

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY,
21 MARCH 2019 at 7.30 pm**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)
Councillors G Barker, P Davies, G LeCount, M Lemon, B Light and
E Oliver.

Officers in
attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director – Corporate Services), B Ferguson
(Democratic Services Officer), S Pugh (Assistant Director –
Government & Legal Services) and A Webb (Director - Finance
and Corporate Services).

Also
present: Councillors S Howell and J Redfern.

SC33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

The Chairman declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Stop Stansted
Expansion.

SC34 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members discussed the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting held on
31 January 2019.

The Chairman asked for an addition relating to SC28 (first paragraph on page 9),
so it read as follows:

In response to a request from the Chairman, Councillor Rolfe said the Council
was lobbying central government to send the message that there was a limit to
the degree of funding cuts that the Council could sustain ***and he was open to
the idea of including comments on the matter from the Scrutiny Committee
in future.***

Councillors Barker and Davies disagreed with the amendment on the grounds
that Councillor Rolfe was not present to agree to the change.

Councillor LeCount said he recalled the comment and concurred with the
Chairman's proposed amendment.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services and the Democratic Services Officer
agreed with the Chairman that something of the like was said.

SC35 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said the Plan was under developed due to the upcoming elections. The only items which had been scheduled were those statutory items relating to the Budget.

SC36 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19

Members agreed to not make any changes to the Work Programme as this would be picked up by the new Committee in May.

SC37 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Chairman moved proceedings to item 10 on the agenda.

The Chairman introduced the Memorandum of Understanding between the Executive and Scrutiny, which had been produced to meet recommendations of the Centre for Public Scrutiny. The aim of the document was to help better define the roles and responsibilities between the two functions to improve the working relationship in the best interests of the community.

Councillor Howell said the MoU was a good starting point for improving the working relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny and it was important to put this in place without delay.

Councillor Light said the MoU was positive but formal approval of the document should wait until after the election, as it was possible that a new Administration could be in place.

Members discussed delaying the implementation of the MoU. The majority of Members supported the implementation of the MoU without delay.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee approves the Memorandum of Understanding

SC38 INVESTMENT STEERING GROUP

Councillor Howell summarised the report for the Committee's consideration. He said at the meeting on 21 February Council had requested a report on the establishment of an Investment Steering Group (ISG), to support the Council in the creation and development of an investment portfolio. Members also requested that the report was considered at Scrutiny before submission at Council on 9 April.

The report before members set out the current Administration's proposals for an ISG, although the precise makeup of the group would be decided by the new Administration following the election in May. The report did set out the general governance structure for the decision making process and the principles behind

such a structure, and Members were asked to provide feedback on these proposals.

Councillor Howell said the ISG would likely be a working group of Cabinet which would include expert advisors. If investment opportunities were found, the ISG would review the business case and recommend investment opportunities to Cabinet for approval. Cabinet would then review the investment and, if satisfied, recommend to Full Council. He stressed that Full Council would make the final decision on whether or not to allocate the funding to any proposed investment.

Councillor Light said she welcomed the proposal for a governance structure to be put in place regarding the Council's investments. She proposed agreeing to the principles outlined in the report but added that much more work needed to be done. She asked whether this would be considered at Council on 9 April.

The Director –Finance and Corporate Services said the report could be endorsed by Full Council at its meeting on 9 April, but the ISG itself would be established under the new Administration.

Councillor Susan Barker entered the meeting at 8.15pm.

The Chairman made the following proposal:

'Scrutiny endorse the establishment of an Investment Steering Group and request that the work on the investment governance structure is progressed and completed in May.'

The proposal was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny endorse the establishment of an Investment Steering Group and request that the work on the investment governance structure is progressed and completed in May

In relation to a question from Councillor Redfern, the Chairman said he had responded to a resident's enquiry relating to the Council's investment strategy and he would circulate the letter confirming this.

SC39 **STREET SERVICES UPDATE**

Councillor Susan Barker summarised the Street Services report for members' consideration.

The report outlined a high level action plan for waste education and awareness, with a view of reducing the level of contamination in recycling collection services and increase participation in food waste collection. Awareness would be raised in a number of ways, such as visual aids, stickers and posters, but education would also be directed towards schools, as it had been shown that children passed on such knowledge to their parents.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Councillor S Barker said stickers would be applied to communal bins in 'houses in multiple occupation' (HMOs) to lower the levels of contamination and help improve the rate of recycling in shared homes.

The Chairman said it was worth considering a monetary penalty, or tax rise, for those who had high levels of contamination in their recycling waste. He said this system could be found in mainland Europe.

Councillor Oliver said the government should ensure a uniform waste and recycling system was put in place nationwide, as many of the problems stemmed from new residents who had moved into the district and who did not understand the new system they were being asked to adhere to.

In response to a member question, Councillor S Barker said the waste vehicles were powered by diesel but she could look into the viability of alternative fuelled vehicles.

The report was noted.

SC40

CONSULTANT'S BRIEF FOR UTTLESFORD HOUSING STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Councillor Redfern summarised the report for the Committee's consideration. She said the affordable strategy outlined in the report had been produced with the Garden Communities primarily in mind, with particular attention paid to providing homes for those that worked in the district, but could not afford to live in Uttlesford. She said it had been a challenging process, and there was much more work to be done, but the strategy before members was an ambitious step forwards in an attempt to address the challenge of delivering affordable housing. She said there were two additions to the Housing Strategy, as recommended by the Housing Board, they were as follows:

Section 11

Advice would be given to everyone on the option of downsizing to increase the provision of homes suitable for families.

Section 12

The guidance outlined in the Housing Strategy would be applied to the whole of the District, not just the proposed Garden Communities.

Councillor G Barker commended the report but asked where the money would come from to fund the preparatory work to refresh the Strategy and Allocations Policy.

Councillor Redfern said the money would be drawn from the Planning Policy budget.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny endorses the brief (Appendix A) so that work can commence on preparing the evidence for the refresh of the Uttlesford Housing Strategy and amendments to the Allocations Policy

SC41 **MAJOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS REVIEW UPDATE**

The Chairman introduced the report updating members on the Major Planning Applications review. He said this report was just for information and it would be up to the new Committee in May, following publication of the Stansted Airport decision notice, to progress the work of the review.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said he was in the process of corresponding with the Planning Advisory Service who would advise on the suggested scope of the review. He said costs were unknown at this time.

The Chairman said he hoped this issue could be looked at again when the new Committee convened in June.

The report was noted.

SC42 **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services summarised the report for the Committee's consideration.

In response to a question from Councillor Barker, the Assistant Director – Corporate Services said specific training for Scrutiny members had been arranged and would be scheduled early in the new municipal year.

RESOLVED to approve the content of the report.

The Chairman thanked members and officers for their contributions to the Scrutiny process in the past year.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.