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Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 30th November, 2023

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden,
CB11 4ER

Chair: Councillor N Gregory

Members: Councillors M Ahmed, G Bagnall (Vice-Chair), C Criscione,
B Donald, R Gooding, R Haynes, S Luck, C Martin, A Reeve and
G Sell

Substitutes: Councillors N Church, M Coletta, G Driscoll, R Pavitt and R Silcock

Public Speaking

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AGENDA

PART 1

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**
To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 5 - 12
To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3 Responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee**
To consider any responses of the Executive to reports of the Committee.
- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to call in of a decision**
To consider any matter referred for call in.
- 5 Cabinet Forward Plan** 13 - 14
To receive the updated Cabinet Forward Plan.
- 6 Scrutiny Work Programme** 15
To receive the Scrutiny Work Programme.
- 7 Environmental Services Performance Update (verbal)**
To receive the Environmental Services Performance Update.
- 8 Economic Recovery Delivery Plan - Year 3 Progress Report** 16 - 21
To receive the Economic Recovery Delivery Plan – Year 3 Progress.
- 9 Corporate Core Indicators 2023/24** 22 - 30
To receive the Corporate Core Indicators for 2023/24.

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Agenda Item 2

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 11
OCTOBER 2023 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor N Gregory (Chair)
Councillors G Bagnall (Vice-Chair), B Donald, R Haynes,
S Luck, A Reeve and G Sell

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Director of Corporate Services), K Clifford (Director of
Housing, Health and Communities), D Hermitage (Strategic
Director of Planning), P Holt (Chief Executive) and C Shanley-
Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present: Councillor A Coote (Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities),
J Evans (Portfolio Holder for Planning), P Lees (Leader of the
Council) and N Reeve (Portfolio Holder for Environment and
Climate Change)

SC12 **PUBLIC SPEAKERS**

Councillor Luck addressed the meeting regarding the recent school bus crash in Clavering. He requested that a report on the matter be brought to the Scrutiny Committee in order to consider the lessons learnt.

In response, the Chair said that this was a troubling incident, but it was an Essex County Council (ECC) matter to resolve.

The Chief Executive confirmed that both education and highways was under the responsibility of the County Council, and their officers would have to produce an incident report. Whilst he was unaware whether this would then be considered at a member level, he encouraged those present to approach their County Councillors to call the matter in through the ECC scrutiny function.

Should the County Council not wish to take this further, then the UDC's Scrutiny function did have the right to request attendance from other public agencies; however such attendance from ECC would be optional.

Following a request from the Chair, the Leader agreed to write to the ECC Councillors for Uttlesford to request that the matter be addressed.

SC13 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ahmed and Criscione.

There were no formal declarations of interest.

The following declarations were made for transparency:

- Councillor Evans declared that land adjacent to his property was submitted to the Call for Sites but was not included in the Site Allocations.
- Councillor Haynes declared that he was a trustee of CPRE.
- Councillor Bagnall declared that the land adjacent to his property was in the Call for Sites and was included in the draft Local Plan.

SC14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of meetings on 22 August and 22 June 2023 were approved.

In response to a question regarding a Local Plan FAQ page on the UDC website, the Director of Planning confirmed that this was now in place and updated when formal questions were submitted to the team.

SC15 RESPONSES OF THE EXECUTIVE TO REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

There were none.

SC16 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

There were none.

With the consent of the meeting, the Chair announced that the order of items had been changed and the Council Housing Management Update would be taken first.

SC17 COUNCIL HOUSING MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Housing presented the progress update on the ongoing review of the Council's Housing Management.

In response to questions from members, the following was clarified:

- Due to human error, the Council was found to be in breach of the statutory Rent Standard, on the basis that the incorrect CPI formula had been used when calculating the annual rent increase for the years 2021/22 and 2022/23. Following this, both the Housing and Finance departments had reviewed the systems in place and offered assurance that a similar incident would not happen again.
- The average overcharge for the above was £65 and the work had already been completed to identify the overcharges and adjust rent accounts. However, during this process it was identified that in addition to the CPI issue during the annual rent increase process, there were a small number of cases where households had incorrect information regarding the number of bedrooms and as such, had also been overcharged. They had since received reconciliation.

- Since June, the Council have revised the gas servicing and electrical check access procedure, which included adding an additional stage where Housing Officers would conduct doorstep visits to properties where they had not received a response to their initial communications. Where this was not successful, the case would be taken to court to gain access. To date, the Council had gained five injunctions and applied for four more to undertake checks. They were also working on the paperwork for another two.
- In the event that the Council gained an injunction and had to use force to gain entry to a property, the Housing Officers would then work with the tenant to rebuild trust and help individuals sustain their tenancy through referrals to appropriate services. Where it was found on entry that there was a case of tenancy fraud, this would then be escalated by the same team.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing has requested that a report be brought to Scrutiny Committee on Walden Place.
- The work to address damp and mould issues in the Council's housing stock had now commenced.
- In early 2023, Savilles conducted a survey into the condition of the housing stock. This would feed into the one-year, five-year and thirty-year business plans to maintain the Council's housing. The Portfolio Holder for Housing agreed to bring the information about the profile of the stock, which could be broken down by ward.
- Lovells were now in the process of rectifying the compliance issues at Reynolds Court, at their own cost. This included fire safety and the heating pump, which they agreed was a design issue. The Council had also asked that Lovell look to provide a compensation payment to residents.
- The day-to-day relationship with UNSL was good, and officers were working with them to re-engineer processes in order to make working more collaborative and improved.
- The representatives on the UDC/UNSL Liaison Board and the UNSL Board were the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Leader of the Council, as well as a relevant officer. Their activities were then reported to the Housing Board, and the reports were publicly available.

The Chair requested that an update be circulated to the Committee once the housing compliance policies and procedures had been reviewed and formally adopted by the Housing Board.

In addition, he asked that a sign-off report on the Rent Setting internal audit be brought to the Scrutiny Committee to reassure members that the matters have been addressed.

Members commended the Director of Housing, Health and Communities, and the Portfolio Holder for Housing for an excellent report and for their work in remediating matters which were not of their making.

The report was noted.

SC18 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

In response to questions about the printing of the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan, the Director of Planning confirmed that hard copies of the plan would be available in libraries and to purchase. Parish Councils would also receive a digital version.

It was also confirmed that the core indicators would be brought to Scrutiny Committee, after Cabinet, as this was now in their remit.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy was looking into car parking, including a cost benefit analysis on the Christmas car parking incentives.

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

SC19 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Sell requested that a report on waste management be added to the programme and brought to an upcoming meeting. The Director of Corporate Services agreed that this could be done as early as November's meeting, subject to officer capacity.

Councillor Driscoll requested a report on the procurement process; however it was confirmed that this was under the remit of the Audit and Standards Committee.

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.

SC20 CORPORATE PLAN

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the draft Corporate Plan for 2023-27.

Members queried the reporting mechanism for the plan, given that the priorities were set by the administration, and concerns were raised around a lack of scrutiny if the delivery of the plan was only monitored by them. It was confirmed that each Portfolio Holder would oversee the reporting in their area and a quarterly report would be brought to Cabinet.

Members also discussed the metrics used to measure the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. Whilst the intention of setting the measurements was not to create a "tick box" exercise, some members questioned whether some were too vague or not relevant to achieving the priority; for example, the improvement to connectivity infrastructure would be measured through officer attendance at the Gigaclear Project Board Meetings.

In response to additional questions from the committee, the following was clarified:

- The Council would work with the Parish Councils on the emerging Nature Recovery Strategy. The document would provide a framework for conservation programmes in the future.
- A Capital Works programme, as well as the HRA 30-year business plan, was due to be published by March 2024. Together, both documents would seek to improve the condition of the Council housing stock and provide more homes.
- The affordability of the Capital Works Programme was dependent on a year-on-year decision by government.
- Following a request by a public speaker at Annual Council, the requirement for Swift bricks in new developments had been incorporated into the policies of the draft Local Plan.

It was confirmed that the Corporate Plan was rewritten every four years but updated annually. The current draft was to be taken to November's Cabinet and then February's Full Council.

The Chair gave thanks to the Leader and the Director of Corporate Services.

The report was noted.

The meeting was adjourned between 21:20 and 21:30.

With the consent of the meeting, the Chair announced that the meeting would continue after the two-hour point.

SC21 **LOCAL PLAN – PROJECT PLAN APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2023**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning provided introductory remarks to the item and reminded members that the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan was a working draft which could be changed, depending on the representations received in the proposed consultation.

He confirmed that the Local Plan Leadership Group would also continue to work on the plan until the submission of Regulation 19.

The Director of Planning presented the update on local plan progress up to end of September 2023, including risks, mitigations and resourcing.

In response to questions from the Chair, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Local Plan process had been paused in June 2022, with the agreement of members, as officers had identified a potential opportunity outside of the Call for Sites. Whilst nothing came of this, he felt that it was right to have delayed to explore the option.

In regard to his recent comments about the emerging Local Plan changing “substantially” between Regulation 18 and 19, the Chief Executive clarified that the current draft was a starting point with serious policies and site allocations. Between the two stages, there would be substantial change, due to a likely reduction in housing numbers and feedback from the consultation being incorporated in, but it would not be fundamentally different. Whilst it was in the

members' gift to amend the whole plan, should they wish, officers would have to look at rerunning a Regulation 18 consultation again if it was drastically changed.

The Chair invited Councillor Bagnall, Chair of the LPLG, to make comment. He said that he believed that it was within the LPLG's role to interrogate evidence and make informed choices on the draft plan. However, there had been a lack of evidence, with most coming forward late in the day, and there were no reasonable alternatives shared with the members. As a result, the LPLG had passed a resolution to recommend the plan to Cabinet, based not on informed judgement but putting trust in officers. The only decisions made by the group was the protection of the greenbelt and CPZ and to allow officers to focus on one option for the strategic site allocations.

He outlined his concerns regarding the site allocations and the lack of documentation seen by members on this, including the Sustainability Appraisal and Site Assessments. He highlighted that regardless of any future review, it was important to get it right the first time as these houses would be built in the district.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Planning said that it was unfortunate that evidence had been provided late. The Local Plan team were working to a tight timetable and much of the evidence, including the Sustainability Appraisal, was now available so that the Council were in a sufficient position to consider the Regulation 18 consultation.

In addition, the Director of Planning explained that the Council had a challenging timetable in which to prepare a plan before the government changes the way plans are developed under the current regime. This is June 2025. Should the Council miss this deadline, then they would face a delay, likely up to 2029/30 to develop a plan under the new framework, which has yet to be announced. This would have significant costs and implications for the district.

He had asked members to be pragmatic about not receiving the full suite of evidence at the start of the five-week governance cycle in order to allow the Local Plan team an extra month to finalise everything required. The alternatives were to delay the consultation or ask officers to rush and potentially make mistakes.

Regarding the concerns raised around the LPLG, the Director of Planning clarified that the group had agreed a number of high-level decisions such as the site methodology and had seen much evidence. He reassured the meeting that all evidence would be available for Full Council, and the LPLG would be invited to another workshop before the meeting to go over the papers.

Members discussed the work to date on the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan. Whilst there was general agreement that there was a need to get a Local Plan in place in order to avoid further speculative development and address the infrastructure deficit, there were concerns regarding the creation of the current plan; particularly the perceived officer-led approach and lack of engagement after the initial community stakeholder consultations.

Furthermore, members questioned the suitability of the allocations, particularly those sites which had been previously dismissed at appeal in Takeley, Great Dunmow and Newport. Officers clarified that the sites in questions were dismissed due to matters of technicality, such as layout and impact on heritage assets. Following consultation with the Council's Urban Designer and Counsel, officers were confident that these sites could be suitable when the Council were in a position to set parameters, address the previous reason for refusal and allocate the appropriate infrastructure.

During discussion, a number of questions of clarification were raised, and the following responses were provided:

- The LPLG had seen the "headline" transport findings. The full evidence would be available before Full Council.
- The commitment figure used to determine the housing supply had been calculated up until 1st April 2023, as it is standard practice to cut off at the previous municipal year. These figures would be updated at Regulation 19 to reflect the additional permissions, and this would likely push down the housing numbers required in the plan.
- The housing supply figures did not include the recent Easton Park decision for an additional 1000-1200 homes. It was noted that the window for Judicial Review had not yet closed.
- The district had a strong record of Neighbourhood Planning, however the NPPF outlined that it was the role of the district's Local Plan to bring forward strategic sites due to their legal duty to meet housing need. It was therefore a risk to leave this responsibility to Neighbourhood Plans and be contrary to advice in the NPPF and Planning Policy guidance, however neighbourhood planning bodies were welcome to bring forward non-strategic sites.
- Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan and the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies. Given that there had yet to be any formal agreement on any aspect of the Plan, officers felt that it currently held no weight in the planning decision making process.
- There would be no limit to the number of comments which could be received in the six week consultation and each individual response would be given a reply. This exercise would be undertaken by officers in December and January, before a report is brought to the LPLG.
- As a strategic allocation may be made up of a number of smaller sites, there would be parameters for each development which would make a contribution towards the greater infrastructure of the whole strategic allocation.

The Chair summarised the debate and said that there had been a thorough exchange of views. The report before the committee was to put the matter forward to Cabinet and Full Council and he sensed the general feeling of the committee was to do so, with some descent. It was important to allow stress testing by stakeholders at a consultation, and the evidence threshold behind it was key. However, evidence was lacking in some areas.

The Chair proposed that Scrutiny Committee remit the matter to Cabinet with the

recommendation that the Regulation 18 draft be further submitted to Full Council for 30th October, but ask Cabinet to satisfy themselves, as part of that process, as to the adequacy of the site selection evidence when that is made available.

This was seconded by Councillor Sell.

RESOLVED: that Scrutiny Committee remit the matter to Cabinet with the recommendation that the Regulation 18 draft be further submitted to Full Council for 30th October, but ask Cabinet to satisfy themselves, as part of that process, as to the adequacy of the site selection evidence when that is made available.

It was noted that the vote was not unanimous and there were significant reservations about the evidential robustness that the committee had been shown.

What we report to Cabinet must be unquestionable as to the balance of the arguments that are conveyed.

The report was noted.

Meeting ended at 22:27

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Item	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact Officer from where the documents can be obtained
Car Park Tariff Review	14 Dec	To present members with the review of car park tariffs and to request that the new charges proposals are consulted on.	No	Open	Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk
Corporate Core Indicators 2023/24 - Quarter 2	14 Dec	CCI's for quarter 2	No	Open	Leader of the Council	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk
Museum Interim Forward Plan 2024/25	14 Dec	A revised interim forward plan ahead of accreditation assessment in early 2024	No	Open	Portfolio Holder for Communities and Local Partnerships	Richard Auty, Director of Corporate Services rauty@uttlesford.gov.uk
Quarter 2 Financial Forecast - 2022/23	14 Dec	Q2 forecast outturn positions for General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and capital programme	No	Open	Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy	Jody Etherington, Director of Finance, Revenues and Benefits JEtherington@uttlesford.gov.uk
Lindsell Neighbourhood Parish Neighbourhood Area and Forum Application	13 Feb	To consider the Lindsell Neighbourhood Parish Neighbourhood Area and Forum Application.	No		Portfolio Holder for Planning	Demetria Macdonald, Planning Policy Officer dmacdonald@uttlesford.gov.uk
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029 and Annual Budget 2024/25	13 Feb	Full suite of financial strategies and annual budget reports covering 2024/25 and the medium term.	Yes	Open	Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy	Jody Etherington, Director of Finance, Revenues and Benefits JEtherington@uttlesford.gov.uk
2023/24 Q3 Corporate Core Indicators (CCIs) Outturn Report	19 Mar	Outturn data for Q3 CCIs and comparable benchmarking analysis.	No	Open	Leader of the Council	Paula Evans, Risk, Contracts and Performance Manager pevans@uttlesford.gov.uk
Corporate Core Indicators 2023/24 - Quarter 3	19 Mar	present members with the q3 CCI's and performance data	No	Open	Leader of the Council	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk
Quarter 3 Financial Forecast - 2023/24	19 Mar	Q3 forecast outturn positions for General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and capital programme	No	Open	Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy	Jody Etherington, Director of Finance, Revenues and Benefits JEtherington@uttlesford.gov.uk
2024/25 Corporate Core Indicators (CCIs) and Targets	18 Apr	To agree the indicators and relevant targets for the 2024/25 performance year collection and reporting.	No	Open	Leader of the Council	Paula Evans, Risk, Contracts and Performance Manager pevans@uttlesford.gov.uk
Annual Procurement Update	18 Apr	to provide members with an update on procurement activity during the financial year	No	Open	Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk

Item	Date	Brief information about the item and details of documents submitted for consideration	Key decision?	Part 2?	Portfolio Holder	Contact Officer from where the documents can be obtained
Corporate Core Indicators - Target Setting 2024/25	18 Apr	presenting members with the targets for CCI's for the year 2024/25	No	Open	Leader of the Council	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk
Economic Recovery Plan 2021 - 2024	18 Apr	To present to members the outcomes/initiatives delivered via the 3 recovery plan.	No	Open	Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk

Agenda Item 6

Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

22 June 2023	11 October 2023	30 November 2023	11 January 2024	6 February 2024	16 April 2024
Work Planning	Corporate Plan	Economic Development Recovery Plan	Climate Crisis Action Plan	Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2023/24 Budget	Corporate Plan
Housing review scoping report	Local Plan	Environmental Services	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	HRA 30 Year Business Plan	Economic Development Recovery Plan
Feedback from Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Annual Conference	Housing Management	Corporate Core Indicators 2023/24	Housing compliance policies and procedures	Car Parking tariff review	

*Walden Place report

Agenda Item 8

Committee: Scrutiny Committee

Date:

Title: Economic Recovery Delivery Plan - Year 3
Progress Report

Thursday, 30
November 2023

Report Author: Angela Knight, Director of Business
Performance and People
aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk
Sarah Lewin, Economic Development
Manager
slewin@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. A three year Economic Recovery Plan was approved by members on 8 December 2020, providing funds of £1m to be spend on supporting the recovery of the local economy following the impact of the Pandemic.
2. The plan has evolved to include supporting the cost of living crisis that has affected local businesses and organisations, with direct impacts such as high inflation, high utility costs and the indirect impact of households with less available income to spend on non-essential.
3. 2023/24 is the third and final year of the recovery plan initiatives.
4. This report also provides members with an update on the Government schemes set up as part of the Levelling up agenda which are administered by the Economic Development Team
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)
 - Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

Recommendations

5. The Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

Financial Implications

6. These are included in the body of this report and the associated appendix.

Background Papers

7. None

Impact

- 8.

Communication/Consultation	Corporate Management Team and Informal Cabinet Board
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	All grants are issued in line with specific grant policies, available on our website
Sustainability	This is a time limited plan, supporting one off projects or initiatives over a period of 3 years with the final year of funding in 2023/24
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

9. The local economy was significantly impacted following the Pandemic and members allocated a £1m dedicated fund to support the recovery of the Local Economy. The fund was to be spent over a period of three financial years, 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024.
10. The Government also initiated a number of schemes over this time period, which the Economic Development were required to administer.
11. The Government schemes were resource intensive and as these were externally funded these were prioritised over the council scheme to ensure that we were able to maximise the funding available for our local businesses and organisations.
12. All Government schemes have either expired or have an established process allowing the Economic Development Team to focus on delivering district specific initiatives as set out in the council's recovery plan.
13. This is the third and final year of the plan and there were £669,000 remaining funds at the start of this financial year.
14. The initial plan presented to the committee in March 2023 set out a spending plan of £650,000 over 5 priority areas. The recovery plan was reviewed in May and where previously it included business as usual activities it now solely focuses on additional initiatives being delivered with 3 key priority areas. The detail recovery plan is attached as Appendix A and a summary table is provided below.

Priority	Allocated spend (£)
Priority 1 Business Engagement and Support	
Objective 1.1 - Support businesses already located in Uttlesford district	32,099
Objective 1.2 - Support businesses hardest hit by the pandemic	12,178
Objective 1.3 - Foster the development of existing town centres as vibrant locations for business and leisure	70,323
Objective 1.4 – Support business start-ups and pre-starts.	67,272
Objective 1.5 - Digital Connectivity	45,420
Priority 2 - Creating Jobs / Inward investment	
Objective 4.1 Support the sustainable growth of existing businesses	76,610
Objective 4.2 Increase inward investment	8,944
Priority 3 – Creating a “greener” local economy	
Objective 5.1 Support local businesses to address Climate Change issues	41,176
Resources (Temporary) to support delivery of the plan	120,670
TOTAL SPEND	474,692

15. The plan supports some activities which span over more than one year, the total amount being carried forward is £194,300 to match to the committed expenditure. These include the following.

- North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) four year strategy
- UK Innovation Core Website for two years
- Resourcing cost to support the final year administration of the UKSPF and REPF government initiatives and the Parking review action plan.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

16. As mentioned earlier in the report the Government set up a number of funded schemes as part of their levelling up agenda. The Council received funds to deliver two schemes UKSPF and REPF. The funds are ring fenced and subject to specific criteria and we are required to report back to Government regularly.

17. The UKSPF was set up to provide support the district under three key investment priorities, Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. Uttlesford will receive a total of £1m over three years, this is the second year of this scheme, and we have an allocation of £219,617 for 2023/24.

18. The REPF is an addendum of the UKSPF, and the Council has been allocated a further £813,386 over two years, with 2023/24 being year one. The REPF can only be spent on capital projects and works.

19. The initiatives for the REPF are to support Rural Businesses and Communities

- Investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas

- The development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy
- Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups

20. The allocation for UKSPF has all been awarded and the REPF is partially awarded but there are pending applications, and we expect to award this in full by the end of the year. Attached as Appendix B is a table of the allocations made for this year on both UKSPF and REPF.

Risk Analysis

21.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Recovery Plan funds are not spent in full or in accordance with members requests	1 – schemes and initiatives have been identified	1 – minimal as any funds not used will be reallocated to other initiatives	The spending plan is monitored and shared with the lead member and presented to Scrutiny on twice a year. Advertising and promotion of initiatives
UKSPF and REPF funds not awarded and reclaimed by Government	1 – this is an application process to local businesses, charities and voluntary organisations and receive high volume of applications	2 – minimal financial impact to the council directly, but our district would miss out on funding	High engagement with local businesses and organisations, advertising and promotion of schemes

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Economic Recovery Delivery Plan

Priority	Spend (£)
Priority 1 Business Engagement and Support	
Objective 1.1 - Support businesses already located in Uttlesford district	
Growth Grant	
Cost of living survey	£9,925
Peer networks programme	£5,000
Digital Boost Week webinars	£300
Networking/events - £23,000	
Business Breakfast 2023	£1,323
Sponsorship - Check in @ Stansted	£2,000
Sponsorship - Stansted Meet the Buyers	£1,495
AWiE - Great Dunmow	£360
AWiE - Start up September	£521
AWiE - Xmas event	£500
Uttlesford Business Awards	£8,000
Sponsorship - Harlow College awards	£300
Discretionary Rate Relief	£2,375
	£32,099
Objective 1.2 - Support businesses hardest hit by the pandemic	
Promotion of Discover Uttlesford website	£4,418
Photo library/videography	£2,785
Economic Impact of Tourism Reports	£975
Map widget for Discover Uttlesford website	£1,000
Digital Trails	£3,000
	£12,178
Objective 1.3 - Foster the development of existing town centres as vibrant locations for business and leisure	
High Street Enhancement Fund	£47,500
HUQ Footfall monitoring platform	£14,800
Digital marketing training programme for town centre businesses	£3,750
SWBID ballot	£4,273
	£70,323
Objective 1.4 – Support business start-ups and pre-starts.	
Start up Grants	£25,000
Rebel Business School	£18,000
Start-up September	£4,145
Start-up and Young Entrepreneurs Market	£13,500
Photos for guide	£127
Young entrepreneurs networking/support	£6,500
	£67,272
Objective 1.5 - Digital Connectivity	
Digital Boost Grant	£45,420
Priority 2 - Creating Jobs / Inward investment	
Objective 4.1 Support the sustainable growth of existing businesses	
Growth and Productivity Grant	£76,610
Objective 4.2 Increase inward investment	
Innovation Core new website	£6,500
New business website	£2,444
	£8,944
Priority 3 – Creating a “greener” local economy	
Objective 5.1 Support local businesses to address Climate Change issues	
Low Carbon Workplace Grant	£39,000
Series of Webinars	£910
121 consultancy for 10 x businesses	£800
Promotion of initiatives	£466
	£41,176
Resources (Temporary) to support delivery of the plan	£120,671
TOTAL SPEND	£474,692

UKSPF and REPF Funding and Awards

UDC Funding Profile					
Funding Sources		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
UKSPF Allocation		£109,808	£219,617	£670,575	£1,000,000
REPF Allocation		-	£203,271	£610,115	£813,387
Buffy Bus	Play bus	£5,000			
Uttlesford Citizens Advice	Digital access points	£16,940			
Dig It Community Allotment	Plot to Plate sessions	£7,147			
Mind In West Essex	Community kitchen	£2,328			
SW Community Shed	Digital router	£6,599			
Touchpoint	Refrigerated van	£24,500			
UCAN	Community responder	£14,808			
UDC	Business Start-up grants	£31,000			
		£108,322			
UKSPF - 2023/24					
Fairycroft House Arts and Media Centre	Voluntary sector grants officer		£18,540		
Fairycroft House Arts and Media Centre	Homework club		£12,860		
Homestart	Stronger Together parenting		£24,565		
Mind in West Essex	Parenting classes		£21,469		
Mind in West Essex	Creative minds		£2,500		
Saffron Walden Museum	Museum on the Move		£10,000		
St Clare Hospice	Bereavement café		£9,431		
Saffron Walden Town Council	Start up and young entrepreneurs market project		£33,500		
Touchpoint	Establishment of community radio station		£7,646		
TouchPoint	Crafton Green refurbishment		£35,000		
			£175,511		
REPF - 2023/24					
Saffron Hall Trust	New lighting system		£15,000		
Saffron Walden Town Council	Repair of well in Bridge End Gardens		£15,000		
Fairycroft House Arts and Media Centre	Display cases for a heritage display		£9,000		
Active Spring Company	Installation of solar panels		£24,116		
Hatters Farm	New attraction at Halloween event		£11,512		
			£74,628		

Agenda Item 9

Committee:	Scrutiny	Date:	Thursday, 30 November
Title:	Corporate Core Indicators (CCIs) 2023/24 Q1 Performance Update		
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Petrina Lees, Leader of the Council		
Report Author:	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk Paula Evans, Contract, Performance and Risk Manager pevans@uttlesford.gov.uk		

Summary

1. This report presents the newly formed suite of Corporate Core Indicators (CCIs) which will provide members with quarterly performance data and where possible, benchmarking comparisons to other similar Local Authorities.
2. The CCIs were identified to enable the Corporate Management Team and Members to focus on key areas of performance across the council. Where possible, comparative data has been obtained from other local authorities so that further, indicator specific, analysis can also be completed.
3. Performance trends have been analysed to identify where improvement may be needed particularly when comparing against other 'statistical nearest neighbour' authorities.

Recommendations

4. None. The report is for information only.

Financial Implications

5. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report:

None.

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	Reviewed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Informal Cabinet Board (ICB)
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Corporate Core Indicators

8. A suite of Corporate Core Indicators (CCI's) has been developed and include a number of new indicators which have not been previously reported on. The indicators have been identified and developed to provide members with information on the performance of key activities within the council.
9. A total of 25 indicators have Q1 outturn data entered against them and where applicable this is compared to the previous year's internal data; this is set out in detail at Appendix A. A summary of the current indicators shows that:
 - 13 have achieved or exceeded their target
 - 6 are showing a decline in the performance levels since the previous comparable quarter
 - 10 are showing a decline in performance over the longer term (12 months)

Benchmarking

10. In addition to reporting against our internal targets and performance, an exercise to benchmark our performance externally has been carried out.
11. The benchmarking group used for the purposes of this report represents Uttlesford District Council's statistical near neighbours (SNN) as identified in the annual Financial Resilience Index produced by CIPFA (see table below).

Authority	Area km²	Population mid 2019
Uttlesford DC	641.18	91,284
Tewkesbury BC	414.4	95,019
South Cambridgeshire	901.63	159,086
Hart DC	215.3	97,073
Tonbridge and Malling BC	240.13	132,153
Horsham DC	530.26	143,791
Sevenoaks DC	370.34	120,750
Harborough DC	591.8	93,807
Test Valley BC	627.6	126,160
Winchester CC	660.97	124,859
Vale of White Horse DC	578.6	136,007
East Hampshire	514.4	122,308
West Oxfordshire	714.40	110,643
South Oxfordshire	678.54	142,057

12. The Nearest Neighbours Model is determined by 40 different metrics across a wide range of social-economic indicators and is designed to help interpret results and deep dive into how the statistical differences between other authorities arises.
13. As there were no other formal benchmarking groups identified at the time of formalising the CCI suite, these were thought to be a good starting point on which to build our benchmarking knowledge. Although it should be noted that this group of SNN is a very close match to the comparative data available on the LG Inform platform, Value for Money Profiles.
14. Work is currently being undertaken to ascertain which benchmarking information would be most appropriate to use through such sources as LG Inform+, CIPFA Insights, APSE. This work will include service specific benchmarking organisations, for example Housemark for the Housing Revenue Account. It is therefore anticipated the 2023/24 Q2 data will be reporting against a more formalised benchmarking group.
15. The benchmarking data contained in this report and the detailed information in Appendix A has been obtained directly from equivalent performance officers in the SNN authorities and/or published data on their authority websites.
16. Comparative data for 8 of the 25 indicators has been obtained and a minimum and maximum value has been identified for each indicator, but for benchmarking purposes the average of the group has been used to determine a comparable performance level for Uttlesford's Q1 outturns. A summary of the benchmarking data for the current group of local authorities selected is set out in the table below.

Benchmarking Comparison Summary				
No. of LA's	Indicator	Average performance level	UDC Outturn	Performance Comments
4	CCI 05: % Information Governance requests (FOIs & EIRs) dealt with in 20 working days	92%	83%	UDC's performance is the lowest of the benchmarking group, however, UDC's performance is improving, and new processes have been put in place to ensure this trend continues and the current target of 95% responded to within 20 days is achieved.
5	CCI 06: % of calls answered vs number of calls received across the council	89%	90%*	UDC's performance is above the group's average and the second highest out of 5.
8	CCI 09: % of Council Tax collected	30%	29.52%	UDC's performance is in line with the average for the group and on a par with all other council's bar one, which is an outlier with a very high performance.
8	CCI 10: % of Non-domestic Rates Collected	31%	30.20%	UDC's performance is in line with the average for the group and on a par with all other council's bar one, which is an outlier with a very high performance.
7	CCI 24: Processing of Planning Applications: Major Applications (within 13 - 16 weeks with EIA or including any Extension of Time)	83%	85.90%	UDC's performance exceeds the average for the group and is 4th highest out of 7.
7	CCI 25: Processing of Planning Applications: Non-major Applications (within 8 weeks or including any Extension of Time)	87%	84.62%	UDC's performance is 2% below the average for the group and 2nd lowest out of 7.
3	CCI 26: % of appeals upheld for Major Applications (min)	12%	10.81%	UDC's performance is better than the average for the group, however it should be noted the comparison group is small, and the spread is wide.
7	CCI 28: % Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	48%	53.88%	UDC's performance is 6% above the average and 3rd highest out of 7.

**It should be noted that some LA's may offer a different range of services through their CSC function*

Risk Analysis

17.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
If performance indicators do not meet quarterly/annual targets then areas such as customer satisfaction and statutory adherence to government led requirements could be affected leading to a loss in reputation for the Council.	2 – The majority of performance measures perform on or above target. Where necessary, accompanying notes to individual performance indicators detail improvement plans.	3 – The majority of service areas in the Council are customer-facing so has the potential to impact reputationally, service delivery and financially.	Performance is monitored by CMT, and Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Short and long term analysis is carried out to identify performance trends, this supports the appropriate action/improvement plans to be put in place to address issues.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Corporate Core Indicators (CCIs) - 2023/24 Q1 Outturn

PI No:	PI Title:	Uttlesford DC								Benchmarking Group				Benchmarking Notes	
		Q1 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	Status	STDOT*	LTDOT*	Performance Note:	Number	Minimum	Average	Maximum		
ORGANISATION/GOVERNANCE															
CCI 01	Average days lost per FTE through short-term sickness absence (min)	10.48 (short & long combined)	9.40 (short & long combined)	4.70	5.19	9.84 (short & long combined)				198 employees took a period of short term absence, of which a majority of these were due to minor conditions such as colds/ headaches and upset stomachs.					
CCI 02	Average days lost per FTE through long-term sickness absence (min)			4.40	4.65					There were 24 people who account for the long term absences, of which a third have left the organisation and only 4 are still on sick leave. 42% of the long term absences were due to stress/depression/anxiety, the majority of which were non-work related.					
CCI 03	Average days taken to complete candidate pre-employment checks (min)	n/a	n/a	15	12		N/A	N/A	Of the 11 new starters, only 2 were under target at 19 & 16 days and this was due to the delay of their previous employer supplying a reference.						
CCI 04	% of Leavers that leave within their first year of employment (min)	n/a	n/a	15%	21%		N/A	N/A	9 Leavers in 1st year (42 total). Breakdown: 4 - ES, 2 - Planning, 1 - Benefits, 1 - Performance, 1 - Audit. Reasons for leaving varied: enticed back to previous workplace, role wasn't what they expected, offered a promotion.						
CCI 05	% Information Governance requests (FOIs & EIRs) dealt with in 20 working days (max)	n/a	n/a	95%	83%		N/A	N/A	Numerator: 175 Denominator: 211. Although there was a significant increase in FOIs received in comparison to Q1 2022/23 there has also been a notable improvement in response times over the previous 12 months, although this has not been formally reported previously. Work will continue with all service areas to further improve monitoring processes which in turn will support an improvement in the indicator outturn.	4	83%	92%	97%	UDC's performance is the lowest of the benchmarking group, however, as already noted, UDC's performance is improving and on an upward trend.	
CCI 06	% of calls answered vs number of calls received across the council (max)	n/a	n/a	90%	90%		N/A	N/A	Numerator: 22,924 Denominator: 25,377 (abandoned: 2,453). Please note these figures relate only to calls into the council's Customer Service Centre. The target has been achieved this quarter despite a very high volume of calls. A high call volume inevitably can lead to longer wait times and increase the risk of call abandonment. Examples of high-volume calls include Council Tax payments at the start of the new financial year and garden waste renewal letters sent to over 11,000 customers requesting payment for the service. The District & Parish elections in May also generated many calls, with this year seeing the introduction of Voter Authority ID. Temporary issues in the waste and recycling service leading to missed bins, also contributed to a rise in calls and several bank holidays, Easter and The King's Coronation in May meant an increase in customer contact over a shorter opening period. Customer Services management continue to work with back offices to improve processes and provide support to individual advisors to manage call handling times as efficiently as possible.	5	87%	89%	91%	UDC's performance is above the group's average and the second highest out of 5.	
CCI 07	Contract Management			Indicator still to be determined following introduction of revised processes											
CCI 08	Resident Satisfaction			Indicator still to be determined further research and analysis to be completed											

PI No:	PI Title:	Uttlesford DC								Benchmarking Group				Benchmarking Notes
		Q1 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	Status	STDOT*	LTDOT*	Performance Note:	Number	Minimum	Average	Maximum	
COST OF LIVING CRISIS														
CCI 09	% of Council Tax collected (max) *	30%	99%	29.00%	29.52%	✔			Numerator: £23,707,078.20 Denominator: £80,319,996.06. Collection rate slightly ahead of target. This is a good result considering the economic climate and reflects the hard work of the revenues team in maintaining correct liable parties and promptly issuing revenue generating documents	8	20%	30%	38%	UDC's performance is in line with the average for the group and on a par with all other councils bar one, which is an outlier with a very high performance
CCI 10	% of Non-domestic Rates Collected (max) *	32.38%	98.06%	26.00%	30.20%	✔			Numerator: £15,493,902.30 Denominator: £51,296,234.70 Collection rate 0.51% below target which, given the economic climate, should be commended. This has been achieved through the prompt issue of reminders and summonses to ensure payments are received from businesses.	8	20%	31%	38%	UDC's performance is in line with the average for the group and on a par with all other councils bar one, which is an outlier with a very high performance
CCI 11	Council Housing: Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed (max) *	92.76%	97.10%	89.00%	92.15%	✔			Numerator: £4,552,551.36 Denominator: £4,940,135.21 This PI has exceeded the target due to focusing on rent collection. However the figure is down on the same quarter last year as the current cost of living rises are still impacting collection.					
CCI 12	% Households claiming LCTS against total CT base (min)	Indicator still to be determined to ensure appropriate monitoring of the impact of the cost of living crisis												
HEALTH & SAFETY														
CCI 13	Council Housing: % domestic dwellings on programme with valid LGSR gas safety certificate (max)	99%	99%	100%	99%	⚠			Numerator: 1,947 Denominator: 1,959 12 do not have in date certificates, tenants not allowing access with UDC for legal action					
CCI 14	Council Housing: % properties compliant with Carbon Monoxide and smoke detector regulations (max)	n/a	n/a	100%	99.40%	⚠	N/A	N/A	Numerator: 2,494 Denominator: 2,509 15 properties have not had an annual check as tenants are refusing access.					
CCI 15	Council Housing: Asbestos Management - % High Priority recommendations o/s from current and previous RA's (min)	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	✔	N/A	N/A	Numerator: 0 Denominator: 150 No actions outstanding					
CCI 16	Council Housing: Water Hygiene - % High Priority recommendations o/s from current and previous RA's (min)	0%	0%	0%	0%	✔			Numerator: 0 Denominator: 9 No actions outstanding					
CCI 17	Council Housing: Fire Safety - % High Priority recommendations o/s from current and previous RA's (min)	0%	0%	0%	0%	✔			Numerator: 0 Denominator: 1 1 action reported and has been completed					
CCI 18	Council Housing: Lift Safety - % lifts with an-in date safety inspection (LOLER) (max)	n/a	n/a	100%	98.11%	⚠	N/A	N/A	Numerator: 52 Denominator: 53 1 stairlift at Walden Place is shut down and beyond repair. Replacement order awaiting installation.					
CCI 19	Council Housing: Damp & Mould - % reported damp & mould cases responded to (within 14 days/ 7 days) (max)	n/a	n/a	100%	30%	⊘	N/A	N/A	Numerator: 7 Denominator: 23 30% of completed mould wash jobs have been completed in 14 days or less. The figures provided include all mould wash jobs raised and completed on Connect, we are unable to determine which of these were raised as a result of a damp and mould survey. The average turnaround time of all completed mould wash jobs during Q1 is 17 days.					
CCI 20	Average no. of days sickness lost due to staff incidents or accidents for the rolling year period as recorded on i-trent (min)	n/a	n/a	0.3	0.13	✔	N/A	N/A	Normally with in-house front line services such as Waste/Recycling/Grounds Maintenance/Housing there would be an expected higher number of sickness absences for accidents/incidences. This could indicate that risk are being mitigated with good H&S practices.	2	0.13	7.07	14	Data is currently only available for this indicator for one other Council in the group, so a comparison is not currently reliable.

PI No:	PI Title:	Uttlesford DC								Benchmarking Group				Benchmarking Notes			
		Q1 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	Status	STDOT*	LTDOT^	Performance Note:	Number	Minimum	Average	Maximum				
FINANCE & INCOME																	
CCI 21	% of commercial property net income against budget (max)	n/a	n/a	95.0%	100.40%	✔	N/A	N/A	Numerator: £12,022,000 (forecast) Denominator: £11,974,000 (budget) Slight increase due to delay in completion of MOOG resulting in additional interest.								
CCI 22	% of invoices paid within 30 days (max)	97.30%	98.09%	98.00%	97.11%	⚠			Numerator: 1,782 Denominator: 1,835 We found 53 invoices that needed more intervention after they were entered onto the system. This ranged from supplier forms that needed to be filled in by the suppliers to departments with sick leave or annual leave that had little or no cover in place.	2	97%	98%	99%	Data is currently only available for this indicator for one other Council in the group, so a comparison is not currently reliable.			
CCI 23	Council Housing: Average re-let time in days (all re-lets including time spent in works) (min)	56	67	35	87	❌			Numerator: 3,768 (void days) Denominator: 43 (lets) On average, 77 days were attributed to the works process and difficulty in finding suitable contractors and 10 days were due to the lettings process. Several properties had to be re-offered or re-advertised this quarter, we will look at this in more granular detail. To improve the time in works we are re-engineering the key to key process with UNSL and will be able to report an improvement once this important piece of work has taken place. Void management is a key focus for the coming quarter.								
ENVIRONMENT/COMMUNITIES & DEVELOPMENT																	
CCI 24	Processing of Planning Applications: Major Applications (within 13 - 16 weeks with EIA or including any Extension of Time) (max)	83.33%	85.94%	98.00%	85.90%	✔			To note that this period covers speed of major decisions from 01/10/2021 to 30/09/2023 - 85.90%. The measure to be used is the percentage of decisions on applications made: (a) within the statutory determination period; or (b) within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the local planning authority, as recorded for major development in Live Tables P151a and 151b, and for non-major development in Live Table 153 from the data collected by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. The assessment period for this measure is the two years up to and including the most recent quarter for which data on planning application decisions are available at the time of designation.	7	63%	83%	100%	UDC's performance is above the average for the group and 4th highest out of 7.			
CCI 25	Processing of Planning Applications: Non-major Applications (within 8 weeks or including any Extension of Time) (max)	85.49%	84.72%	80.00%	84.62%	✔			To note that this period covers speed of major decisions from 01/10/2021 to 30/09/2023 - 84.62%. The measures used are as per CCI 24 above.	7	73%	87%	96%	UDC's performance is 2% below the average for the group and 2nd lowest out of 7.			
CCI 26	% of Appeals upheld for Major Applications (min)	8.82%	6.85%	9.00%	10.81%	❌			To note - the current figure for the period of decisions issued between 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2023 with appeal decisions to 31/12/2023 is 10.81% with some appeal decisions outstanding. Figure being queried with DLUHC. Now very close to national target of below 10%. The measure to be used is the percentage of the total number of decisions made by the authority on applications that are then subsequently overturned at appeal, once nine months have elapsed following the end of the assessment period, as recorded in Live Table P152a and P152b for major development and in Live Table 154 for non-major development from the data collected by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and the Planning Inspectorate. The 9 months specified in the measure enables appeals to pass through the system and be decided for the majority of decisions on planning applications made during the assessment period. The assessment period for this measure is the two years up to and including the most recent quarter for which data on planning application decisions are available at the time of designation, once the nine months to be allowed for beyond the end of the assessment period is taken into account.	3	2%	12%	25%	UDC's performance is better than the average for the group, however the comparison group is small and the spread is wide.			

PI No:	PI Title:	Uttlesford DC								Benchmarking Group				Benchmarking Notes
		Q1 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	Status	STDOT*	LTDOT^	Performance Note:	Number	Minimum	Average	Maximum	
CCI 27	% 'red' status tasks from Local Plan project plan (min)	n/a	n/a	0%	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	This indicator is currently under review and will reflect a revised and more defined method of monitoring for the Local Plan. It is anticipated outturn will be reported from Q2 onwards.					
CCI 28	% Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (max)	52.48%	43.06%	50.00%	53.88%				Numerator: 4,479.90 (recycling and composted) Denominator: 8,314.88 (total domestic waste arising)	7	35%	48%	55%	UDC's performance is 6% above the average and 3rd highest out of 7
CCI 29	% High Priority actions completed from the Climate Change plan	Indicator still to be determined to ensure the most appropriate monitoring of Climate Change Initiatives is adopted												
CCI 30	% staff completed safeguarding training (max)	n/a	n/a	100%	44%		N/A	N/A	Numerator: 138 Denominator: 313 As at end June 2023, 67% of all staff had completed safeguarding training. Further work has been completed to improve the number of attendances by end Q2 such as toolbox-type sessions for depot staff with the content of the course being specifically tailored to the audience. Other initiatives being progressed include the introduction of a safeguarding bulletin and inclusion of safeguarding training within the U-Learn series of on-line courses.					