012 there have been 12 reports of airport related parking outside of the airport boundaries. In 3 cases there was no evidence of a breach of planning control. In 2 cases compliance was achieved without the need to serve an enforcement notice. 1 case was statute barred. 1 case relates to land which is the subject of an effective enforcement notice. The owner of the land has been interviewed under caution and a file is being prepared for prosecution. 6 cases remain the subject to active investigations.
10. The dates for compliance in respect of 3 current enforcement notices occur in December 2013. Compliance inspections will take place and if necessary prosecutions will be brought to secure compliance.
11. The appeal referred to in paragraph 3 above is worthy of further comment. The owners maintained that they had been carrying on the business of airport related parking from the land for more than 10 years prior to the enforcement notice being served and argued that for that reason the use was immune from enforcement action. The land had been the subject of prior investigations during which planning contravention notices were served on 2 occasions. The responses to those notices denied that any business activity was being undertaken on the land. The planning inspector found as a matter of fact that more than 10 years use had been proved. However he upheld the enforcement notice on the basis of the principle set down in *Welwyn and Hatfield Council v Secretary of State* that a person should not be able to circumvent an enforcement notice where earlier action had been avoided by a deception on the part of the owner. The owner sought permission to appeal to the High Court but permission was refused.
12. It is necessary to bear in mind that the *Welwyn* case and the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 (alluded to in the December 2012 report) only apply where

there has been deception on the part of the landowner. Where the use has continued undetected for more than 10 years and no deception is involved the use will be immune from enforcement.

13. The Council does not have resources to carry out extensive surveys of the district to try and detect instances of airport related parking. However enforcement officers and planning officers are fully aware of the issue and if they notice any activity which may be a breach of planning control whilst they are travelling within the district this prompts an investigation. Sensitive sites (e.g. where airport related parking has occurred previously but the situation has been resolved without formal action) are kept under observation. The enforcement team also reacts to reports from councillors, parish and town councils and the public.
14. In scoping the request for this report the Committee wished to consider whether there was an issue of suppressing commercial alternative parking.
15. The local plan has always regarded Stansted as being an “airport in the countryside”. In support of this aim the plan provides that all development related to airport related activities must be within the airport boundaries and that development which is not airport related will not be permitted within the airport boundaries. The 2005 local plan specifically states that “Proposals for car parking associated with any use at Stansted Airport will be refused beyond the Airport boundaries, as defined in the Stansted Airport Inset Map”. Members are referred to policy T3 in the plan for the rationale behind this policy.
16. The airport owners control all the land that is currently used for short, mid and long stay car parking but they have sold the freehold of some of the ancillary land within the airport boundary. Previously an issue of monopoly provision was raised by an appellant in an appeal against an enforcement notice in 2011. In that case the inspector held that the purpose of the Council’s policy was not “to prevent legitimate business competition” nor “to stifle economic growth”. The inspector did go on to say that more was required to justify the policy than merely saying that there was sufficient capacity at the airport but on the evidence before him he did not conclude that the policy unfairly prevented competition.
17. Since that decision the new owners of part of the freehold land that now comprises Site 500 (aka Endeavour House 2) has made a planning application for airport related car parking which the council has resolved to grant subject to completion of planning agreement requiring the operator to charge a levy on each car park transaction which would go towards funding public transport improvements at the airport. A similar levy is charges by the airport operator on its own parking transactions at the short, mid and long stay car parks.
18. Any relaxation which would permit off airport parking in competition with the sites would need to be dealt with in the context of the local plan revision. However as the inspector pointed out in his appeal decision “it is a moot point whether “airport related parking” amounts to use of land in planning terms, as

opposed to simply car parking". The issue therefore is whether members wish to see large car parks developed in the district.

19. On-street parking that is alleged to be airport related is monitored by the Highways Working Group of the Stansted Area Transport Forum (SATF). The officer-level Group meets quarterly, and is chaired by a representative from Essex County Council, and is also attended by representatives of UDC, East Herts DC, Herts CC, MAG, Sustrans and the Highways Agency.

20. The requirement to monitor this activity stems from an obligation in the May 2003 Section 106 Agreement between UDC, ECC and Stansted Airport Limited (STAL) when planning permission was granted for expansion from 15 million passengers per annum (mppa) to 25mppa. With the sale of the airport, the terms of the agreement roll the obligation forward onto MAG.

21. The obligation is in two parts (Clauses 9 and 10 of Schedule 5):

Within 6 months of the date of grant, to carry out or procure studies of the incidence of air passengers parking motor vehicles on the public highway within five miles of the airport boundary but excluding the airport and to report the results of such studies to ECC and UDC as soon as possible

To pay to ECC upon request a contribution of up to £50,000 to ameliorate any problems with off-airport parking which may be identified as a result of the studies referred to in paragraph 9 of this schedule including (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing) the costs of introducing local residents only parking zones.

22. In October 2003, STAL introduced a Freephone parking "hotline" (0800 7312385) to permit members of the public to phone in to leave information against a series of prompts regarding airport related vehicles parked in residential streets. The introduction of the hotline followed discussions at the Highways Working Group, which also involved STAL's highway consultants, Halcrow. It was intended originally to carry out a series of street surveys to meet Clause 9, but it was concluded that this would not be a practical way of identifying airport-related parking. The surveys would need to be repeated frequently to identify long staying vehicles, and would not catch people in the act of parking, which would give the best clue as to the nature of the parking (i.e suitcases being taken out of the car). The hotline would allow the public to phone in with the first-hand evidence that they had seen.

23. A one hour no-waiting scheme was subsequently introduced in parts of Takeley, paid for by part of the £50k contribution. The scheme was designed, consulted upon and introduced by ECC, residents having been given the option of a residents' parking scheme. The scheme was modified after an initial period (to include the Clearway along Parsonage Road), and remains in force today.

24. The Highways Working Group continues to monitor the output from the Freephone hotline, but the current volume and location of calls to the hotline

do not allow the conclusion to be drawn that there are any parking hotspots that require attention. In the last quarter, there were only 16 calls to the hotline, which seems about average for each quarter at the moment. The call locations were:

- 3 – Meadowcroft, Stansted
- 1 – West Road, Stansted
- 2 – The Champions, Stansted
- 1 – Wilson Way, Stansted
- 1 – Brewers End, Takeley
- 1 – Elm Close, Takeley
- 1 – North Road, Takeley
- 2 – Hawthorn Close, Takeley
- 1 – Leefield, Takeley
- 3 – Bishop’s Stortford

25. It has been the practice for the airport operator to relaunch and publicise the hotline periodically, and Parish and Town Councils are encouraged to put the number on their websites.

26. The previous report also reviewed parking options and charges. Since this the airport have restricted entry to the terminal forecourt and introduced new pick up and drop options:

Free facility – located in the mid stay car park a 5 minute bus ride from the terminal forecourt.

Express facility - located just a short walk to the terminal. Charge £2 for 10 minutes.

Short stay car park – Located a short walk to the terminal. Charge £2.80 for 25 minutes.

27. At the same time they introduced an Express Set Down discount scheme of 75% for stays up to a maximum of 15 minutes in the Express Set Down only for any resident of Uttlesford District Council (UDC), East Herts District Council (EHDC), UDC and EHDC licensed Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicles. Some residents have expressed difficulty in joining the scheme.

28. The new arrangements in drop off and pick up do not seem to have impacted the calls received to the freephone hotline.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
1	1	1	

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 26 November 2013

9

Title: Tenants' Regulatory Panel

Author: Paula Evans, Housing Business and Performance Manager

Item for information

Summary

1. Following a presentation to the Scrutiny Committee in June 2013 and a request from the Committee for further updates, this report provides a summary of the work of the Housing Tenant's Regulatory Panel to date.

Recommendations

2. For information only.

Financial Implications

3. Limited. Through scrutiny reviews the Panel may identify and recommend cost efficiencies or propose investment opportunities within the Housing service:

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Localism Act 2011.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Tenant Regulatory Panel members were recruited through a consultation process. Regular updates on activities are given through the Housing News publication.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	All tenants were able to apply to become members of the Panel. Interviews were conducted to select members. Equalities training will be given to all Panel members.
Health and Safety	None

Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Panel supports the self-regulation principles outlined in the Localism Act (2011).
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. The Tenants' Regulatory Panel has now been in existence for a year having been formed in November 2012. The group consists of 3 analysts, 4 inspectors and a Chairperson. The key aim of the group is to scrutinise identified housing processes and procedures whilst acting as an independent body on behalf of Uttlesford District Council's tenant base. Their work and time commitments are on a voluntary basis.
7. The Panel completed in-depth Scrutiny training as part of their formation and have been attending relevant Tenant-based training or information sessions to further develop both the team and individual members. The Panel are also still being supported and guided by an external consultant as they complete their initial review. The Housing Business and Performance Manager remains the Panel's main communication point with the Housing Service, but due to the requirement for the group to remain as independent as possible, this contact is minimal.
8. The first review that the Panel has undertaken is that of Void properties (the time that a property remains empty between re-lets). They have conducted extensive research and have spent time gathering information regarding this process and its current performance levels within Uttlesford. This has involved meeting and interviewing staff at various levels within the organisation as well as conducting site visits to empty properties.
9. The Panel are currently finalising their formal recommendations report which will then be presented to both the Tenant Forum and officers of the council towards the end of January 2014. Once this presentation has been made, the Panel will take their recommendations to the Housing Board for formal member approval.
10. The panel are also currently drafting and prioritising a schedule of work for future reviews.

11.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That UDC are unable to retain and re-recruit Panel members	2 – some risk or impact	Independent Housing Scrutiny activities would be limited	Ensure the work of the Panel is regularly communicated and promoted and that these activities emphasise the importance of the group
That Tenant Scrutiny work is not undertaken	2 – some risk or impact	The housing Service would not be adopting some of the key principles of self-regulation	Panel fully supported by officers to ensure work is undertaken

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item

Date: 26th November 2013

10

Title: Rural Broadband

Author: Simon Jackson, Economic
Development Officer 01799 510521

Item for decision

Summary

1. At the scrutiny meeting on 3rd September 2013 Members considered a scoping report on rural broadband. This report responds to the questions raised in that scoping document.

Recommendations

2. This report recommends:
 - a. Officers continue to monitor the progress of the wireless service provided by Buzcom in the District
 - b. Officers continue to work closely with the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Superfast Essex programme

Financial Implications

3. Recommendations have costs but these are already budgeted*.

* A grant of £30,000 was given to Buzcom from the 2009/10 Local Authority Business Growth Initiative monies, which are held in the Business Development Reserve, as follows:

- a. £15,000 on go live - paid in September 2011
- b. £5,000 when the lease for use of High Garrett Police Tower is signed
- c. £10,000 when the company can demonstrate they have achieved a minimum of 40 installations per week for a continuous period of 8 weeks

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - a. Report to Environment Committee, Radio Broadband, 17th March 2011
 - b. Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy 2012-14

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation on superfast broadband undertaken as part of the Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy during September 2012 including a Business Conference.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	Enabling sustainable economic growth in rural areas.
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. At the scrutiny meeting on 3rd September 2013 Members considered a scoping report on rural broadband that posed a number of questions. These questions and the responses to them are set out below.

- 6.1 What is the current situation within the District regarding wireless broadband availability? What areas of the District are still without broadband?

Currently approximately 70% of the District can receive wireless broadband. This is a theoretical coverage figure as the end users' ability to access the service depends on there being line of site between Buzcom transmission equipment and the customer.

Areas along the eastern side of the District are still unable to access wireless broadband due to delays in acquiring a lease at High Garrett tower that will serve this area.

The most up to date coverage maps will be presented to Members at the committee meeting.

- 6.2 Has Buzcom been launched to all areas? What is the timetable of roll out?

The Buzcom wireless broadband service was communicated to all areas in the District in 2011. However, the delay in making the service available to all areas has created waiting lists.

Buzcom anticipate that the roll out of the main towers will be completed with the High Garrett tower in early 2014.

6.3 How many masts cover Uttlesford and are there plans to bring others online to enhance the coverage

The original plan was for coverage to be provided across the District using four main towers at Cutlers Green and Wimbish Water Tower, RAF Barkway near Royston and the Kent Police tower at High Garrett.

Up to October 2013 two of the main towers are operational at Cutlers Green and Wimbish Water Tower supported by additional towers at High Trees Packers and Poplars in The Rodings.

In October Buzcom signed a ten year renewable agreement to use the tower at RAF Barkway and this is now also operational.

Negotiations are ongoing with Telemaster, the agents for Kent Police with regard to the tower at High Garrett. Investigations are also underway with regard to using Felsted water tower.

6.4 How do regional booster units work?

There are 12 local repeater sites in the District that enhance coverage in the local surrounding area and are sited on farm buildings/barns. The repeater sites enable customers who, for example, do not have line of sight with one of the main towers to receive the signal from a local repeater site that they do have line of sight with.

6.5 Was Buzcom promoted, has information on Buzcom been provided to the community especially the isolated areas?

Buzcom promotes its service predominantly via its website, publicity in local press, presentations (including parish councils) and word of mouth.

6.6 What was the take up, has there been any issues with the system since the launch? What can be done to improve on any issues?

In the District there are currently 710 subscribers, both companies and households, to the Buzcom service. Buzcom has provided access to super fast broadband for a number of rural based businesses.

One example of a rural based business is Miles Kelly Publishing who are an independent children's book publisher based in Thaxted. Founded in 1996 by Jim Miles and Gerard Kelly they employ over 30 people. The company produces books and ebooks for children of all ages. Buzcom were able to provide the company with an uncontended wireless leased line for half the cost proposed by another supplier.

To date, feedback regarding the wireless system Buzcom uses is positive and is proving technically robust. Any issues have related to customers experiencing power outages outside the control of Buzcom.

6.7 What has the feedback been?

Feedback regarding the installation of the equipment and the service provided has been positive. Criticism has been made regarding a lack of communication from Buzcom regarding the waiting list of people and businesses who have registered an interest in receiving the service. To reduce the waiting list Buzcom has increased the number of people installing the equipment from 6 to 9 installers.

Buzcom are currently undergoing trials with Carver Barracks to provide a broadband service for the servicemen and women at the barracks and have received positive feedback.

6.8 Have the proposed savings through the cancellation of broadband contracts been made?

Not as yet. The cancellation of broadband contracts will be looked into when Buzcom had cleared its waiting lists.

6.9 Has free internet access been provided within sheltered units and if so how has this been promoted?

Not as yet. But will be when Buzcom had cleared its waiting lists.

6.10 Has Buzcom been able to sub contract installation and support work to Uttlesford based companies?

Buzcom has used its existing Essex based contractors none of which are in the District.

6.11 What does the Essex County Council rural broadband project involve?

The Essex County Council BDUK "Superfast Essex" project aims to:

- a. By 2015, ensure everyone will get access to basic, 2Megabits per second (Mbps), broadband – this basic level of speed allows one computer or device in a household to access the internet, carry out on-line services and tasks; banking, road fund licence renewal etc. and will allow streaming of videos and other on-line content.
- b. By 2015, at least 90% of Essex will gain access to Superfast broadband. Superfast broadband allows several users to be on-line simultaneously, downloading content, playing games or researching schoolwork.

Currently in Essex, about 60% of premises have access to Superfast Broadband. In cities and towns it is commonplace. In more remote places like smaller towns, villages and hamlets, it currently isn't and it is in these areas that the majority of the investment will be made.

The 'Implementation Stage' of the project is scheduled to commence April 2014. The Essex BDUK Project has been awarded to BT to implement superfast broadband infrastructure (minimum 24Mbps) and better broadband uplift (2Mbps – 24Mbps) to Greater Essex.

6.12 How does the Buzcom offering compliment/compete with the Essex County Council led rural broadband project?

The Buzcom service compliments the Superfast Essex project because it provides superfast broadband now into rural areas that may take up to 2/3 years for the Superfast Essex project to reach. The Buzcom service provides additional competition for the other main private sector providers such as BT Infinity and Virgin and choice for the end user.

Risk Analysis

6. In addition to the risks identified in the report to the Environment Committee, Radio Broadband, 17th March 2011

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Buzcom failing to deliver the wireless broadband service across the District	2 Negotiations have been ongoing for over two years regarding the High Garrett tower	2 The service along the east of the District would be compromised	Officers ensure close monitoring of Buzcom

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item

Date: 26 November 2013

11

Title: 2014/15 Budget planning

Author: Stephen Joyce
Assistant Chief Executive - Finance

Item for information

Summary

1. At its meeting on 6 February, the Scrutiny Committee will be invited to comment on detailed proposals for the 2014/15 budget, ahead of consideration by the Cabinet on 18 February and determination by the Full Council on 27 February.
2. This report provides an overview of the budget setting process and the documentation that will be coming forward for review. There are pointers for the sorts of issues the Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider.
3. Attached to this report is a copy of the Financial Outlook and 2014/15 Budget Strategy report approved by the Cabinet in October. Also attached is a document which sets out the full results of the public consultation process, summarised in the Financial Outlook report.
4. The Scrutiny Committee's role is to provide an independent endorsement of the proposals prior to consideration by Cabinet, or to suggest alternatives. This is ordinarily an apolitical process; alternative budget proposals from Opposition Members should be formulated away from the Scrutiny process and presented to Cabinet and Full Council at the appropriate time.

Recommendations

5. None.

Financial Implications

6. None.

Background Papers

7. None.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Public consultation and business ratepayers consultation is carried out as part of the budget process.
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Community Safety	None
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the budget process.
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	It is a legal requirement to produce a balanced budget.
Sustainability	Budgets must be drawn up in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Some budget proposals may affect staff e.g. efficiency savings requiring different ways of working.

Budget setting process and timetable

8. The 2014/15 budget relates to the financial year that will run from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. The Full Council meeting on 27 February will set the budget, taking into account recommendations from the Cabinet. The Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to review the budget proposals before the Cabinet determines its recommendations.
9. The following are the key steps taken to draw up the budget:

July 2013	Public consultation carried out
October 2013	Financial forecasts updated Budget Strategy approved by the Cabinet
November 2013	Business ratepayers consultation initiated Briefing for Scrutiny Committee (this report)
December 2013	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement released by DCLG
January 2014	Finalisation of budget proposals Confirmation of Local Government Finance Settlement
February 2014	Formal consideration of budget proposals by Members; Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council
March 2014	Council Tax bills issued
1 April	Financial year commences

Budget papers for consideration by Members

10. Below is a summary of the separate components of the budget papers and suggestions for the types of issues the Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider. These suggestions are neither compulsory or exhaustive.

11. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Summary

- a) Deals with budgets for council housing only, which by law are kept in a separate ringfenced account, separate from other council services.
- b) Expenditure on council housing is funded by rents and service charges payable by council tenants.
- c) HRA finances underwent substantial reform on 1 April 2012. Negative housing subsidy was abolished, replaced by the Council having to take on a share of the national housing debt. The result is that the HRA has significant levels of revenue headroom in its budget.
- d) The HRA has a 30-year business plan which sets out plans to maintain and improve housing stock and provide services to tenants, and plans for funding new council houses. The business plan allocates the revenue headroom and ensures that the debt is repaid within the 30-year period.
- e) HRA budgets are discussed by the Tenants Forum and Housing Board prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:

- Do the proposals have the support of council tenants?
- Is the rationale for proposed rent & service charge increases clearly explained and justifiable?
- Are there clear plans for the use of revenue headroom that deliver useful outcomes within reasonable timescales?

12. Treasury Management

Summary

- a) Including monies collected for other organisations, over £125m flows in and out of the Council's bank accounts each year. Inevitably, temporary cash surpluses arise.

- b) In addition, the Council holds financial reserves, including its own balances, and S106 funds.
- c) Treasury management is the process by which these cash flows and balances are managed. The prime objective is to ensure security of funds, secondary priorities are to ensure sufficient liquidity to enable commitments to be met, and capacity to earn income on the balances held.
- d) The Council is required to approve a Treasury Management strategy that ensures appropriate risk management including a safe approach to investing surplus funds. This has particular importance in wake of the Icelandic banking crisis in 2008, and volatility in the industry generally.
- e) Treasury management strategy also governs how long term borrowing is used to fund capital expenditure.
- f) The strategy is accompanied by mandatory “prudential indicators” which are technical measures of the affordability and sustainability of the Council’s borrowings and investments.
- g) The Council is advised in its treasury management activity by leading independent experts, Arlingclose Ltd.

Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:

- Is the strategy consistent with advice provided by Arlingclose?
- Does the strategy ensure that the Council’s exposure to risk is appropriate and properly managed? Has the right balance been struck between safeguarding funds and earning a return?
- What do the prudential indicators say about the appropriateness of the Council’s plans?

13. Capital Programme

Summary

- a) Capital expenditure is spending on schemes or assets that have long term value to the Council and the community. Examples include council housing, vehicles, IT systems, building improvements, or grants to outside bodies and individuals such as disabled adaptations.
- b) Capital expenditure is financed by contributions from the HRA or General Fund, capital receipts (sale of Council assets), external funding such as S106 contributions or government grant, or by borrowing.
- c) The Capital Programme sets out capital expenditure plans for the next 5 years, together with details of how this is to be financed.

Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:

- Do the proposed items in the Programme provide tangible outcomes and value for money?
- How do we ensure that capital grants given to outside bodies and individuals achieve the intended outcomes?
- Are the financing methods appropriate, and built into revenue budgets?

14. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Summary

- a) The MTFS relates to the General Fund (all services except Council Housing) and sets out forecasts for the next five years.
- b) It includes estimates of income and expenditure, and quantifies the extend of any surpluses or deficits anticipated during the five year period.
- c) The MTFS sets out in outline the Council's strategy for addressing deficits, or using surpluses, in order to ensure that Corporate Plan priorities are underpinned by sound finances.
- d) The key reason for having an MTFS is to anticipate potential difficulties long before they arise and ensure that robust plans are in place to address them. This is of particular importance because of expected future cuts in Government funding of local government.

Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:

- Are the assumptions used to build the forecasts reasonable?
- What would happen if actual events differed from the assumptions?
- Does the Council have a robust plan for addressing any deficits forecasted?
- Are plans for the use of any surpluses prudent, sustainable and good value for money?

15. Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

Summary

- a) By law, the Council must set its General Fund budget and Council Tax having given due regard to advice from its chief financial officer on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves.
- b) The report will summarise the key risks in the Council budget, and the assumptions that are most volatile. This will be translated into advice

about the minimum safe level of contingency reserves that should be maintained, and whether other reserves are needed to meet expected pressures in the coming years.

- c) The Secretary of State has powers to intervene if the CFO's advice is disregarded by Members, in the event of inappropriately low levels of reserves being maintained.

Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:

- Are the risks clearly explained?
- Is the advice about minimum safe contingency reserves proportionate to the risks involved?
- Is the level of reserves held by the Council appropriate?

16. General Fund Budget and Council Tax

Summary

- a) The General Fund covers budgets for all Council services except council housing.
- b) General Fund expenditure is mostly funded from fees & charges and Government grant. The balance is funded by Council Tax. By law the Council must set a balanced budget.
- c) The report will set out in detail proposed budgets for all General Fund services, proposed fees & charges, and a Council Tax resolution. On 24 October, the Cabinet indicated that it intends to recommend that the Council approves a freeze in Council Tax, when final budget proposals come forward in February.

Possible issues for consideration by Scrutiny:

- Is the proposed budget consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the CFO's advice on the level of reserves that should be maintained?
- Is the budget consistent with the Budget Strategy approved by the Cabinet?
- Have consultation responses been properly taken into account?
- Does the budget support the Corporate Plan?
- Are proposed budget growth items (service investment) justified with clear outcomes that provide value for money?
- Are proposed budget reductions (efficiency savings or service reductions) reasonable and consequences properly thought out?

- Is the Equalities Impact Assessment satisfactory?
- Is the proposal regarding Council Tax reasonable?

Further background reading

17. Scrutiny Committee Members are invited to familiarise themselves with the Council’s existing Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Book. Both can be found on the Council’s website at: www.uttlesford.gov.uk/finance (see box on bottom right of webpage)

18. In addition, Members are requested to review the Budget Strategy report approved by the Cabinet (attached for ease of reference).

19. At all times the Assistant Chief Executive – Finance shall be pleased to meet with Members individually or in groups to discuss any aspect of the Council’s finances.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
A detailed risk assessment shall accompany the budget proposals. There are no specific risks at this stage.			

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 24 October 2013

11

Title: Financial Outlook and 2014/15 Budget Strategy

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Robert Chambers

Key decision: **No**

Summary

1. This report summarises the financial outlook for 2014/15 and asks Members to approve a strategy for drawing up the 2014/15 budget.
2. The report also sets out the results of the public consultation on Council priorities.
3. Based upon the approved strategy officers will draw up a proposed budget for formal review by Members as follows:

Scrutiny pre-review	Scrutiny Committee	26 November
Scrutiny review	Scrutiny Committee	6 February
Finalisation of budget proposals	Cabinet	18 February
Approval of final budget	Full Council	27 February

4. The report sets out an outlook for the next five years and suggests that cost savings and/or additional income of around £1.3 million need to be secured by 2018. A contribution towards this position of £0.3 million is suggested as being a required outcome from the 2014/15 budget.

Recommendations

5. The Cabinet is recommended to approve the 2014/15 Budget Strategy and key actions as set out in this report.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation.

Background Papers

7. None.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Detailed in the report
Community Safety	None
Equalities	An EQIA will be prepared as part of developing budget proposals for approval.
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	It is a legal requirement to ensure a balanced budget.
Sustainability	The budget is to be set within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy which is designed to ensure stability and sustainability of budget decisions.
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Some of the decisions made as part of the budget setting process could have implications for staff.

Financial Outlook for 2014/15

8. Budget planning this year is again characterised by uncertainty about Government funding and local government finance generally. Root and branch reform of the funding system continues apace with localisation of business rates and council tax support having taken effect from 1 April. The local government finance system has radically altered such that Councils' funding depends directly on growth and prosperity in their local economies. Further adjustments are expected with additional substantial cuts in formula grant, and a proposed top slice of New Homes Bonus.
9. Firm numbers to inform the UDC budget will not be available until the Local Government Finance Settlement is published, anticipated for early December. Meanwhile, during the Summer and Autumn the Government has issued various publications that enable their thinking to be interpreted and estimates to be made.
10. The numbers in this report are based upon these interpretations and are therefore subject to change when the Settlement is published.
11. With that caveat in mind, the indications at this stage are that UDC has a stable budget outlook for 2014/15, in which an in-year surplus is forecasted. Extrapolations from 2015/16 onwards suggest that in-year budget deficits will arise.
12. The major uncertainty in the budget forecast is New Homes Bonus income which is £2m in 2013/14 and forecasted to be £2.6 million in 2014/15. This is a variable item and depends upon the number of new homes entering the Council Tax system. The Government's intentions for this funding stream are not clear with a proposed top slice to take effect from 2015/16 and no certainty about the scheme at all beyond 2016/17.

Budget Model

13. To inform the financial outlook for UDC, a detailed budget model is used. The following are key assumptions used in the model.

- a) **Gross service expenditure:** Uses the 2013/14 base budget as a starting point and one-off items removed. Assumptions about annual inflation for 2014/15 are used: Staff Pay 1%, Utilities 5%; Contractual indexation 3%; Price Inflation 2%.
- b) **Gross Service Income:** Again uses the 2013/14 base budget as a starting point. Assumed price inflation 2% for fees and charges except where special arrangements apply e.g. car park charges and taxi licences.
- c) **Universal Credit** – assumed that Housing Benefits expenditure and subsidy will start to phase out of the UDC budget in 2015/16 and this process to complete by 2017/18.
- d) **Service demand** – because of growing population and housing numbers, it is prudent to assume greater demand for council services such as refuse & recycling, revenues collection etc. A cumulative figure of £150,000 pa has been used.

£000	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Gross service expenditure	32,123	32,045	27,997	23,998	15,737	16,015
Gross service income	-23,490	-23,574	-19,497	-15,358	-7,072	-7,195
Service demand	-	150	300	450	600	750
Net service expenditure	8,633	8,621	8,800	9,090	9,265	9,570

- e) **Corporate items:** Pension Fund deficit payment – inflationary increase. Capital Financing Costs –in line with expected capital expenditure financing requirements. Investment income – nominal sum only due to continued low interest rates and prudent investment policy. Recharges to HRA – no change in methodology or amount recharged. LCTS subsidy and income sharing in line with the proposed scheme being considered by Cabinet today.

