

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on MONDAY, 21 MARCH
2022 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor N Gregory (Chair)
Councillors A Coote, G Driscoll, R Jones, P Lavelle and
G LeCount (Vice-Chair: via Zoom – non-voting)

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), C Edwards
(Democratic Services Officer), L Howells (Economic
Development Officer), S Miles (Local Plan and New
Communities Manager) and A Webb (Director - Finance and
Corporate Services)

Also in Attendance: Councillor J Evans (Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local
Plan) and Councillor N Reeve (Portfolio Holder for Economy and
Investment).

SC53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Criscione, Isham, Sell and
De Vries.

SC54 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 December 2021 and 3 February 2022
were approved.

SC55 RESPONSES OF THE EXECUTIVE TO REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor LeCount gave an update with regards to the Stansted Airport Appeal
Review. He said that all documents were being reviewed by the consultants and
there had been an opportunity for the working group to look at them, comments
had been received from Councillors Fairhurst and Khan. The full review and
report would be available in April 2022.

**SC56 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN
RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION**

There were no matters.

SC57 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Chair said that the plan was noted and in particular the developer's
contribution draft.

The Local Plan and New Communities Manager presented the report. He said that since the report had been published it had been recognised that extra work was needed to explore a couple of variations on the emerging development strategy. He said that although the impact was not significant it was essential to ensure that the best Local Plan was delivered. The main report was now out of date, but an up-to-date version would be circulated along with an amended letter to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

He highlighted the following risks on pages 22 to 24, id references 2 and 20 which related to staffing issues and id reference 12 regarding the designation of the Council. He said that this did not have a direct effect on the Local Plan but emphasised the importance to deliver the plan as soon as possible to assist with decision making.

He pointed out a new risk, id reference 44, which identified the possibility of an additional round of Regulation 18/19 stages being required. He said while the risk was low it needed to be recorded.

Councillor Evans thanked the Local Plan and New Communities Manager and his team including the input from the Interim Planning Director. He said there would be an overlap between the Interim Planning Director and the new, to be appointed, Planning Director. He said the delay in the Local Plan allowed for further consideration of the options and he said it was important in order to get the best Local Plan for the residents of Uttlesford.

Councillor Driscoll asked about the new risk regarding regulation 18/19 stages, number 44. The Local Plan and New Communities Manager said that the risk had been identified and therefore it needed to be acknowledged within the register.

In response to a question from Councillor Jones, the Local Plan and New Communities Manager said that the delay was necessary to enhance the plan and properly assess the development options. He said that in order for that work to be undertaken properly the extra time was needed.

In response to questions from Councillor LeCount, the Local Plan and New Communities Manager made the following points: -

- The impact of the Local Plan Project Manager leaving had been managed and the tasks had been split between himself and the Project Officer. He said an additional independent review team was checking that the project plan was robust and complete.
- The response from the Parish Councils had been good, he would provide a percentage after the meeting.
- The designation did not have a direct impact on the Local Plan but confirmed that once in place it would assist in decision making on planning applications and would reduce the number of applications being overturned at appeal.

The Chair said that it was an excellent report and thanked the Local Plan and New Communities Manager for the clarification about the delay. He said that Members needed to ensure that they were content with the process being undertaken to produce the Local Plan, that it was being delivered efficiently with the right outputs and nothing had been missed.

Councillor Driscoll pointed out that one of the larger sites at Hatfield Heath/Little Hallingbury had been missed from the report on page 30/31. The Local Plan and New Communities Manager apologised and said it should be on the list as West of Hatfield Broad Oak. He agreed to change the document.

The Committee agreed to remit the report forward to Cabinet and approve the letter with the necessary amendments to the content.

AGREED: That the report be remitted to Cabinet.

SC59 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillor Reeve presented the report he thanked the economic development and Business rates teams, he highlighted the following: -

- In the last year attention had been given to those businesses and individuals hardest hit by the pandemic.
- A new plan for year 2 was in progress.
- The first year had focused on processing grants, a total of £35m had been administered into the local community.
- The welcome back fund had been administered for the Town Centres.
- There was a total of 1,200 people currently unemployed in the district and the team continued to help to resolve this issue.
- Due to the focus on the delivery of the business support grants there will be an underspend with only £130k spent from this year's allocation of £347k. The balance will be rolled over to the next year. The Discover Uttlesford' website had been launched with an app coming later. It was aimed at supporting the tourist sector and would also help other business sectors including hospitality and retail.

The Committee agreed that it was an outstanding and comprehensive report and agreed unanimously to commend to Cabinet.

AGREED: That the report be remitted to Cabinet.

SC60 **CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY PLAN 2022/23**

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services presented the report. He said that the format was unchanged from previous years apart from the addition of a summary at the start. The report highlighted key actions that were relevant to the priorities of the Council within the Corporate Plan.

Councillor Reeve thanked the Assistant Director – Corporate Services for taking ownership of the report and thanked the staff who had contributed. He said that past comments had been noted and said it was a SMART plan that was underpinned by a balanced budget.

In response to questions from Councillor Driscoll, the Assistant Director – Corporate Services said that the residents survey on the 'Blueprint Uttlesford' project on page 46 would report back by the end of June. He said the 'Let's Talk Uttlesford' community engagement portal on page 47 was on schedule to go live in April 2022.

The Chair said the report was a commendable piece of work with SMART objectives. He suggested and Members agreed unanimously to commend to Cabinet.

AGREED: That the report be remitted to Cabinet.

SC61 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

The Chair said that due to the current pace of activity around the Local Plan and the amount of work this could produce, the Committee should be careful how much extra work was included in the work programme. He said it would be prudent that all the work was wrapped up within the remaining year of this Council.

Suggestions put forward and agreed were: -

Councillor Jones asked for a review of sports and leisure within the district focusing on what the district was meant to provide. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said it was a good idea as long as it kept to the target scoping. The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said he would bring a scope outline to the next meeting.

Councillor Coote asked for a sub-committee to look at how the Council would operate as an organisation in the future and how the new way of working would affect the Council. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that the project board for Blueprint Uttlesford had already discussed how Scrutiny could be involved and would ensure that the Committee had early insight into the process.

Councillor Driscoll asked that the Stansted Airport fly parking project was reinstated. The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said that work on this was included in the delivery plan, on page 60, as part of a parking review.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.