

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON  
ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 24 JUNE 2014**

Present: Councillor E Godwin (Chairman)  
Councillors G Barker, P Davies, S Howell and D Morson

Officers Present: G Bradley (Community Partnerships Manager), A Rees (Democratic Services Support Officer), V Taylor (Business Improvement and Performance Officer) and A Webb (Director of Corporate Services).

Also Present: Councillors C Cant and J Ketteridge (Leader).

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Evans, E Oliver, J Rich and D Watson.

*Councillor Cant declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9, Day Centres – scoping report, as she was a trustee of Dunmow Day Centre.*

**SC2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2014 were approved and signed as a correct record.

**SC3 MATTERS ARISING**

**(i) SC62 – NHS England and West Essex CCG**

The Business Improvement and Performance Officer said she had not heard from Mrs Manton as to whether Health authorities could ask for greater Section 106 contributions.

**SC4 STANDING ITEMS**

The Chairman said that she was aware of no matters referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision, nor any responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee.

**SC5 FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted.

**SC6 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Barker suggested that the Committee should focus more on decisions made by Cabinet. The Work Programme needed to be more flexible in order to allow for this. He asked what brief Peter Fentem was

to be given about air quality for the meeting on 14 October. The issue was often vague and emotive and it was important to provide the public with figures that were as accurate as possible.

Councillor Howell said that it was important that the Committee focussed on decisions made by the Council. He was pleased that the meeting's agenda focussed on such issues. He added that the statutory and non-statutory service list should also be added to the work programme and questioned what had happened to this review.

The Director of Corporate Services reminded the committee that it had been agreed to review Day Centres as a previous review had been undertaken by Scrutiny. He suggested that the list should be added to September's agenda in order for the next review to be decided.

In response to the points raised by Councillor Barker, the Director of Corporate Services said that key decisions were scrutinised before they went to Cabinet. The call-in process also allowed for scrutiny of Cabinet decisions when needed. The Business Improvement and Performance Officer would be requested to find out what Mr Fentem was going to say regarding air quality.

Councillor Ketteridge informed the Committee of an Air Quality Planning workshop that was to be held on 25 June. All members were welcome to attend.

The Committee discussed the proposed agenda for the meeting on 24 March 2015. Councillor Godwin suggested that the Access and Equalities Officer should be invited to speak about the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Work Programme was noted.

SC7

## **ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE LEADER**

Councillor Ketteridge presented the Leader's report to the Committee. He said the 2013/14 financial year had been successful. It was the seventh successive financial year that Council expenditure was within budget. For the 2012/13 financial year there was another unqualified audit. One member of the public had objected, but the Auditor had found the claim to be without foundation. In accordance with the Corporate Planning and Medium Term Financial Strategy there would be no increase in Council Tax throughout the plan period. He was proud that Council Tax had been reduced by 1% in 2013/14 and 2% in 2014/15. The Council had received the best Government financial settlement by spending power. The Council had been in correspondence with the Airports Commission. The Commission's interim report did not include Stansted in its proposals for new runway capacity. The Uttlesford Local Plan was to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate shortly. It was still necessary to plan for Gypsy and

Traveller sites in the district. Findings of a county wide survey were being waited upon. The Council had a requirement to provide affordable housing and the waiting list for Council or Housing Association accommodation continued to grow. Due to the Council's strong financial position it was now able to begin dealing with the need for new housing. The Council's policy of requiring commercial housing developments to ensure 40% of the development was affordable housing was the only way to make a serious contribution to Social Housing stock. Ensuring future economic development was a key part of the Corporate Plan. The Local Plan provided a number of new areas for economic growth, as well as enhance existing ones. The Tour de France on 7 July would provide a significant boost in profile for the district. The Council would continue to work with neighbouring districts and play an active role in a variety of local partnerships. Democratic and Electoral Services had recently conducted the European Parliamentary Election. The amount of work undertaken to ensure the election ran smoothly was often underestimated and it was pleasing to note that Essex was the second county to declare its results. Work was now being undertaken to ensure the successful implementation of Individual Electoral Registration, as well as the various elections that would take place in May 2015. In September 2013, the Government chose to implement its "You've got the power scheme" in Uttlesford because of the progress it had made in registering Community Assets. It was satisfying to note that the Halifax Rural Areas Quality of Life Survey 2014 had stated that residents of Uttlesford enjoyed the best quality of life for any rural area in Great Britain. The Council had become well respected throughout the country and this was because of the work undertaken by the Council's officers.