£000	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Pension Fund	488	512	538	565	593	623
Capital Financing	1,525	1,200	1,225	1,250	1,275	1,300
Collection Fund Balance	-6	0	0	0	0	0
Community Budgets	50	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge to HRA	-1,204	-1,029	-1,044	-1,062	-1,081	-1,100
Investment income	-50	-50	-50	-50	-50	-50
LCTS subsidy – majors	212	59	30	0	0	0
LCTS subsidy – parishes	194	194	194	194	194	194
Income sharing	-96	-96	-96	-96	-96	-96
Total corporate items	1,209	790	797	801	835	871

Government Funding Assumptions

- f) **Specific grants:** Assumed no change to PFI, Homelessness and NNDR collection costs funding. Housing Benefits subsidy at 98% of expenditure, phased out from 2015/16. Benefits admin subsidy reduced to reflect onset of Universal Credit
- g) **Council Tax Freeze Grant** – The Government has announced that Council Tax Freeze Grant awarded from 2013/14 onwards will continue to 2015/16, at the level of 1% which for UDC is approximately £50,000. Assuming that the Council freezes its Council Tax in 2014/15 and 2015/16, further awards will be made. It is possible that the awards will rolled into formula grant from 2016/17 onwards, but it is prudent not to assume that for the time being.

£000	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2013/14	50	50	50	-	-	-
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2014/15	-	50	50	-	-	-
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2015/16	-	-	50	-	-	-
Total	50	100	150	-	-	-

- h) **Localisation of Business Rates** – Under most foreseeable scenarios the amount retained by UDC shall be between £1.4m and £1.8m. The figures assumed in the model are based on incremental growth from the 2013/14 baseline position. In the event of gross revenue reduction e.g. because of the Diamond Hangar case, or additional discretionary rate relief being granted, the amount retained by the Council would reduce.

£000	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Retained business rates	1,356	1,401	1,443	1,486	1,531	1,577

- i) **Formula Grant:** 2014/15 figure based on indicative sum published by DCLG in the late 2012, with a small reduction as indicated by material the Government published in Summer 2013. The same material indicated an approximate 33% cut for 2014/15. There is no information about subsequent years. The model assumes a 25% annual reduction so that Formula Grant reaches zero by 2019/20.

£000	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Formula Grant	2,038	1,573	1,022	767	511	256

- j) **New Homes Bonus:** Assumes that the scheme will continue in line with the existing published methodology. The Council will be rewarded by around £1,456 pa for six years for each new home brought into the Council Tax system. There are two major uncertainties here. NHB is a six year scheme and the MTFS period goes beyond the sixth year. Secondly the Government has consulted on proposals to top slice NHB from 2015/16 to provide funding for LEPs. Two top slice rates were consulted upon, 35.1% and 18.9%. The model prudently assumes the higher level. Based upon predictions of Housing Growth consistent with the Local Plan Statement issued in October 2013, the estimated NHB funding is as follows:

£000	MTFS PERIOD							
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
2011/12 award	714	714	714	714	714	714		
2012/13 award		534	534	534	534	534	534	
2013/14 award			794	794	794	794	794	794
2014/15 award				582	582	582	582	582
2015/16 award					403	403	403	403
2016/17 award						422	422	422
2017/18 award							762	762
2018/19 award								1,201
TOTAL NHB	714	1,248	2,042	2,624	3,027	3,449	3,497	4,164
Less 35.1% top slice					-1,062	-1,210	-1,227	-1,461
Net retained by UDC	714	1,248	2,042	2,624	1,965	2,239	2,270	2,703
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast

Council Tax

- k) the Administration has given informal guidance that UDC's Council Tax should be frozen in 2014/15 and 2015/16, and to plan on the basis of a 2% annual increase from 2016/17. The Administration shall be looking carefully at the Council's finances during the next 2-3 years and will take appropriate and responsible decisions depending on the circumstances at the time. Taxbase assumptions are in line with housing growth forecasts and an estimate of LCTS discounts, and additional income arising from reducing discounts on second homes and empty homes. These assumptions give rise to the forecasts below.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Tax Base	34,389	34,854	35,164	35,489	36,091	37,051
LCTS discounts	-2,550	-2,420	-2,320	-2,220	-2,220	-2,220
Extra taxbase from changing discounts	-	248	248	248	248	248
Tax Base (net)	31,839	32,682	33,092	33,517	34,119	35,079
UDC Band D	£145.95	£145.95	£145.95	£148.87	£151.85	£154.89
Planning assumptions	1% cut	Freeze	Freeze	+2%	+2%	+2%
Council Tax income	£4.647m	£4.770m	£4.830m	£4.990m	£5.181m	£5.433m

Cumulative CPI inflation since April 2010 (date of last UDC Council Tax increase) to August 2013 (latest published inflation data) is 10.7%. Projecting this forward to April 2014 gives an estimated cumulative inflation from April 2010 to April 2014 of 12%. If a freeze is approved by the Council, the district Band D figure will have reduced by 1% during this period. This would represent a real terms reduction in the UDC precept of 11.6% since 2010.

(2010/11 Band D £147.42 + 12% = £165.11. £145.95 is 88.4% of £165.11. Real terms reduction therefore 11.6%.)

Summary of Budget Model

14. The above assumptions produce the following forecasts for the next five years:

£000	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	budget	forecast	forecast	forecast	forecast	forecast
Gross service expenditure	32,123	32,045	27,997	23,998	15,737	16,015
Gross service income	-23,490	-23,574	-19,497	-15,358	-7,072	-7,195
Demand growth	0	150	300	450	600	750
Net Service Expenditure	8,633	8,621	8,800	9,090	9,265	9,570
Corporate items (net)	1,209	790	797	801	835	871
Net council expenditure	9,842	9,411	9,597	9,891	10,100	10,441
<u>Government funding</u>						
Council Tax Freeze Grant	-50	-100	-150	0	0	0
Formula Grant	-2,038	-1,546	-1,022	-767	-511	-256
Business rates retention	-1,356	-1,401	-1,443	-1,486	-1,531	-1,577
New Homes Bonus	-2,042	-2,624	-1,965	-2,239	-2,270	-2,703
Other items (2013/14 one off)	-71	0	0	0	0	0
Total Government Funding	-5,557	-5,671	-4,580	-4,492	-4,312	-4,536
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	4,285	3,740	5,017	5,399	5,788	5,905
Net transfers to/(from) reserves	140	140	190	40	40	40
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	4,425	3,880	5,207	5,439	5,828	5,945
COUNCIL TAX INCOME	-4,647	-4,770	-4,830	-4,990	-5,181	-5,433
In year surplus(-) / deficit	-222	-890	377	449	647	512

15. The forecasts show:

- An in-year surplus of £0.9m for 2014/15
- An in year deficit of £0.4m-£0.6m in each year from 2015/16 onwards.

16. Projecting the model forward for a 10 year period (i.e. until 2023/24) suggests that the in year deficit grows each year and reaches approx £0.8m by the end of this period.

17. These figures represent a “best case” scenario. It is emphasised that all forecasts, in particular those about Government funding, are not based on firm information and figures from 2015 especially are (informed) conjecture. It is possible that there will be worse outcomes than those currently indicated. The surprise Government proposal to top slice New Homes Bonus is an example of how changes in the funding environment can suddenly occur. The model is unavoidably full of assumptions about the future and it is possible that some assumptions will prove, with hindsight, to be optimistic.

