

**CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2017 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor H Rolfe (Chairman)  
Councillors S Barker, S Howell, V Ranger, J Redfern and H Ryles

Also present: Councillor A Dean (Liberal Democrats Group Leader and Chairman of Scrutiny Committee), Councillor J Lodge (Residents for Uttlesford Group Leader).

Officers in attendance: R Dobson (Principal Democratic Services Officer), D French (Chief Executive), R Harborough (Director - Public Services), Horner (Finance Manager), S Pugh (Interim Head of Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer) and A Webb (Director - Corporate and Financial Services)

**PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Statements were made by Helen Payne, Dena Ludford and Robert Timmins. Summaries of their statements are appended to these minutes.

**CA59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Barker declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Essex County Council.

**CA60 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2017 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments.

At the request of Councillor Dean, to add the words at CA49:

“That Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the Cabinet’s decision but wished the Cabinet to take into account the need to achieve infrastructure enhancements for the benefit of the community by investing some of the capital receipts from the land sale.”

**CA61 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)**

Councillor Dean as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee said training for Scrutiny members would take place in the New Year, to ensure the purpose of the Committee was understood, in that it should ensure the Council and Cabinet worked well. The Committee had considered its work programme, one item of which would be to address affordable and social housing. There had been a number of initiatives recently, it seemed these were not adequately understood in terms of the benefits of social versus affordable capacity, which were relevant to the Local Plan process.

Councillor Dean referred to the Council's grant of £500K for the running track at Carver Barracks. Since that decision he had discovered the Council did not have a credible sports strategy. He had met with three individuals who supported the sporting community and with whom he had discussed this matter.

Councillor Rolfe asked whether the account of this meeting was pertinent to the report from the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Dean said it was relevant to the Local Plan.

Councillor Rolfe suggested Councillor Dean raise the matter at the next meeting of the Planning Policy Working Group, rather than as part of a report from Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet. Councillor Dean said he would leave the meeting if not permitted to raise this matter. Councillor Rolfe said he would allow the matter to be raised at the item on Garden Communities.

#### **CA62 REFUGEE WORKING GROUP (STANDING ITEM)**

Councillor Redfern gave an update on refugees coming to the area. She said a Syrian refugee family would arrive in two weeks' time. The Council's housing staff would meet them the next day and would be supporting them in settling in. This was good news before Christmas.

#### **CA63 NOMINATIONS FOR ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

Councillor Barker presented a report which set out the Council's duty to maintain the list of land in its area that was land of community value, and which sought the determination of the nominations made, including the determination of re-nominated assets which following their inclusion in 2012 were due to be removed from the list after five years.

Members were asked to determine whether each of the nominated properties referred to was a valid nomination. The report set out the criteria members needed to consider: whether the use of the building (currently or in the recent past) furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the community and whether it was realistic to think that in the next five years the building could be used to further the social wellbeing or interests of the community. In considering those questions, she said members had to consider principal, rather than ancillary, uses of the building. If members concluded that the answer to these questions was "yes", a nominated property should be included in the list of assets of community value.

Councillor Barker went through the nominations, explaining the recommendations and the intention to defer consideration of two of these nominations. She commended the organiser of the petition in relation to Chalky Meadow, and thanked the other speakers.

Councillor Barker referred to the properties which she recommended should be accepted for inclusion on the list of assets of community value, for the reasons which she had set out, and which she invited Cabinet to determine.

Regarding the category of nominations which it was recommended should be rejected, Councillor Barker said that in the case of Land adjacent north of Threeways, and south of Limetree Hill, Great Dunmow, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that a primary use of the land furthered the social wellbeing and social interests of the community. In respect of the Post Office, High Street, Great Dunmow, the Post Office was exempt from listing as it was classed as “operational land” of Post Office Limited. In respect of St Giles Church, Great Hallingbury, St Mary’s Church, Little Hallingbury, St Margaret of Antioch Parish Church, All Saints Church, Rickling and St Simon and St Jude’s Church, Quendon: there was legal authority that religious observance was not a use that qualified a building for listing as an asset of community value and there was no clear evidence of another use that was not ancillary that would qualify.

In respect of Quendon Hall and Parkland, and Quendon Woods, Councillor Barker said the primary use of the Hall as a private wedding venue was not a use of the land which furthered the social wellbeing and social interests of the community, and that there was little or no evidence of any other non-ancillary use that met that requirement; and in respect of the Woods, that there was not sufficient evidence to conclude that a primary use of the land furthered the social wellbeing and social interests of the community.

Regarding Chalky Meadows and Hop Poles Public House, Great Hallingbury, Councillor Barker recommended that determination of these nominations be delegated to a sub-committee to permit further consideration.

Councillor Lodge declared an interest in that he was Chairman of the Rickling Ramblers Cricket Pavilion, Rickling Green. He asked that some corrections to the names of the nominated properties be made to the further paper submitted under any other urgent items, on this item. Councillor Barker said the correct names were given in the main report and on the consultation.

Councillor Dean asked a question regarding Dunmow Post Office, in that current use did not seem to preclude it being included in the list.

The Interim Head of Legal Services said the Post Office came within the definition of operational land and was technically not capable of being listed as an asset of community value under the Localism Act.

The motion being then put and seconded by Councillor Ranger, it was

#### RESOLVED

1 To approve the inclusion in the assets of community value list the following properties:

- Broxted Village Hall
- Great Canfield Cricket Club

- Great Canfield Village Hall
- Newton Green Great Dunmow
- Rowena Davey Centre, Great Dunmow
- Great Dunmow Maltings
- Dunmow Community Hub
- The Former Library Great Dunmow
- Kings Head, Hadstock
- Village Recreation Ground, Hadstock
- Village Green Hadstock
- Village Hall Hadstock
- Bluebell Inn Hempstead
- The Village Green, Hempstead
- The Bull Public House, Langley
- The George Public House, Little Hallingbury
- Little Hallingbury Village Hall
- Rickling Primary School
- Rickling Ramblers Cricket Pavilion, Rickling Green
- The Cricketers Arms, Rickling Green
- Rickling Green Recreation Association, Rickling
- Quendon and Rickling Village Hall
- The Village Fountain, Quendon

2 To reject the nomination of the following properties:

- Land adjacent north of Threeways, and south of Limetree Hill, Great Dunmow
- Post Office, High Street, Great Dunmow
- St Giles Church, Great Hallingbury
- St Mary's Church, Little Hallingbury
- St Margaret of Antioch Parish Church
- All Saints Church, Rickling
- St Simon and St Jude's Church, Quendon
- Quendon Hall and Parkland
- Quendon Woods

3 To defer the determination of the following properties, such determination to be delegated to an Assets of Community Value Sub-Committee, comprising the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships:

- Hop Poles Public House, Great Hallingbury
- Chalky Meadows, Thaxted

## CA64 2017-18 BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 2

Councillor Howell presented a report detailing financial performance relating to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Treasury Management, based on actual expenditure and income from April to September.

Councillor Howell drew members' attention to the main items in the report in that the General Fund was forecast an underspend of £1,488,000; the Housing Revenue Account was forecast an underspend of £2,949,000; the Capital Programme was forecast an underspend by £3,414,000, with an updated position including slippage brought forward from 2016/17 and slippage of £2,571,000 to be carried forward to 2018/19, which left an actual underspend of £843,000. Treasury Management activity now included external borrowing both short term and long term relating to the Council's purchase of the 50% share of Chesterford Research Park by Aspire Ltd, the Council's wholly owned subsidiary company.

Councillor Howell highlighted further sections of the report, including updates on efficiencies; variances outside the control of the Council; and commitments already agreed. He drew attention to the expanded treasury management report, identifying the structure of the funding of Aspire Ltd.

Councillor Redfern referred to the underspend in the Housing Revenue Account. She said the slippage was mainly on the development work at Reynolds Court, Walden Place and Hatherley Court. The first two schemes were progressing well, and in respect of Hatherley Court, further information would be brought to Cabinet in January. Regarding the purchase of eight new properties in Radwinter, three were now ready and the rest would be ready in 2018/19.

Councillor Lodge asked how the repayment profile was structured for the Phoenix Life Ltd loan.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said drawing down would be in three tranches; repayments would be interest-only for the first five years, and then repayments of interest and capital would be made, as modelled in the repayment plan.

RESOLVED to note and approve the outturn forecast position.

## CA65 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW 2017-18

Councillor Howell presented a mid-year report for 2017/18 in accordance with the requirement imposed by its adoption of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2011 Edition*.

Councillor Howell referred Cabinet to the section of the report detailing the importance of successful identification, monitoring and control of risk, in that the Council had borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and was therefore exposed to financial risks. Consequently the intention of the report

was to give members an update on current treasury activities and other factors that might affect or influence the financial market. He said the main focus at present was the introduction of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (“MiFID II”) where local authorities would lose their professional status and be re-categorised as retail clients unless they ‘opted up’. In order to opt up, local authorities had to meet certain criteria. This council did qualify and intended to maintain that qualification.

CA66

## **FINANCE UPDATE & BUDGET CONSULTATION OUTCOMES 2018-19**

Councillor Dean reported Scrutiny Committee’s consideration of the finance update and budget consultation outcomes. He said he had been pleased at the level of public participation in the consultation, compared to other councils. He understood the consultation had been included with *Uttlesford Life* and was accompanied by a prepaid envelope. He said the Scrutiny Committee had questioned how the responses would be taken into account, and had received the response that residents’ views would be listened to, but that there were limits on resources. He noted responses regarding car parks were fewer than for other areas, despite car parks representing an area about which people were often concerned. Councillor Dean said there had also been an apparent lack of understanding of the distinctions between different levels of local government, as some comments had related to responsibilities which were within the remit of Essex County Council, and those comments should be passed on to the County Council to make them aware of the areas of concern. No major conclusions were reached on the public consultation.

Councillor Rolfe thanked Councillor Dean for his comments.

Councillor Howell said he would address Councillor Dean’s report from Scrutiny Committee. He presented a report on the finance update and outcomes of the budget consultation for 2018/19. He said whilst the Budget had now taken place, in early December he would be likely soon to receive a provisional update on the financial settlement. There was still significant uncertainty on income, not least because of a further consultation on the New Homes Bonus which could have a significant impact on a portion of the Council’s income.

Councillor Howell referred members to the report which set out areas which he said should be taken into account when considering the budget preparation process.

On the subject of the budget consultation, Councillor Howell said the level of engagement had been fantastic, as 1,800 people had responded. However, this was not a referendum, and it was the Council’s role to listen to replies, align priorities and allocate resources. In receiving the results of the consultation, the Council would not limit how it chose to invest its funding, but it was an important part of the process to understand priorities of residents. The outcome of a consultation was not the only basis on which the Council made investment decisions. The Scrutiny Committee had had a useful debate and it was important not to lose sight of the wood for the trees. There was clearly some confusion as to which areas fell to which level of local authority government, and

this was a well made point. The report set out the Council's initial thoughts on budget preparation processes, including proposals to respond to the consultation responses.

## CA67 **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND CONSULTATION 2018-19**

Councillor Dean gave a report from the Scrutiny Committee's discussion of this item. He said the Committee had had the impression that residents had found this consultation hard to understand, as a consequence of which the Committee felt the consultation should in future be simplified, and should be combined with the budget consultation. Scrutiny members had agreed that the contribution cap should remain at 12.5%, but there had been some disagreement about the withdrawal of the grant which the District Council had been making to the parish councils for the loss of the tax base that the LCTS caused. There was concern and puzzlement over a swing in public voting on this matter in the consultation, as in previous years the public had supported the reduction of the grant but had responded to the contrary this year. The Committee had concluded that it supported the contribution cap of 12.5% and the withdrawal of the grant to parish councils.

Councillor Howell said that even if the Council made no changes it was still required to consult on the next year's scheme. This was a very complex subject and was the one most subject to scrutiny. He noted the scheme was in its fifth consecutive year of having the lowest contribution rate in Essex, a fact of which the Council could be proud. He spoke in detail about each area of the recommendation. Regarding the grant paid to parish councils, in 2013/14 the Government had provided transitional funding for the first two years, so that the Council could pass on that benefit. The Revenue Support Grant ("RSG") paid to the Council had subsequently been reduced and in 2018/19 the Council would receive no RSG.

Councillor Howell said an objection had been received from Thaxted Parish Council to the reduction to zero of the grant to town and parish councils. It was important to note that whilst it had provided this support whilst receiving RSG, the Council would not receive RSG in future, and it was not withholding funding from town and parish councils by no longer paying a grant towards them under the LCTS.

Turning to the contribution percentage under the Scheme, Councillor Howell said consultation responses from a majority of residents had shown support for the cap to remain at 12.5%, although approximately a third of residents did not support this figure. The Scheme operated as a "cliff edge", with those not falling within the criteria having to pay 100% Council Tax. It was important to listen to these views. However, the consultation was not a referendum, and he was not persuaded to change his recommendation to Full Council.

Councillor Barker seconded the motion, and asked whether there was any information on why the number of pensioners seemed to have reduced.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said the age of respondents had been the subject of comment at Scrutiny Committee. 41% of them were aged under 54, with 56% aged 55 and over. Fewer than 10% were under the age of 24. The Committee suggested use of social media and consideration by the Youth Council for future consultations.

Councillor Rolfe said those in the lower age range were least likely to be paying Council Tax, and noted the fact that the consultation had been sent to the household rather than to individuals.

RESOLVED to recommend for approval to Full Council the proposals for the 2018/19 LCTS scheme:

1. The 2018/19 LCTS scheme is set on the same basis as the 2017/18 scheme and therefore the contribution rate is frozen for the fifth consecutive year.
2. The Council continues to protect Vulnerable and Disabled Residents and Carers on a low income.
3. The discretionary subsidy grant for Town & Parish councils is withdrawn.

## CA68 **REVISION TO MUSEUM FEES AND CHARGES**

Councillor Ranger presented a report seeking approval of revised fees and charges for 2017/18 for services provided by Saffron Walden Museum. He said that after a break of two years, the Museum was re-launching its services to schools during the autumn term, as there was now a new Learning & Outreach Officer in post. Due to restrictions on teaching space in the Museum, it was intended to offer taught sessions in schools, requiring a new charge to be introduced. Schools Loans boxes were also being revised and improved. Members were asked to approve these charges, which were not within the 2017/18 budget.

Councillor Redfern seconded the proposals, and suggested the Museum liaise with Saffron Walden Town Team, which aimed to direct people between Audley End and Saffron Walden.

Councillor Rolfe agreed it was sensible to take a collective approach to drawing people in to the Town's attractions.

Councillor Howell said he was pleased to note the increase in visitors to the Museum during the last quarter.

RESOLVED

1 to approve the following recommendations from the Museum Management Working Group:

- The fees for schools as set out below
- The revised loan box charge as set out below



- That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer to approve variations to published entrance fees, in consultation with the Curator. Any variations to be reported quarterly to the Museum Management Working Group.

2 Fees for schools: Visit from the Learning & Outreach Officer to bring objects and specimens from the education & handling collection to the school and deliver a taught session in the school classroom: to be charged at £120 (£100 + £20 VAT) for a morning and £210 (£175 + £35 VAT) for a full day. These charges would apply to schools in Uttlesford and/or within 20 miles of Saffron Walden by road. Special requests to be priced according to costs of travel and staff-time.

3 Schools Loans Boxes: to raise the loan box charge from £12 per half-term to raise this to £18 (£15 + £3 VAT).

## CA69 **BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTER**

Councillor Barker presented a report setting out the Council's obligations under the Brownfield Land Register Regulations 2017 to establish a "brownfield land register" by 31 December 2017. The recommendation would enable the compilation of the register by the appropriate officer. Councillor Barker said she would suggest an amendment to include the wording "in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services".

In response to a question from Councillor Redfern as to whether the land to be included in the register was only that which was suitable for residential development, or would encompass commercial land also, Councillor Barker said she understood this to be residential land only.

RESOLVED That the Assistant Director – Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment Services is given delegated authority to compile the initial version of Part 1 of the Council's Brownfield land register for publication.

## CA70 **WRITING OFF DEBTS - DELEGATION TO DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

Councillor Howell presented a report setting out the case for increasing the level to which the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, as the Council's Chief Financial Officer, had delegated authority to "write off" debts. He said the current level of £5,000 had not been reviewed for some time. He recommended increasing the level to £10,000. This change would reduce the need for reports to be submitted to Cabinet for decision, saving officer time in preparation and help ensure the Cabinet focused on strategic and major issues.

RESOLVED that the write off limit in paragraph 11.4 of the Financial Procedure Rules is increased from £5,000 to £10,000, to read:

*Bad debts of up to £10,000 shall be written off by the Chief Financial Officer, having ascertained that all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt and that it would be uneconomical to pursue the debt further. Cabinet approval is required to write off bad debts in excess of £10,000.*

**CA71 DRAFT STATUTORY INSTRUMENT - THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING REGULATIONS 2017**

Councillor Barker presented a report seeking approval for an increase in planning fees, in accordance with a proposal in the Government White Paper "Fixing our broken housing market".

RESOLVED to approve a 20% increase in planning application fees as set out in the Draft Statutory Instruments 2017 No. (see link below) with effect from the date to be set out in the regulations, and commits to investing the additional income in the planning service.

**CA72 CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY PLAN**

Councillor Rolfe presented a report setting out progress against the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan for the period July to September 2017/18. He said good progress had been made as summarised in the report, in particular with the establishment of the Youth Council, the completion of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, completion of the research stage of the social isolation project, and approval of a grant of up to £300,000 towards to the cost of providing a new college at Stansted Airport.

Councillor Dean said the summary omitted reference to giving priority to protecting and enhancing the character of the District, which he felt was a weakness in the Plan. Stansted's main streets were dirty and householders' frontages were untidy. The Council was aiming for exemplar Garden Communities, and he would not want the existing communities to be a poor contrast. He suggested a campaign to ask people to consider what they could do themselves to address such matters, not just expecting the Council to do things for them.

Councillor Rolfe said this point was well made. The Highway Rangers carried out much clearing work, and campaigns had taken place, but the suggestion would be considered. Continuous improvement was the aim, and the situation was not too bad.

Councillor Ranger said he agreed with the point made, as he was in dialogue with the County Council regarding vegetation growth on traffic islands and footpaths, in particular regarding obscured road signs.

**CA73 GARDEN COMMUNITIES DELIVERY**

Councillor Ranger presented a report setting out the current process for the delivery of the Garden Communities proposed in the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan, and seeking approval to establish a delivery company and to allocate funds to continue the delivery work.

Councillor Ranger said the object of forming the company, Uttlesford Garden Communities Limited, was to support whichever direction the Council took in delivery of the Local Plan, and to ensure the Garden City principles were adhered to.

Councillor Dean said this proposal was the right way forward and would enable a robust approach. What was proposed would support delivery of a strong vision for garden communities. Part of this process was engaging with existing communities, not just new ones. The Minister of State had said the first requirement was for a council to have strong community involvement, and to avoid omitting such involvement. For example, residents at Cambourne had complained about the absence of footpaths in the development, but they had not been engaged in the process. On this subject, Councillor Dean referred to a meeting he had had the previous week with three individuals who had wanted to be involved with the sports strategy, but had complained that they had been rebuffed. There needed to be proper and respectful engagement with public sporting organisations in order to draw up the sporting strategy, and there should be a business plan in respect of investment in Carver Barracks. He would be seeking a report to be submitted to Scrutiny Committee in March on progress regarding the sports strategy.

Councillor Rolfe said the work was being progressed with Active Essex. Under this group were Active Uttlesford, Active Stansted, Active Thaxted and Active Dunmow. There were a considerable number of possible schemes in terms of investment. Whilst he fully took Councillor Dean's point, he did not know whom he had met, but there was a great deal of engagement with the Active Uttlesford model.

Councillor Lodge said he did not object to the setting up of a company but he was not sure what it could do that the Council could not. There would still be money spent on consultants. He questioned why this proposal had not come to the Planning Policy Working Group.

Councillor Rolfe said the Planning Policy Working Group had already discussed governance, but this decision was for Cabinet as it involved establishing a mechanism for delivery of the Local Plan, and allocation of money.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said Planning Policy Working Group was looking at the Local Plan, but this report was dealing with delivery, which would extend beyond the Local Plan period. The decision was rightly one for Cabinet.

Councillor Redfern asked where future reports on the company would be submitted.

Councillor Rolfe said it was right that the Planning Policy Working Group should examine how the governance model developed, but that where money was involved, decisions would come to Cabinet and ultimately the Local Plan decision would go to Council.

RESOLVED to

- (a) Note the action to date and the approach to be undertaken.
- (b) Authorise the establishment of Uttlesford Garden Communities Limited and appoint Adrian Webb as the interim Director.
- (c) Allocate the sum of £50,000 from the forecast 2017/18 budget underspend to fund the first stage of the delivery process.

#### CA74 **TRANSFER OF LAND AT WENDENS AMBO**

Councillor Redfern presented a report seeking Members' consideration of the transfer of Council owned land on the corner of Station Road in Wendens Ambo for nil value to Wendens Ambo Parish Council. The land had been maintained by the parish council. There had been some trouble in that the land had been parked on, but this problem had been addressed by the provision of proper parking access for the nearby Council properties. The market value of the land was £575.

Councillor Barker asked whether there was a policy on whether the recipient in cases such as this would bear any legal costs.

The Interim Head of Legal Services said the transaction was notional in terms of costs.

In respect of cases where consideration was £1, he explained this was usually only the case for leasehold, where there was an intention to ensure ongoing obligations were binding.

RESOLVED to transfer land at Station Road, Wendens Ambo to Wendens Ambo Parish Council for nil value.

The meeting ended at 9pm.

#### CA75 **PUBLIC SPEAKING - STATEMENTS**

##### **Statement of Helen Payne**

I would like to address the objection Essex County Council has raised to the nomination of Chalky Meadow as an asset of community value, and to present a petition supporting the nomination. Our petition proposes that protection and development of this 'wild space' would be of enormous community benefit. There is a strong connection between our wellbeing and our relationship with Nature, and I refer to the Green Paper from the Wildlife Trust and RSPB supporting this point. We should recognise the value of Nature, and how it can

promote our wellbeing, as well as enabling community involvement and education opportunities for our children.

I refer the Cabinet to Thaxted's draft Neighbourhood Plan regarding wildlife habitats, which identified this land, amongst other sites, as one which was important for wildlife and deserving of protection. The questionnaire referred to in the draft Neighbourhood Plan shows 95% of respondents considered it was important to protect and manage local wildlife sites.

Further, this land has not been developed other than when the Mill View development was initiated. It was earmarked for development for a school, many years ago, but that development had not been progressed. The land had over the years been used by walkers and runners as a pathway to town.

We dispute the argument that the land at Chalky Meadow is not of benefit to the community: our photographs show it is a benefit, as do the many letters of support we have received, proving that we care about the quality of our environment. We hope Cabinet accept our supporting evidence and can see the land does meet the criteria to be an asset of community value.

Councillor Foley added his support to the above statement, and said the local District and Parish Councillors supported the addition of this land to the list of assets of community value.

#### **Statement of Dena Ludford**

I am the Clerk of Thaxted Parish Council, which has unanimously agreed that Chalky Meadows should be listed as an asset of community value. It was the Parish Council's intention to distribute to as many recipients as possible the biodiversity report, showing the importance of the land for wildlife and their habitats. Extracts of Thaxted Parish Council's emerging neighbourhood plan supported this approach, which also had the support of the local ward councillors.

#### **Statement of Robert Timmins of Strutt & Parker**

I appear on behalf of the freehold landowner of Quendon Hall and Quendon Wood, regarding their objection to the nomination of these properties as assets of community value. Quendon Hall is a privately owned property with parkland, let by private arrangement for weddings and other events. There is no public use, and no public access. Given the nature of this business, we do not agree that the current use of the Hall furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, nor do we agree that there has been any such usage in the recent past. It cannot, therefore, be said that the Hall is of community value. There are also no permitted public rights of way to Quendon Hall or the ancillary buildings. The Hall cannot therefore be said to be of community value.

The same principle applies to the Parkland at Quendon Hall. The Deer Park is not open to the public, and there is no permitted public access through the Parkland.

Neither of these properties has ever been used for recreational, sporting or cultural interests which benefit the local community.