

**EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING held at COUNCIL CHAMBER -
COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on
TUESDAY, 21 MARCH 2023 ON THE RISE OF THE ORDINARY MEETING**

Present: Councillor H Asker (Chair)
Councillors G Bagnall, M Caton, A Coote, A Dean, G Driscoll,
J Emanuel, J Evans, P Fairhurst, R Freeman, N Gregory,
N Hargreaves, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, P Lavelle,
G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge, T Loveday,
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: N Coombe (Interim Legal Services Manager and Deputy
Monitoring Officer), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager),
P Holt (Chief Executive) and A Webb (Director - Finance and
Corporate Services)

C99 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Armstrong, Criscione,
Loughlin, Foley and Barker.

There were no declarations of interest.

**C100 REQUISITION FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL:
BLUEPRINT UTTLESFORD**

Councillor Lees presented the report regarding Blueprint Uttlesford, following a requisition for an extraordinary meeting and report to discuss reorganisation plans under the banner of Blueprint Uttlesford. She said Blueprint Uttlesford had been discussed at a number of meetings and member briefings as part of the ongoing change programme. She said she was disappointed that debate had been requested but press releases had already been sent to the press; she felt minds had already been made up. She proposed for the report to be noted.

Councillor Light left the Chamber at 8.49pm. She returned at 8.51pm.

Councillor Lavelle seconded the report.

Councillor Fairhurst said press releases had been sent prior to the meeting due to imminent deadlines and that the issue had been pushed to the final days of the council term. If information was wrong, it would be retracted.

Councillor Lemon left the meeting at 9.15pm.

Members discussed Blueprint Uttlesford and the following points were raised:

- Blueprint Uttlesford was the overarching title of the ongoing change programme and it had been referenced in numerous reports in recent years, including the Budget and Corporate Plan. It underpinned many of the changes taking place at the Council.
- The requisition for a meeting on Blueprint Uttlesford was a request for transparency and openness. The programme was not clear because decisions would be taken after the election, and costs would be incurred in the summer that would have to be paid from reserves. Change demanded leadership, and there was a lack of governance, accountability and political oversight in this process.
- The Chief Executive was commended for the changes implemented and commitment to transparency since his arrival.
- The change programme did not provide the requisite vision nor certainty to staff and the public. Blueprint Uttlesford needed to be encapsulated in one strategic document, with clear aims, outcomes and milestones made available. Staff and the public deserved to understand the project.
- The Council had inherited many problems, such as those identified in Housing and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and it had taken four years to improve the situation. Change was needed in future years and efficiencies would be required, as was the case with local authorities across the country, due to the lack of certainty surrounding future funding from Government. Blueprint Uttlesford was the Council's response to this uncertainty, in order to manage finances and resources as effectively as possible.

Councillors Fairhurst, Light and Isham left the meeting at 9.55pm.

Councillors Lees was invited to summarise the debate. She said there would not be an emergency budget in the summer and the prospect of redundancies had not been raised as staff would be managed by natural wastage. She asked Council to note the report.

RESOLVED that Council notes the report.

The Chair thanked members as it was the final meeting of the council term. She wished those councillors who were not standing at the election all the best for the future.

The meeting was closed at 10.02pm.