The Committee discussed the Leader's comments in relation to Stansted Airport. Members agreed that although it was reassuring that the Airports Commission had not shortlisted Stansted Airport for additional runway capacity, the number of flight paths directly above Stansted were too numerous.

The Committee agreed to move to Item 11.

The Annual Report from the Leader was noted.

SC8

## **SPORTS FACILITY PROVISION – SCOPING REPORT**

The Committee received information about the suggested terms of reference for the review into sports facility provision. The suggested terms of reference were as follows:

- To understand what facilities were available within the district and who used them.
- To understand whether if there was a shortfall in facilities

- To determine what the catchment areas were for current facilities, including those on the edge of the district.

The Community Partnerships Manager told the Committee that the Council was working with Active Essex and 1Life. The Active Uttlesford Network had been launched so that sports clubs could decide what facilities were needed. There would be sub groups for larger areas such as Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

The Committee were concerned by the possibility of replicating work already being undertaken by the Active Uttlesford Network. It was agreed that the review into sports facility provision would be deferred until it was possible to ascertain what the Active Uttlesford Network was likely to do.

RESOLVED that a report on Active Uttlesford be brought to the next Scrutiny meeting. The report would set out who the members of Active Uttlesford were, the planned workload and timings for completion of each element.

SC9

## **DAY CENTRES – SCOPING REPORT**

Councillor Godwin outlined the suggested terms of reference for the review into day centres. They were as follows:

- To assess how each of the five day centres operated and what services were provided.
- To assess the usage of each centre.
- To review the locations of the centres.
- To assess what building works would be required and any likely costs.
- To evaluate the findings and formulate recommendations for each centre.

The Committee decided to establish a Task Group to assist with the review. The Task Group would comprise of Councillors Davey, Evans, Godwin and Morson.

The Committee received information from Councillor Cant about the day centre in Dunmow. She said that finding volunteers was often challenging, especially at a committee level. The day centre had been able to improve its facilities and it was important that funding continued to be made available to ensure facilities were maintained to a high standard. It was also important that the Council continued to be proactive in engaging with day centres. There had been an issue with fire alarms in the day centre and this needed to be resolved.

Councillor Barker said that in addition to the suggested terms of reference, the review should look at why the Council has day centres.

Members agreed that this should be added to the terms of reference for the review.

RESOLVED that a Task Group would be set up to review day centre provision throughout the district, to report to the meeting of the Committee in October.

The Task Group would be comprised of Councillors Evans, Godwin and Morson. Councillor Davies would act as a 'critical friend'. It would have the following terms of reference:

- To assess how each of the five day centres operated and what services were provided.
- To assess the usage of each centre.
- To review the locations of the centres.
- To assess what building works would be required and any likely costs.
- To evaluate the findings and formulate recommendations for each centre.
- To establish why the Council has day centres.

SC10

#### **SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM AND CASTLE SITE DEVELOPMENT – SCOPING REPORT**

The Committee were told by Councillor Morson that the review would provide on how the partnership between the Museum Management Working Group and the Museum Society. The suggested terms of reference for the review were:

- To establish how much money was being spent and where.
- To understand the two phase forward plan.

In response to a question by Councillor Barker, The Director of Corporate Services said that the castle was owned by the Council.

RESOLVED that a review into the Saffron Walden Museum and Castle site development would take place with the following terms of reference:

- To establish how much money was being spent and where.
- To understand the two phase forward plan.
- To be reassured that the underlying infrastructure of the castle is protected.

SC11

#### **PLANNING SCOPING REPORT**

The Committee discussed the stringency of planning performance indicators. Members agreed that determining the quality of work was within the remit of management and not the Scrutiny Committee. The appeals procedure also dealt sufficiently with performance indicators relating to quality. Other performance indicators were already covered by the Performance and Audit Committee.

SC12      **AMBULANCE SERVICE SCOPING REPORT**

Members agreed that the ambulance service had already been discussed sufficiently at previous meetings.

SC13      **ANY OTHER ITEMS**

The Director of Corporate Services told the Committee that the meeting on 14 October would have to be rescheduled due to a clash with the South Area Forum.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm.