

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on TUESDAY, 20
NOVEMBER 2018 at 7.30 pm**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)
Councillors G Barker, R Chambers, J Davey, P Davies, A Gerard
(substituting for H Asker), M Lemon, B Light and E Oliver.

Officers in
attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director – Corporate Services), B Ferguson
(Democratic Services Officer), G Glenday (Assistant Director –
Planning), A Knight (Assistant Director – Resources), J Pine
(Planning Policy Officer) and A Webb (Director of Finance and
Corporate Services).

Also Present: S Howell (Cabinet Member for Finance and Administration)

SC16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Asker, Harris and
LeCount.

SC17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September were signed and approved as
a correct record.

The Chairman referred to the Investment Strategy as described on the Scrutiny
status report. He said he was in dialogue with the directors of Aspire regarding
the risks of the Council's investment in Chesterford Research Park and would
report back at a future meeting.

Members requested that this email correspondence was also shared with the
Committee.

The Chairman said a report on the Council's Investment Strategy would be
brought to the Committee in due course.

SC18 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Cabinet Forward Plan.

In response to a Member question relating to the Walden Place item, the Cabinet
Member for Finance and Administration said further details would be available
when the report was published with the Cabinet agenda later this week (21
November).

SC19 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018-19.

The Chairman said he had agreed with officers to defer scrutiny of Section 106 agreements, which had previously been placed on the work programme, as it could place the Council at a commercial disadvantage in relation to the development of the proposed garden communities. He said this topic would be revisited once the negotiations had progressed.

Councillor Gerard asked whether due process had been followed in relation to the vote taken on an application determined at Planning Committee in October. He said this should be looked at by Scrutiny.

The Chairman said voting matters were a governance issue and therefore should be referred to the GAP Committee.

Councillor Light requested that the processes of the Local Plan and the Stansted Airport planning application be added to the work programme.

Members discussed the merits and purposes of scrutinising these processes.

The Chairman said the Committee had previously declined to scrutinise the overall Local Plan process, as the Planning Policy Working Group was fulfilling this role. There was no agreement that the Local Plan process should be added to the work programme.

With reference to the Stansted Airport application, the Director – Finance and Corporate Services said individual decisions of regulatory committees of the Council, such as those of the Planning Committee, could not be brought to Scrutiny. He said it was within Scrutiny's remit to look at the overall processes behind such decisions.

The Chairman said Councillors Lemon and Light should work on this request outside of the meeting and to contact the Assistant Director – Corporate Services with their findings before the item could be formally added to the work programme.

SC20 **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES 2019-20**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Administration introduced the report to the Committee, which outlined the LCTS scheme and the responses received to the public consultation.

Members discussed the main elements of the scheme, specifically the protection afforded to vulnerable people in the District, as well as the proposed 100% premium applied to properties that had remained empty and unfurnished for two

years or more. The Committee noted the results of those who responded to the questionnaire.

In response to a member question, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Administration said there would come a point when finances dictated that the Council would have to consider raising the 12.5% contribution cap of working aged people in receipt of LCTS, but he hoped this would not occur whilst he was still a councillor.

Councillor Barker said there were two separate issues to address in this scheme. Whilst he supported the protection afforded to the most vulnerable people in the District, he felt conflicted regarding the 100% premium applied to empty properties as it was, in effect, a double taxation of people's private property.

The Chairman took two separate votes on the scheme, the first relating to the 12.5% contribution cap; the second relating to the 100% empty home premium. Both motions were approved.

RESOLVED to recommend the final 2019/20 LCTS Scheme proposal to be presented to Cabinet.

SC21 **BUDGET UPDATE AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES 2019-20**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Administration presented the report to the Committee, which provided an overview of the budget setting process and results of the budget consultation. Members commended the high response rate to the questionnaire, which was higher than in previous years. For residents, the highest ranked priority for the Council was the 'emptying of bins and running the recycling service'. For businesses, the highest ranked priority related to 'planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new houses and businesses will be located'.

In response to a Member question relating to Business Rates retention, the Assistant Director – Resources said she would circulate a summary note and accompanying graphic to help explain the complexities of the system.

The Chairman asked how responses to the consultation would affect policy.

Councillor Howell said this was a consultation, not a referendum, but the priorities expressed by residents were normally in line with those of the Council.

Members discussed the Council's projected finances and current funding levels. There was agreement that Uttlesford's investment strategy would be crucial if the Council intended to provide its current level of services in future.

The Committee noted the report.

SC22 **AIRPORT CAR PARKING**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Administration presented the report to the Committee, which set out the position relating to passenger car parking issues associated with Stansted Airport.

Members discussed the various elements that contributed to car parking problems in the area surrounding Stansted Airport. In particular, lawful on-street “fly-parking” where residential loss of amenity was an issue, and unlawful changes of use of private land in breach of planning control. There was a discussion about planning enforcement and the introduction of parking controls.

The Chairman asked whether the Council had sufficient resources to fully investigate this issue.

The Planning Policy Officer said that money to deal with fly-parking had been made available by the airport operator under the 2003 S106 agreement and the 2008 unilateral undertaking that related to previous airport expansion. Furthermore the proposed Local Network Fund that was part of the draft S106 agreement for expansion to 43 million passengers per annum was a resource that could be allocated to alleviate parking issues around the airport.

The Chairman said research and evidence were required to identify parking hotspots around the airport. He asked officers to report back in six months’ time with an update on how the airport car parking strategy was moving forward.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.