18. Alternative scenario planning, based mainly upon significantly downgrading the available Government funding, suggests that over the 5 year period covered by the MTF5, i.e. by 2018/19, an in year deficit of up to £1.3 million could open up.
19. Subject to further analysis and in particular, confirmation of the Local Government Finance Settlement, it is felt that the Council should prudently work to the assumption that a £1.3 million budget reduction over the next 5 years should form the basis of its financial planning.
20. Continuing the approach that has served the Council well in recent years, it would be sensible to make steady progress towards this sum in each financial year. To reach a cumulative budget reduction of £1.3 million by 2018/19, some progress would need to be made in 2014/15.
21. Accordingly, it is proposed that the 2014/15 budget should seek to identify budget reductions of around £0.3 million.
22. Budget reductions include the making of efficiency savings and the generation of additional income. Service reductions would need to be contemplated if efficiency savings and income generation were not sufficient to ensure a balanced budget and ongoing financial stability.
23. Because of the degree of estimation involved, and the longer term projections referred to in the preceding paragraph, it will be absolutely essential to maintain strong financial discipline around all aspects of the Council's costs and income. The Council must ensure it is in a strong position to anticipate and adapt to funding outcomes that differ from what is currently assumed. Therefore any decision to incur additional costs e.g. service investment or to reduce income e.g. fees & charges reductions must be fully funded by sustainable cost savings and/or additional income elsewhere in the Council's budget.
24. Total General Fund reserves during this five year model are estimated to stay steady at around £6.5m-£7m. This excludes any in-year surpluses or deficits. A schedule of forecasted reserves balances is below.

31.3.2013	£000	31.3.2014	31.3.2015	31.3.2016	31.3.2017	31.3.2017	31.3.2018	31.3.2019
Actual		Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
1,214	Working Balance	1,214	1,214	1,214	1,214	1,214	1,214	1,214
	<u>Financial management reserves</u>							
1,251	Budget Equalization	1,473	1,473	1,473	1,473	1,473	1,473	1,473
587	Change Management	524	524	524	524	524	524	524
124	Council Tax Freeze Grant	124	224	374	374	374	374	374
	<u>Contingency reserves</u>							
962	LGRR Contingency	725	725	725	725	725	725	725
165	Landsbanki Contingency	165	165	165	165	165	165	165
90	Emergency response	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
51	Municipal Mutual Insurance	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
830	NHB Contingency	790	790	790	790	790	790	790
	<u>Service reserves</u>							
266	Planning	724	724	724	724	724	724	724
66	Neighbourhood Front Runners	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
79	Waste Management	186	186	186	186	186	186	186
81	Homelessness	101	121	141	161	181	201	221
117	Economic Development	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
63	Licensing	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
47	Elections	67	87	107	127	147	167	187
100	Hardship Fund	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
26	NHB Community Projects	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
6,119	TOTAL RESERVES	6,577	6,717	6,907	6,947	6,987	7,027	7,067

Public Consultation

25. This is the third year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget has been run. Information about the budget setting process and the survey was distributed to every household in the district as part of the council's magazine *Uttlesford Life*. Breaking with previous practice and as part of the authority's drive towards channel shift, the 2013 survey was available primarily through an online questionnaire rather than as a printed sheet included with the magazine. A small number of printed copies, though, were distributed to libraries and the council's CIC points across the district to ensure that all residents would have a chance to taking part. A copy of the survey was not, this year, included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire as it was considered that panellists could respond independently. The results are detailed below.

26. Questions posed in the 2013 budget consultation are similar to those asked in previous years and take account of the council's long term strategy as promulgated in the Corporate Plan 2013-18. Amongst respondents to the budget consultation there was a marked preference for "Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times" with 37% indicating that they felt this area of spending should be the council's highest priority. This is a continuation of the trend, though with a slight decrease, established in 2011 and 2012 when 52% and 46% respectively selected the same option. The headline view for the second highest spending priority was jointly tied between "Providing affordable housing for local people"

and “Work[ing] with Essex County Council to provide the condition of the district’s roads”. Both options received a 20% opinion rating. This stands in contrast to the previous years when crime reduction was rated as the second most important objective for spending. Interestingly, of those who selected a third highest priority, a further 18% again considered that working with the County Council on road issues should be of importance.

27. Respondees were also offered the option to select a category of spending where they considered the council should be curtailing resources. In 2012 almost a quarter of those who expressed an opinion (23%), selected that “Giving responsibility to local communities to run services where appropriate” should not be a priority area for council consideration. For 2013, though, there was a marked opinion by 26% that the council should not be allocating funds to “Work more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy”.

Priority	Spending Area
Highest priority	[A] “Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times”
Second highest	[C] “Providing affordable housing for local people” and [H] “Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads”
Third highest	[H] “Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads”
Don't do	[I] “Work more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy”

28. There is a statutory requirement to undertake business ratepayers consultation which as in previous shall be via correspondence with the key business representative groups in Uttlesford.

Housing Revenue Account

29. 2014/15 shall be the third year of self financing. The Business Plan sets out estimates of revenue headroom and how this will be invested, including improvements to the Council’s housing stock, and new build including the development of Mead Court and garden sites.

30. The key issues for 2014/15 will be:

- ensuring that delivery of the Business Plan is on course
- maintaining clear plans which demonstrate how headroom is to be used.

- applying UDC rent setting policy and ensuring that income is maximised where appropriate
- monitoring the effects of Right To Buy invigoration
- ensuring that the Housing Service has the capacity deliver the Plan.

31. In the event of slippage in the use of revenue headroom the Council will need to consider whether to pay off a proportion of the £88.4m debt it has been required to take on under the self-financing reform. The debt has been structured so that it is repaid in years 6 to 30 i.e. from 2017/18 to 2041/42 however up to £10m can be paid off early without financial penalty.

Key actions and budget strategy for 2014/15

32. The following are the key actions and assumptions that will inform the 2014/15 budget process

- To take account of budget consultation results when drawing up budget proposals.
- To plan on the basis that the UDC Council Tax will be frozen for 2014/15.
- To make progress towards savings & income targets set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, with a guideline target figure of £0.3 million for 2014/15.
- To implement planned changes to Council Tax Discounts and the LCTS scheme, subject to Council approval.
- To implement a new policy for discretionary business rates relief.
- To maintain, and seek opportunities to enhance, support for the voluntary sector.
- Unless there is a significant change in circumstances, not to require any cuts in services to make financial savings, although efficiency savings will continue to be sought.
- To develop a new strategy for the financing of capital expenditure, which optimises the revenue budget position over the medium to longer term.
- Continue to implement the HRA Business Plan.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Changes in circumstances and/or	2 (inherent risk of	3 (sums involved are	A detailed risk assessment will be

<p>new information becomes available that affects the assumptions in the budget strategy</p>	<p>variability in any budget model)</p>	<p>potentially significant)</p>	<p>prepared and incorporated with budget approval papers in February.</p> <p>The Working Balance is to be maintained at a minimum safe contingency level.</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy outlines clear criteria for decision making.</p>
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2013

COUNCIL SPENDING

Budget Consultation Results

October 2013

QUESTIONNAIRE ON COUNCIL SPENDING FOR THE YEAR 2014-15



Prepared by:
Consultation Unit
Uttlesford District Council
October 2013



BUDGET CONSULTATION 2013

CONTENTS

1. Executive summary
2. Purpose methodology
3. Survey results, detailed findings
4. Appendices –Tables and charts

1. Executive summary

This is the third year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget has been run. Information about the budget setting process and the survey was distributed to every household in the district as part of the council's magazine *Uttlesford Life*. Breaking with previous practice and as part of the authority's drive towards channel shift, the 2013 survey was available primarily through an online questionnaire rather than as a printed sheet included with the magazine. A small number of printed copies, though, were distributed to libraries and the council's CIC points across the district to ensure that all residents would have a chance to taking part. A copy of the survey was not, this year, included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire as it was considered that panellists could respond independently. The results are detailed below.

