

**COUNCIL held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on TUESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2021 at 7.00 pm (reconvened on WEDNESDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2021)**

Present: Councillor A Coote (Chair)  
Councillors A Armstrong, S Barker, M Caton, C Criscione, C Day, A Dean, G Driscoll, J Emanuel, J Evans, P Fairhurst, M Foley, R Freeman, N Gregory, N Hargreaves, R Jones, A Khan, P Lavelle, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Loughlin, S Luck, S Merifield, E Oliver, R Pavitt, L Pepper, N Reeve, G Sell, G Smith, M Sutton, M Tayler and J de Vries

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), R Harborough (Director - Public Services), E Smith (Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Public

Speakers: D Corke, A Gardner and V Isham

**C43 MINUTE'S SILENCE**

The Chair began with a commemoration to Sarah Oxley, a long standing council officer, who had sadly passed away on the 8<sup>th</sup> September. Sarah had worked within the Benefits Service for over 20 years and was a much valued friend and colleague, not just to benefits staff, but to many across the Council. She would be very sadly missed but never forgotten.

*Council stood for a minute's silence.*

**C44 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Mr David Corke and Ms April Gardner addressed Council. Summaries of their statements are appended to these minutes.

**C45 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

In the absence of Councillor Asker, the Vice-Chair of Council, the Chair proposed to appoint Councillor Gregory as Vice-Chair for the meeting.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Gregory as the Vice-Chair of Council for the meeting held on 5 October 2021.

**C46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence on 5 October were received from Councillors Eke, Luck, Asker, Isham, Bagnall, Tayler, Smith and Lodge.

Councillor Criscione noted that this evening's Council meeting clashed with the Conservative Party Conference. He asked that party conferences be taken in to account when scheduling the meetings of Full Council in future.

**C47 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 20 July and 9 September 2021 were approved as correct records subject to the following amendment to minute C33 of the meeting held on 20 July 2021:

The word '**loan**' to be replaced with the word '**grant**'.

**C48 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair provided a brief update on events he had attended since the previous meeting. He said he would be raising money for the East Anglia Children's Hospice by getting fit and would make an announcement at the next meeting.

**C49 REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

In the absence of the Leader, Councillor Lees, the Deputy Leader, said she had no announcements for Full Council.

**C50 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (UP TO 30 MINUTES)**

The Chair invited Councillor Barker to ask her urgent question regarding car parking ticket machines of Councillor Freeman, the Portfolio Holder for Public and Council Services.

Councillor Barker said she had been alerted to the change of car park ticket machines in Great Dunmow towards the end of September. She asked when the decision had been made to change Dunmow Parking machines to cashless machines; what consultation had been done with the public? Had an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) been carried out in respect of this decision? Had there been a press release and were notices affixed to old machines to alert residents to this change? Why had Councillors not been informed this was happening?

In response, Councillor Freeman said his published report dealt with the early stages of this process but events had now moved on. He said the decision was taken in 2016 to put money aside to change the ticket machines into cashless across the district but five years later the money had not been spent. The Council's hand was forced to make changes following a spate of vandalism and theft from the cash ticket machines. Thieves had stolen a machine and had de-engineered the technology; criminals now knew how to circumnavigate existing

security mechanisms. He said the current position was unsustainable and the technology needed to be updated. In regards to a consultation, he said a trial was currently being run and the consultation would take place following the end of the pilot. An EQIA had been produced and press releases had been circulated, as well information sent to the relevant town and parish councils. He said he was looking forward to hearing the views of the public following the consultation.

The Chair said he would take any questions of clarification on the five written questions submitted and published with the papers. Supplementary questions would not be permitted.

Councillor Dean thanked Councillor Pepper for her comprehensive answer to his written question regarding waste and recycling issues. He suggested that GAP Committee monitor waste and recycling performance indicators.

Councillor Sell asked for clarity regarding his Highways funding question. He asked whether he was correct to think that there was no guarantee that Highways funding would be made available next year.

In response, Councillor Hargreaves asked whether Councillor Sell accepted what had been said at previous Highway Panel meetings regarding Essex County Council's issues with delivery and the lack of engineers to carry-out further projects.

Councillor Sell said he did understand this but the County Council had to budget and therefore they needed to know what the budget would be for the next financial year in order to programme delivery of projects. He expected there to be a dialogue between officers.

Councillor Sell asked for clarity regarding his call for sites question and when these sites would be put in the public domain.

In response, Councillor Evans said his written answer referred to a recent Local Plan Leadership Group publication that included a schedule and provided details on the call for sites.

Councillor Gregory said he had no questions of clarification for Councillor Pepper.

C52

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Gregory, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, presented the Committee's annual report. He said its presentation had been delayed and the content referred to the work carried out in the municipal year 2020-21. The defining issue of the year had been the coronavirus; he said the Council had displayed institutional agility in responding to the pandemic under very challenging circumstances. He thanked officers for their contribution during this difficult year including the Assistant Director of Finance, the Business Support Officer, the Local Plan and New Communities Managers, the Development Manager and the

Assistant Director for Corporate Services. One major work stream that had been developed in the past year included dedicated Local Plan Scrutiny meetings; this had been a great success and had added value to the process. Another was the scrutiny carried out on S106 issues and he thanked Councillors Jones and Criscione for their hard work. The Corporate Plan Delivery Plan had also been comprehensively scrutinised and would be continued to do so. In terms of self-improvement, he said the Centre for Public Scrutiny had carried out a review and the Committee had been asked to focus its attention on the Executive to ensure they were held to account. Reservations were still held regarding the Executive's reluctance to share information, and Scrutiny would continue to ask for detailed, specific and measurable outcomes. He thanked members of the Committee from all groups for their continued efforts to ensure that effective scrutiny was carried out.

C53

### **GOVERNANCE REVIEW WORKING GROUP: CONCLUSION OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

*Councillor Coote vacated the Chair in order to present the report. Councillor Gregory took the Chair and invited Councillor Coote to address Council.*

Councillor Coote said he was passionate about governance and had been delighted when asked to Chair the Governance Review Working Group in 2019. He was saddened to propose the recommendation in the report, specifically to disband the GRWG, but he felt the group had run its course and he had failed to convince members that a change in governance models was the best way forward. He moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

Councillor Criscione seconded the proposal.

Members discussed the recommendation set-out in the report and the work of the GRWG. In summary, the following points were made:

- There had been a lack of political will to change from a Cabinet to a Committee System.
- Councillor Coote's sincerity and commitment to good governance was not in doubt.
- Lessons had been learnt during the review and there was still work to be done on governance issues, including the culture of governance and the scheme of delegation.
- The Administration had committed to a review of the governance system and that had been undertaken; a move to a Committee System had not been pre-determined.
- The Cabinet system concentrated too much power in too few hands. A more inclusive system was needed.

Councillor Coote summarised the debate and said he was saddened to disband the GRWG but they had been unsuccessful in their attempt to find a better, or at least as effective, model of governance in relation to the existing Cabinet system. If the review was to recommence at a later date, new members with a different vision would be required.

The Vice-Chair moved to a vote.

Councillor Fairhurst requested a recorded vote:

<b>Councillor:</b>	<b>For, Against or Abstain</b>
Armstrong	For
Barker	Against
Caton	Against
Coote	For
Criscione	Abstain
Day	For
De Vries	For
Dean	Against
Driscoll	For
Emanuel	For
Evans	For
Fairhurst	Against
Foley	Against
Freeman	For
Gregory	For
Hargreaves	For
Jones	For
Khan	Against
Lavelle	For
LeCount	For
Lees	For
Lemon	Against
Light	Against
Loughlin	Against
Merifield	For
Oliver	Against
Pavitt	Abstain
Pepper	For
Reeve	For
Sell	Against
Sutton	For

The proposal was carried 18 for, 11 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED that the Governance Review Working Group be disbanded and that the following significant key points identified during the course of the review be acknowledged and taken forward:

- I. Many “softer” culture issues had been identified. Most notably the future need for transparency, openness, honesty, respect for one another and trust. This was dependent on the working culture and practices of members and officers.

- II. The Monitoring Officer to be asked to report to GAP on reviewing the Constitution and the Council's Scheme of Delegations.

C54 **LITTLE CANFIELD BUSINESS PARK (LCBP)**

*Councillor Coote retook the Chair.*

The Chair invited Councillor Reeve to present the report on Little Canfield Business Park, which outlined a request from Cabinet to allocate the sum of £7.5million from the £300m commercial fund to the commercial element of the Park. He proposed the recommendation as set-out in the report.

Councillor Hargreaves seconded the proposal.

In response to a question from Councillor Caton regarding the green credentials of the site, Councillor Reeve said the installation of solar panels on the roof had been looked into but the structural integrity of the building could not bear the weight of current solar panel technology. However, the idea of a carbon-neutral zone at the site was under consideration.

Councillor Foley said solar panel installation should be looked at all future sites relating to council investments.

Councillor Hargreaves said interest had already been shown in the rental space available on the site.

The Chair moved to a vote.

RESOLVED to endorse the allocation of £7.5million to the LCBP commercial element and to authorise the necessary borrowing.

C55 **MOTION: SOLAR FARM PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Councillor Barker was invited to present her motion regarding solar farm planning applications. She said there was a need to have a policy developed regarding solar farm applications and the intention was to "bridge the gap" with this proposal until a time that the emerging Local Plan was in effect. She proposed the motion as set out in the agenda, as follows:

**Motion:**

*This Council notes a number of recent applications for Solar Farms in the area and calls on the planning committee and its officers to recommend the following as a condition should they be minded to approve an application until such a time when the new planning policy framework in the emerging Local Plan has been adopted.*

*Any successful planning application for a Solar Farm or other energy producing scheme on a green field, in the Countryside Protection Zone or green belt site*

*will have a condition applied to the permission which states that "should all or part of the application site cease to be used for energy production that the site will be returned to its Green Field/ Belt status and will not be considered as a Brown Field site".*

Councillor Loughlin seconded the proposal. She said solar farms were often built upon agricultural land and it was only right that the land was returned to its pre-application state when it was no longer used for the purpose of solar farms.

Councillor Merifield said solar farms were temporary structures and therefore the land would return to its previous state; it would not automatically be designated a "brown-field site". She said she was confused by the motion and felt that such decisions should be reserved for the Planning Committee.

Councillor Foley spoke on behalf of Councillor Tayler, who was not present. He supported the motion but expected further clarity to be added to the policy via the emerging Local Plan process. Furthermore, the motion did not address the impact of solar farms on the landscape, although it did address the temporary nature of these planning applications.

Councillor Foley said he was a member of CPRE who had been working on the subject and a brochure would be shared with members.

Councillor Evans said work was being undertaken by the Development Management and Legal teams on the decommissioning of solar farm sites.

The Chief Executive advised that if this motion were to be approved it would not bind the Planning Committee but was expressing a wish that the planning condition under discussion was actively considered in the planning process.

The Chair moved to a vote.

RESOLVED: this Council notes a number of recent applications for Solar Farms in the area and calls on the planning committee and its officers to recommend the following as a condition should they be minded to approve an application until such a time when the new planning policy framework in the emerging Local Plan has been adopted.

Any successful planning application for a Solar Farm or other energy producing scheme on a green field, in the Countryside Protection Zone or green belt site will have a condition applied to the permission which states that "should all or part of the application site cease to be used for energy production that the site will be returned to its Green Field/ Belt status and will not be considered as a Brown Field site".

