

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30pm on 11 April 2017**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)
Councillors G Barker, R Chambers, M Felton, G LeCount , B Light
and E Oliver.

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director -Corporate Services), P
Evans (Leisure and Performance Manager), B Ferguson,
(Democratic Services Officer), V Taylor (Business Improvement
and Performance Officer) and A Webb (Director of Finance and
Corporate Services).

Also present: Louise Byrne (Chair of the Tenant Regulatory Panel)

SC56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillors Asker, Davies and Harris.

SC57 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2017 were received and signed
by the Chairman as a correct record.

SC58 RESPONSE OF THE EXECUTIVE TO REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chairman said no official response had been received from the executive
regarding reports submitted by the Scrutiny Committee. However, a complaint
had been received at Cabinet from Uttlesford Licensed Operator and Drivers
Association (ULODA), stating that nothing had been done with regards to
relaunching forums for Taxi Drivers/Operators as recommended by the Scrutiny
Committee. Councillor Chambers explained that based on previous experience
relaunching a forum for the sector was not the most appropriate way. Officers
have revised and updated the Taxi Chat magazine, to improve engagement
with drivers. Officers will also be introducing a question and answers forum.
This will be of greater benefit to the trade as anyone can post questions and
everyone can be informed directly of the Councils response. The Chairman
added that a response from the Executive must be pursued.

SC59 TENANT REGULATORY PANEL – INTRODUCTION TO THE PANEL

Item 9 was moved forward in the proceedings as a guest speaker was present.
The Leisure and Performance Manager gave a brief history of the voluntary
Tenant Regulatory Panel (TRP) group before introducing the Chair of the TRP.

The Chair of the TRP said the group's aims were to improve housing services
for tenants, and ensure Uttlesford District Council (UDC) was getting good

value for money. She talked about how the group worked, and said that while it had run into staffing problems in the past, its effectiveness and legitimacy had never been in question. She noted it had been nominated for a national scrutiny award for 'inspiring newcomer', and that it had a high quantity of recommendations adopted by UDC.

The Chairman said that the TRP could be of much help to the Scrutiny Committee, and asked if the TRP had worked with UDC committees before.

The Chair of the TRP said the aim of her introduction had been to make members aware of what the TRP was doing and it was open to co-operation. She said that the scope of potential projects would have to be considered as they were a group staffed by volunteers and therefore their workload capacity was limited.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Councillor Felton stated that there was no current slot on the Housing Committee for the TRP and asked whether the TRP could share information on tenant priorities with the Council.

The TRP Chair said she was open to sharing reports and information with the Housing Committee.

Councillor Chambers thanked the TRP for their work and stressed the importance of communication between the group and UDC.

The Chairman thanked the TRP Chair for attending.

SC60

CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The committee considered the updated forward plan and the Chairman asked members for their thoughts. Councillor Felton introduced the provisional Health and Wellbeing Strategy to the discussion. She said although progress had been achieved with external organisations, the strategy needed to be clarified. The Chairman agreed, and said this was a priority.

Councillor Chambers expressed his concern about the remit of such a plan. Although work should be done with external partners, it was not the role of the Council to fulfil the failings of the National Health Service. The council's role should be restricted to making the relevant health service aware of failings and to assist in finding solutions.

In response to a suggestion by Councillor Barker that a document should be made available to remind members of the statutory duties of UDC, Councillor Felton said the UDC should provide guidance, for instance, to assist disabled people when they do not know where they can seek support. The Chairman stated that progress on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy may be of interest to the Scrutiny Committee in the future.

In relation to the Member Public Engagement plan, Councillor Light expressed her concern over the lack of progress made to date. The Assistant Director of Corporate Services updated members on his understanding of the scheme and

said wider community engagement would follow on when the work with the youth engagement group had been completed. It had been suggested this would involve the current members of the Youth Engagement Working Group but this was not definitive due to reservations related to work load.

SC61

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Business Improvement and Performance Officer said that the Work Programme was a list of suggested topics that the Scrutiny Committee could look at in the future.

The Chairman added that it was not a definitive list and members were welcome to make their own suggestions.

Councillor Barker listed a number of items he thought should be considered by the Scrutiny Committee, including resilience and emergency planning.

The Chairman said there was a Corporate Risk Register which reports to the Performance and Audit Committee, and questioned whether resilience plans were in the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services suggested that a report could be submitted to Scrutiny regarding Business Continuity Plans to allay any fears related to resilience issues.

The committee discussed the Cabinet System Review, including the pros and cons of Cabinet and Committee systems. The Chairman suggested that the committee look for other authorities which had changed from a Cabinet to a Committee system, to understand why they had taken the decision.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said officers would locate and circulate the Basildon Council report covering its recent decision to change system.

In response to a question from Councillor Felton regarding whether planning enforcement had been examined, the Chairman said planning had been included within the Scrutiny Enforcement review. He went on to explain that Planning and Licensing enforcement had now been split into separate teams.

Councillor Felton said that feedback for planning enforcement was largely negative, with no mechanism to check the progress of a complaint which had been made by the public.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that an up-to-date list of public complaints would be published that week, including reference numbers.

Councillor Chambers gave a verbal update on the Licensing Committee's internal review. In response to a question from the Chairman, he said that ULODA would be included in the consultation stage of the process. ULODA had been unhappy at the lack of progress made regarding a taxi forum between the Licensing Committee and drivers. Councillor Chambers reiterated that the

process was under review and drivers would be consulted in due course. He added that the taxi company 24x7 had given positive feedback about proceedings.

In response to a question from Councillor Oliver, the Chairman asked officers if they had anything to add to the feedback received from PAS, an external body commissioned by the Scrutiny Committee to review the ongoing Local Plan. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said there was currently no further feedback.

The Chairman asked the Committee and Senior Officers if there was anything they would like added to the work programme. In response the Director of Finance and Corporate Services suggested that the Committee may wish to look at the Council's approach to commercialisation. It was agreed that this would be added to the work programme.

SC62 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW 2016-17

Members received a report reviewing the committee's work through 2016-17. The Chairman, in response to a question from Councillor Barker, said that he would be presenting the report to Full Council.

SC63 ECC HIGHWAYS – REPORTING OF MAINTENANCE ISSUES

In the absence of Cllr Davies, the lead member of the report, members agreed to remove this item from the agenda and work programme.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.