Simply choose your top three priorities from the list below and select the corresponding letter from the drop down list. If there are any priorities listed which you believe the council should NOT pursue, then you can tell us that too.

- A. Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times
- B. Giving responsibility to local communities to run services where possible (for example for town/parish councils)
- C. Providing affordable housing for local people
- D. Reducing crime and antisocial behaviours in partnership with the police and others
- E. Keeping our streets and open spaces clean and free of litter
- F. Maintain support for charities and the voluntary sector
- G. Develop opportunities for local residents to influence decision-making on public services (such as through the Community Forums)
- H. Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads
- I. Work more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy
- J. Other (if you would like to choose a priority that is not in the list above, select 'Other' and specify in the appropriate box)

1. Highest Priority

Drop down menu showing options A through J and Other.

Other - Please specify in Box 2 provided below

Questions posed in the 2013 budget consultation are similar to those asked in previous years and take account of the council's long term strategy as promulgated in the Corporate Plan 2013-18. Amongst respondents to the budget consultation there was a marked preference for "Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times" with 36.7% indicating that they felt this area of spending should be the council's highest priority. This is a continuation of the trend, though with a slight decrease, established in 2011 and 2012 when 51.8% and 45.7% respectively selected the same option. The headline view for the second highest spending priority was jointly tied between "Providing affordable housing for local people" and "Work[ing] with Essex County Council to provide the condition of the district's roads". Both options received a 20% opinion rating. This stands in contrast to the previous years when crime reduction was rated as the second most important objective for spending.

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2013

Interestingly, of those who selected a third highest priority, a further 18.3% again considered that working with the County Council on road issues should be of importance.

Respondees were also offered the option to select a category of spending where they considered the council should be curtailing resources. In 2012 almost a quarter of those who expressed an opinion (23.0%), selected that “Giving responsibility to local communities to run services where appropriate” should not be a priority area for council consideration. For 2013, though, there was a marked opinion by 25.9% that the council should not be allocating funds to “Work more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy”.

The results are summarised below and fully detailed findings can be seen in Section 3.

Priority	Spending Area
Highest priority	[A] “Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times”
Second highest	[C] “Providing affordable housing for local people” and [H] “Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads”
Third highest	[H] “Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads”
Don't do	[I] “Work more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy”

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2013

2. Purpose methodology

Each year Uttlesford District Council sets a budget to decide how to allocate money to the wide range of services that the council provides. The budget is linked closely to the priorities in our Corporate Plan - the key document which sets out what the council wants to achieve over the next five years. The council is obliged to consult with the residents of the district when setting the budget for the forthcoming year. The results of this consultation will inform the decisions made by officers and councillors when setting spending for the year April 2014 to March 2015.

The consultation was run over the period 27 August to 23 September 2013. Respondents were asked to select their top three spending priorities from a list of 10 options covering the full range of the council's activities. They were also offered the opportunity to indicate a preference for reducing spending in any area and for appending additional comments.

Information about the survey was distributed to every household in the district as part of the summer issue of the council's in-house magazine, *Uttlesford Life*. In line with the authority's drive towards channel shift, the 2013 survey was available primarily through an online Snap 11 questionnaire rather than as a printed sheet included with the magazine. A small number of printed copies, though, were distributed to libraries and the council's CIC points across the district to ensure that all residents would have a chance to taking part. A copy of the survey was not, this year, included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire as it was considered that panellists could respond independently.

By the close of the consultation period, 51 electronic submissions had been received using the Snap consultation and 10 paper copies had come in, making a total return of 61 for the consultation. This represents a significant decrease on the previous year when 257 responses were received and is possibly attributable to a relative lack of engagement with online surveys from the sector of the population most likely to respond.

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2013

3. Survey results, detailed findings

Key results from the survey are as follows:

SECTION 1: HIGHEST PRIORITIES - GENERAL AREAS OF SPENDING FOR THE COUNCIL

- On the highest spending priority, just over a third of respondents (36.7%) considered that the council should concentrate on “Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times”. A further 16.7% of people who answered this question considered that “Providing affordable housing for local people” should be the most important area in which to concentrate resources.
- Option C was again popular with those marking a secondary priority. Here exactly a fifth (20%) of those consulted rated [C] “Providing affordable housing for local people” as being the second highest priority. A further 20% also selected [H] “Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads”. Interestingly, in the 2012 survey, 21.6% had flagged up their concerns over expenditure on “Providing affordable housing for local people”. The present results would seem to indicate that opinion is on the wane with greater public awareness of the need for social housing.
- “Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads” was also selected by 18.3% as the third highest priority for spending. This option was also selected as the ‘highest priority’ by 13.3% of the respondents. Whilst not the headline priority for the overall survey, it is important to note that in a cumulative total 51.63% people chose to include this option as of concern.

SECTION 2: LOWEST PRIORITIES – “DON’T DO” AREAS OF SPENDING

- Of those who expressed an opinion, just over a quarter 25.9% considered that that the council should not consider “Work[ing] more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy”, though a further 18.5% also suggested that funding should be withdrawn from “Giving responsibility to local communities to run services where possible (for example for town/parish councils)” and “Maintain[ing] support for charities and the voluntary sector”.

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SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED

- Consultees were also invited to submit further comments additional to the formalised questions with some 13.1% choosing to do so. These responses, appended verbatim to the full report, covered a wide range of subjects but generally show a topical preoccupation with infrastructure including comments on maintaining community services, roads and sports facilities. Further comments covered health issues and concerns over airport development.

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2013

4. Appendices

Priority options

A. Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times

B. Giving responsibility to local communities to run services where appropriate (for example to town/parish councils)

C. Providing affordable housing for local people

D. Reducing crime and antisocial behaviours in partnership with the police and others

E. Keeping our streets and open spaces clean and free of litter

F. Maintain support for charities and the voluntary sector

G. Develop opportunities for local residents to influence decision-making on public services (such as through the Community Forums)

H. Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads

I. Work more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy

J. Other

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Total number of
respondents to
question

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Other
Highest Priority	22	6	10	4	4	0	1	8	2	3
	36.70%	10.00%	16.70%	6.70%	6.70%	0	1.70%	13.30%	3.30%	5.00%
Second Highest Priority	2	5	12	11	5	5	4	12	3	1
	3.30%	8.30%	20.00%	18.30%	8.30%	8.30%	6.70%	20.00%	5.00%	1.70%
Third Highest Priority	5	6	5	8	9	1	3	11	9	3
	8.30%	10.00%	8.30%	13.30%	15.00%	1.70%	5.00%	18.30%	15.00%	5.00%
Don't do (If applicable)	1	5	4	0	0	5	1	1	7	3
	3.70%	18.50%	14.80%	0	0	18.50%	3.70%	3.70%	25.90%	11.10%

Table 1 Response counts and percentages for each option

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2013

Council Spending Consultation - August 2013

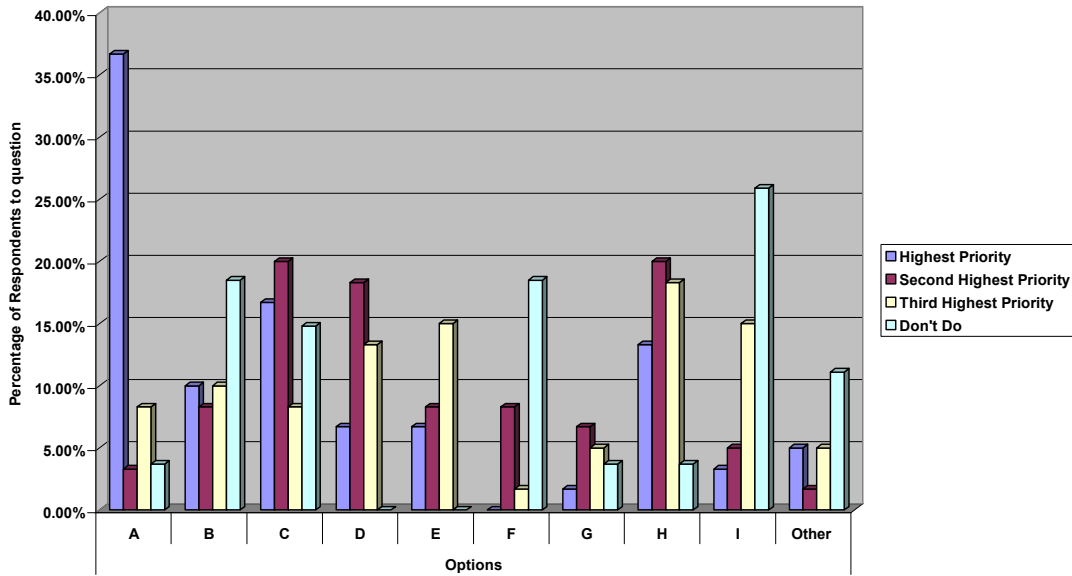


Chart 1 NB. Option 'J' comments for "other" priorities can be seen included as part of the table of "Respondents Comments"

Legend

A	Continuing with sound financial management to ensure continued stability of the council and its services in difficult times
B	Giving responsibility to local communities to run services where possible (for example for town/parish councils)
C	Providing affordable housing for local people
D	Reducing crime and antisocial behaviour in partnership with the police and others
E	Keeping our streets and open spaces clean and free of litter
F	Maintain support for charities and the voluntary sector
G	Develop opportunities for local residents to influence decision-making on public services (such as through the Community Forums)
H	Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of the district's roads
I	Work more closely with the business community to benefit the local economy
J	Other (if you would like to choose a priority that is not in the list above, select 'Other' and specify in the appropriate box)

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Open text responses

61 responses were received – 51 online responses and 10 completed paper questionnaires.

The following open text responses were provided where the respondent did not choose from the listed priorities but selected the 'Other' option:

Highest Priority 'Other'

Provide defibrillators to all our schools. Pressure all local sports centres/ clubs into providing AED's in their premises.

Develop a strategic infrastructure plan for the district.

Seriously improve monitoring and control over money allocated to ensure it is spent thriftly (sic) and with maximum benefit

Second Highest Priority 'Other'

Stop wasting money on some charities and voluntary sector activities where the council provides similar. You have no real knowledge of what they really are achieving (if anything)

Third Highest Priority 'Other'

Consider poverty (particularly child poverty) when making policy decisions, for example with regard to setting Council Tax. Lobby for reduction in bus fares on rural routes, if necessary subsidise from revenues. Improve affordability of sport facilities for people on low incomes, to encourage healthy lifestyle.
--

Maintain community services operated by the Council e.g. Community Information Centres, Day Centres, Saffron Walden Museum
--

Don't Do 'Other'

Don't support airport expansion in any form

I am a resident of the newly built houses in Little Canfield. Sort the on road parking issue. Some roads especially are very narrow and the people don't even bother to park the cars on to the foot paths. It is one of the prime issue which if resolved can avoid accidents. I have noticed this issue on the Dunmow road very often close to Four Ashes signal.

Service	Status	
	Statutory	Non-Statutory
Council Tax Benefits	x	
Housing Benefits	x	
Business Rates	x	
Revs and Bens administration	x	
Customer Information Centres		x
Customer Services		x
Human Resiurces		x
SW Offices		x
Public Conveniences		x
Central services		x
Office Services		x

Finance	x	x
Corporate Management	x	x

ICT		x
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Housing Repairs		x
Property Services		x
Rent Collection and Accounting	x	
Homelessness	x	
Housing Sewerage		x
Housing Services		x
Sheltered Housing		x
Lifeline		x
Day Centres		x
Estate Maintenance		x

Internal Audit	x	
Enforcement		x
On street parking		x
Assisted Travel	x	
Emergency Planning	x	
Car parking		x
Land Charges	x	
Licensing	x	
Monitoring & Enforcement		x
Legal Services		x
Waste management	x	x
Transport administration	x	x
Depots		x
Vehicle Maintenance		x
Local amenities		x
Contract management		x
Street Cleansing		x

Septic Tanks		x
Development Control	x	x
Land drainage	x	x
Planning administration	x	x
Building Surveying	x	x
Housing Strategy	x	x
Planning Policy	x	x
Conservation	x	x
Planning Grants		x

Environmental Health	x	x
Port Health	x	x
Animal Warden	x	
Pest Control		x
Environment management		x

Communication		x
Conducting elections	x	
Democratic representation	x	
Electoral registration	x	
Committee administration		x
Museum		x
Business Improvement & Performance		x

Community safety		x
Sports Development		x
Leisure administration		x
Leisure pfi		x
Grants & contributions		x
Community wardens		x
Drug awareness		x

Scoping Report for Scrutiny Committee Review

Review Topic	Planning (Development Management)			
Scoping Report to go to meeting on	26 November 2013			
Review to take place at meeting on	To be confirmed			
Review format required at meeting <i>(tick as appropriate)</i>	Written report (to be supplied at least five working days before the meeting)	X	Presentation	
Portfolio Holder	Cllr S Barker Cllr J Cheetham (Chairman of Planning Committee)			
Lead Officer	Andrew Taylor			
Stakeholders	Businesses, developers and agents, landowners, residents, visitors,			

Suggested Terms of Reference	<p>§ Focus on key aspects of the Development Management Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The respective weight to be attached to development plan and other material considerations such 5 year supply of deliverable sites; ○ The purpose and effectiveness of consultation; ○ Mitigation of impacts including infrastructure contributions
Suggested Purpose and/or Objective of the Review	<p>§ To consider the attributes of a quality development management service</p> <p>§ To assess the council's service against these attributes and make recommendations for improvements if required.</p>
Methodology / Approach	<p>§ Government's national performance criteria: speed and appeals</p> <p>§ National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>§ Infrastructure contribution guidance and CIL v S106 mechanisms</p> <p>§ Appeals against the council's decisions – outcomes</p> <p>§ Judicial reviews of the council's processes</p> <p>§ Relevant LGO decisions about allegations of maladministration</p> <p>§ Cost of appeals: advocacy and expert witness fees</p>

	§ Review Planning Services customer questionnaires. § Review performance reports § Caseloads and outstanding applications § Discussions with planning committee members.
Attendees Required	To be decided