**MOTION: TO CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO RETAIN THE £20 PER WEEK UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPLIFT**

Councillor Khan was invited to present the motion regarding the Universal Credit Uplift. He said that he had put this motion together from a place of fairness and compassion. He praised the 30 councillors who had signed up in support of the motion, recognising the need to protect the most vulnerable people at a time when household costs were rising. He said that challenging the Government to retain the £20 uplift was the right thing to do and asked Council to support the proposal as set out in the agenda, as follows:

**Motion:**

*This Council recognises the positive impact of the £20 uplift on Universal Credit implemented in April 2020.*

*It is now increasingly likely that the Government will withdraw the £20 Universal credit uplift meaning many families in Uttlesford are potentially facing a loss of £1,040 a year to their incomes overnight.*

*Official statistics from the Local Government Association indicate that 4,806 people were claiming Universal Credit in Uttlesford in August 2021. 2,078 were in employment.*

*At the end of the month, two of the major protections to protect household finances in Uttlesford during the pandemic are scheduled to end. These are: The Job Retention Scheme and the £20 a week increase in Universal Credit. October will also see a 12% rise in the maximum amount energy providers can charge which will see people having to pay more to heat their homes.*

*Therefore:*

*I. The Council calls on the UK government to help families in Uttlesford by retaining the £20 uplift.*

*II. The Council agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and our MP Kemi Badenoch, who is now a Minister in the Department for Levelling Up, requesting they retain the £20 uplift on Universal Credit. This will send a clear message to our residents following the pandemic which has resulted in acute financial pressures, job losses and increased debt, that we believe in fairness.*

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the validity of the amendments, the Chief Executive said the advice on balance had been that the amendments were valid and had not negated the purpose of the motion.

Councillor LeCount had provided notice of an amendment and was invited to propose. He thanked Councillor Khan and Caton for their motion, which had given him the idea to ask other members whether more could be done to help residents in need. Following consultation with other councillors, he felt that a real difference could be made if members donated their allowance for the month of November to the Uttlesford Food Bank. This would help those most in need and show that Uttlesford District Council cared. He proposed the amendment as published with the agenda.

**Amendment:**

*This Council recognises the positive impact of the £20 uplift on Universal Credit implemented by the Government in April 2020.*

*It is now increasingly likely that the temporary £20 Universal credit uplift will be brought to an end meaning there are families in Uttlesford who are potentially facing a loss of £1,040 a year to their incomes. Official statistics from the Local Government Association indicate that 4,806 people were claiming Universal Credit in Uttlesford in August 2021. 2,078 were in employment.*

*At the end of the month, two of the major protections to household finances in Uttlesford during the pandemic are scheduled to end.*

*These are:*

*The Job Retention Scheme and*

*The £20 a week increase in Universal Credit.*

*October will also see a 12% rise in the maximum amount energy providers can charge which will see people having to pay more to heat their homes.*

*Therefore:*

*The Council calls on the UK government to continue to support those in need through the benefits system, but to also prioritise investment and support into employment and skills to further help families in Uttlesford as the country emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic.*

*Furthermore, this Council believes in immediate, positive and direct action which will have an effect on people's lives. Accordingly, Council resolves:*

- a. To invite all Councillors to donate to the Uttlesford Food Bank during the month of November 2021, up to the extent of their Councillor's allowances for the month of November 2021, such monies to be used collectively to provide additional support and comfort during the Christmas and winter period to those of our residents in greatest need, through the Uttlesford Food Bank.*
- b. That Cllr LeCount report back to the first full Council of 2022 on the actions undertaken and extent of the additional support provided to residents and that the Director of Finance be requested to monitor the expenditure undertaken.*

Councillor Criscione said the past two years had been extremely challenging for everyone. The economic impact had hit the most vulnerable in our society the hardest, one mitigating measure introduced by the Government to alleviate hardship was the temporary uplift in Universal Credit. He said more was needed than writing a letter to Government and he was grateful to Councillors LeCount, Gregory and Pavitt for coming up with an initiative that would result in direct action to help residents in need. He said the original motion was politically motivated, as demonstrated by the same motion being sponsored by Liberal Democrats at local authorities across the country.

Councillor Dean spoke against the amendment; he said families wanted money in their pockets, not donations to the Foodbank. The amendment softened the intent of the motion and he asked members to reject it.

The Chair said he would take no further speakers as there was under five minutes remaining before the Council Chamber had to be vacated for ventilation purposes. He moved to a vote on the amendment.

The amendment was carried 17 for, 13 against with 1 abstention.

The Chair said notice had been received of a further amendment, as proposed by Councillor Khan.

Councillor Khan proposed the further amendment as follows.

**Further Amendment:**

*This Council recognises the positive impact of the £20 uplift on Universal Credit implemented in April 2020.*

*It is now increasingly likely that the Government will withdraw the temporary £20 Universal credit uplift meaning many families in Uttlesford are potentially facing a loss of £1,040 a year to their incomes overnight.*

*Official statistics from the Local Government Association indicate that 4,806 people were claiming Universal Credit in Uttlesford in August 2021. 2,078 were in employment.*

*At the end of the month, two of the major schemes designed to protect household finances in Uttlesford during the pandemic are scheduled to end. These are:*

*The Job Retention Scheme and  
The £20 a week increase in Universal Credit.*

*October will also see a 12% rise in the maximum amount energy providers can charge which will see people having to pay more to heat their homes.*

*Therefore:*

*The Council calls on the UK government to:*

*I. help families in Uttlesford by retaining the £20 uplift.*

*II. The Council furthermore agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and our MP Kemi Badenoch, who is now a Minister in the Department for Levelling Up, requesting they retain the £20 uplift on Universal Credit. This will send a clear message to our residents following the pandemic which has resulted in acute financial pressures, job losses and increased debt, that we believe in fairness.*

*Furthermore, this Council believes in immediate, positive and direct action which will have an effect on people's lives. Accordingly, Council resolves;*

*a. To invite all Councillors to donate to the Uttlesford Food Bank during the month of November 2021. The funds raised to be used to provide additional support and comfort during the Christmas and winter period for the 4806 people claiming Universal Credit across Uttlesford and those in greatest need.*

*b. To ask Cllr Khan to liaise with the CEO of Uttlesford Foodbank in order to report to the Council in early 2022 on how the cash raised was used to support those families and individuals in need.*

The Chair moved to a vote on the further amendment.

The further amendment was carried 14 votes for, 13 against, with 4 abstentions.

The Chair moved to a vote on the substantive motion.

Councillor Fairhurst called for a recorded vote.

<b>Councillor:</b>	<b>For, Against or Abstain</b>
Armstrong	Abstain
Barker	Against
Caton	For
Coote	For
Criscione	Against
Day	Against
De Vries	For
Dean	For
Driscoll	For
Emanuel	For
Evans	For
Fairhurst	For
Foley	For
Freeman	For
Gregory	For
Hargreaves	For
Jones	For
Khan	For
Lavelle	For
LeCount	For
Lees	For
Lemon	For
Light	For
Loughlin	For
Merifield	For
Oliver	Abstain
Pavitt	Abstain

Pepper	For
Reeve	For
Sell	For
Sutton	For

The substantive motion was approved 25 votes for, 3 against, with 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED: This Council recognises the positive impact of the £20 uplift on Universal Credit implemented in April 2020.

It is now increasingly likely that the Government will withdraw the temporary £20 Universal credit uplift meaning many families in Uttlesford are potentially facing a loss of £1,040 a year to their incomes overnight.

Official statistics from the Local Government Association indicate that 4,806 people were claiming Universal Credit in Uttlesford in August 2021. 2,078 were in employment.

At the end of the month, two of the major schemes designed to protect household finances in Uttlesford during the pandemic are scheduled to end. These are:

The Job Retention Scheme and  
The £20 a week increase in Universal Credit.

October will also see a 12% rise in the maximum amount energy providers can charge which will see people having to pay more to heat their homes.

Therefore:

The Council calls on the UK government to:

I. help families in Uttlesford by retaining the £20 uplift.

II. The Council furthermore agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and our MP Kemi Badenoch, who is now a Minister in the Department for Levelling Up, requesting they retain the £20 uplift on Universal Credit. This will send a clear message to our residents following the pandemic which has resulted in acute financial pressures, job losses and increased debt, that we believe in fairness.

Furthermore, this Council believes in immediate, positive and direct action which will have an effect on people's lives. Accordingly, Council resolves;

a. To invite all Councillors to donate to the Uttlesford Food Bank during the month of November 2021. The funds raised to be used to provide additional support and comfort during the Christmas and winter period for the 4806 people claiming Universal Credit across Uttlesford and those in greatest need.

b. To ask Cllr Khan to liaise with the CEO of Uttlesford Foodbank in order to report to the Council in early 2022 on how the cash raised was used to support those families and individuals in need.

*The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9.03pm to Wednesday, 6 October at 7.00pm.*

**C57 MEETING RECONVENED – APOLOGIES FOR 6 OCTOBER AND PUBLIC SPEAKING**

*The meeting was reconvened at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 6 October.*

The Chair reconvened the meeting and said the primary purpose of this session was to resolve the time critical Stansted Airport Planning Appeal item. He noted the apologies of Councillors Armstrong, Pavitt, Bagnall, Eke, Asker, Isham and Lodge for this evening's session.

He invited Councillor Isham, who was unable to attend the meeting in-person and had registered as a public speaker, to address Council. A summary of his statement has been appended to these minutes.

**C58 MATTERS RECEIVED ABOUT JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

The Chair said Item 7 had not been considered the evening before. He confirmed that there were no matters to report from Joint Arrangements and External Organisations.

**C59 STANSTED AIRPORT APPEAL DECISIONS: THE COUNCIL'S APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO APPLY FOR A PLANNING STATUTORY REVIEW**

The Chief Executive spoke to the report, which outlined that the application for permission to apply for a statutory planning review has been refused, and that the council was required to decide urgently whether to renew its application. He said all of the details contained in the report were in the public domain and could be debated this evening.

Councillor Lees proposed to accept the judgement of The Honourable Mrs Justice Lang DBE. She said she did so with a heavy heart but it was time to bring legal proceedings to an end.

Councillor Evans seconded the proposal.

The Chair invited Councillor Freeman to assist with chairing duties for this evening as Councillor Gregory, who had temporarily deputised the evening before, had indicated that he needed to depart during the meeting.

Councillor Fairhurst proposed an amendment as follows:

- 1. This Council is extremely disappointed that its application to the High Court for permission to apply for a planning statutory review has been refused;*
- 2. It considers that the responsibility for the failure lies with key Members from the Administration party. In the interest of proper accountability, the Council calls upon the Leader, Deputy Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Chair of Planning Committee to resign primarily because of their abject failure to oversee the defence of the unanimous of the Planning Committee in January 2020 to refuse permission to London Stansted Airport to expand to 43mppa. This has cost council taxpayers in Uttlesford in the region of £2.5 million.*
- 3. On condition that this calls for resignations is endorsed, Council resolves to cease legal action related to the airport appeals process.*

The Chief Executive noted that the printed amendment had been signed by eleven councillors, overriding rule 13.2 'Motion similar to one previously rejected' which stipulated that a motion or amendment similar to one rejected within the past 6 months had to be signed by a quarter of Council (ten members) in order to be heard.

*The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7.09pm to allow members to read the tabled amendment.*

*The Chair reconvened the meeting at 7.12pm.*

Councillor Fairhurst spoke to his amendment. He said this was a disaster. The Planning Committee had made a decision to refuse the Stansted Airport expansion application in January 2020 and its decision had not been defended adequately through the appeal process. Voices of concern had been shut down and questions asked of the leadership remained unanswered. He said the leadership now had to take responsibility for the £2.5 million wasted in legal costs and resign.

Councillor Gregory said Councillor Fairhurst had shown great passion and commitment to this matter but the council had already considered a vote of no confidence, and he questioned whether this met the relevant threshold to call for resignations. He said there needed to be recognition of collective responsibility here, with particular attention paid to the Scheme of Delegation and its operation. This was not simply about the failure of individuals. He could not support the amendment as it was aimed at the wrong targets.

*Councillor Gregory left the meeting at 7.20pm.*

In response to a comment from Councillor Barker regarding the Leader's absence, Councillor Lees said events had moved at such speed that he had been unable to return from abroad in time for the meeting.

Councillor Smith said the notion that this was a failure of central Government was an abdication of responsibility. This was council taxpayers' money and the

leadership needed to be held accountable. This was not money to be “frittered away” and could have been put to good use elsewhere.

Councillor Reeve said he did not feel that the money had been wasted; it had been worth defending the decision of the Planning Committee. He proposed that the question now be put.

The Chair said he would not take this to a vote as there were members still wishing to speak and he felt the matter had not yet been fully discussed.

Members continued to discuss the amendment. In summary, the following comments were made:

- The Scrutiny Committee were already scheduled to look at the matter of the appeal process.
- The legal defence had been delegated to officers.
- It was wrong for leading members of the Administration to hide behind officers.
- Non-leading Members had not been kept informed of details relating to the legal defence.
- A lack of accountability, leadership and competence were the issues that had led to a call for resignations.
- The amendment was political theatre, more akin to Westminster politics.
- Climate Change was the greatest threat facing people today and the Planning Committee had been morally right to reject the Airport’s application to expand passenger numbers.
- The Planning system was “statist” and policy was largely dictated by central government for high profile applications.

Councillor Caton, who had seconded the amendment, said the main issue had not been addressed; the Planning Committee’s decision to refuse the application had been changed by the time of appeal to an approval with conditions. Political responsibility could not be abdicated and the amendment was seeking to ensure relevant members were held accountable.

Councillor Fairhurst said this was not a political statement, it was simply about good governance and holding those with responsibility to account. He called for a recorded vote on the amendment.

<b>Councillor:</b>	<b>For, Against or Abstain</b>
Barker	For
Caton	For
Coote	Against
Criscione	For
Day	Against
De Vries	Against
Dean	For
Driscoll	Against
Emanuel	Against
Evans	Against

Fairhurst	For
Foley	Against
Freeman	Against
Hargreaves	Against
Jones	Against
Khan	For
Lavelle	Against
LeCount	Against
Lees	Against
Lemon	For
Light	For
Loughlin	For
Luck	Against
Merifield	Against
Oliver	For
Pepper	Against
Reeve	Against
Sell	For
Smith	For
Sutton	Against
Taylor	Against

The amendment fell with 12 votes for and 19 against.

Councillors Fairhurst and Light said they would not participate any further in the meeting.

*Councillors Light and Fairhurst left the meeting at 8.18pm and did not vote on the substantive motion.*

The Chair moved to a vote on the substantive motion. Councillor Lees read out the recommendation stated in the report.

The recommendation was carried with 28 votes for, none against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED to accept the judgement of The Honourable Mrs Justice Lang DBE.

*The Chair closed the meeting at 8.20pm.*

## Summary of Public Statements

### April Gardner

Ms Gardner spoke on behalf of Debden Recreation Ground, a small charity responsible for running and maintaining community assets in Debden. She said the charity had applied for a sports provision grant in June for a pavilion but were told they had been unsuccessful due to the request to return another grant relating to the village hall. She said these were two separate projects. She asked how Debden could move forward when many facilities that were available to the village twenty years ago no longer existed. She highlighted UDC's corporate plan and the commitment to make Uttlesford a great place to live, work and play – she said a new village hall and pavilion would go some way to achieving these aims in Debden. She said support from UDC was required to deliver these projects. She invited key members to engage with Debden on these issues.

### David Corke

Mr Corke said the population of Uttlesford had increased significantly since 2000 and many had move here to enjoy the rural nature of the district. However, much of the land was agricultural, not open land to be enjoyed freely. Country Parks and Nature Reserves were required, such as the three nature reserves created by Walden Countryside in the past twelve years. He said Uttlesford was unique in Essex in not having created a country park and he urged UDC to engage with Walden Countryside to make a Country Park in the district happen.

### Councillor Vere Isham (6 October)

Councillor Isham said he had campaigned on the promise to improve the Airport for the community on matters such as air quality, noise and the impact on local residents. He had since left R4U but one of the reasons for doing so was the Administration's approach to the defence of the Planning Committee's decision. He said there had been no credible defence of the decision; he cited the opening remarks of the legal defence team and the fact that no members of the Planning Committee had been invited as witnesses. Furthermore, he took issue with the fact that councillors had not been involved in building the defence case, an approach which had been defended by Councillors Lodge and Evans, as well as the lack of engagement with Stop Stansted Expansion. This was a failure of governance.