

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP held at the COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.00 pm on 25 MAY 2005

Present:- Councillor P A Wilcock – Chairman.
Councillors C A Bayley, A Dean, S Flack, E J Godwin,
R T Harris, B M Hughes, A J Ketteridge, R M Lemon and
J I Loughlin.

Officers in attendance:- A Bovaird, R Chamberlain, S Clarke, R Harborough,
P O'Dell, P Snow and T Turner.

SDAG21 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C M Dean, S C Jones and A R Thawley.

SDAG22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2005 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the substitution of "Local Futures" for "Uttlesford Futures" in the first line of the second paragraph to Minute SDAG20.

SDAG23 TAKING STOCK PRESENTATION

The Chief Executive introduced a Power Point presentation which aimed to capture the position reached to date in developing a strategic vision that would inform the Council's policy choices in the period to 2021. The presentation ranged over a number of areas including future structures for local government and known and anticipated legislative change.

At the meeting of the group in March Members had compiled a list of items for inclusion in a strategic vision by reference to three key themes defined as economic, social and environmental factors. Officers had been asked to develop these themes into a suggested strategic vision for discussion. Following an officers' brainstorming session a number of headings and comments had been worked up under each of the three themes and a series of wall charts prepared for display at this meeting. The intention was for Members to consider these ideas and decide their priorities for inclusion in the next stage of drafting a strategic document. The Chief Executive suggested that the list of indicators should be reduced to a small number of key priority areas under each of the three themes concerned.

The next stage would be to set targets and decide how to go about achieving these stated policy aims. The Chairman then invited Members to discuss in small groups the suggested indicators set out on the wall charts and the meeting then adjourned to allow the small group discussions to take place.

When the meeting resumed the Chief Executive guided Members through the various comments added to wall charts and the group attempted to agree those factors that should be retained as the key indicators. He suggested that the next step would be to take the ideas now generated to the next level by attempting to find the best way of measuring these indicators. The Chairman commented that he hoped the group would be able to move towards finalising the agreed indicators at its next meeting.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the officers would be tasked with providing a means of delivering the targets thus defined. He said that this might encompass adopting actions that may not be acceptable or palatable to Members. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager agreed and said that officers would need to integrate the various processes set in train and that it would first be necessary to set out clearly what the Council's corporate objectives would be.

As part of the final part of the discussion, Members considered the possible implications for Uttlesford arising from the large-scale sale of government property. There was also a brief discussion about the future structure of local government and the possibility of unitary authorities becoming more universally established. This might present the Council with the dilemma of whether to concentrate resources in preserving the organisation or whether to seek to promote the well being of the area regardless of the structures employed.

Action: Officers to further develop the indicators listed under the three themes of economic, social and environmental factors for discussion and agreement in due course.

SDAG24 **FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the date of the next scheduled meeting would be changed to Thursday, 30 June, at 10.00 am. The following meeting would be on 27 July as originally scheduled at which point a further calendar of meetings would be agreed.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm.