

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES,  
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on TUESDAY, 1  
MAY 2018 at 7.30 pm**

Present: Councillor A Dean (Chairman)  
Councillors G Barker, R Chambers, P Davies, M Felton,  
A Gerard (substituting for H Asker), M Lemon, B Light and  
E Oliver

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), C Chapman  
(Operations Manager - Street Services), B Ferguson  
(Democratic Services Officer), S Payne (Project Manager -  
Planning Policy), S Pugh (Assistant Director - Governance and  
Legal) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Also present: Councillors S Barker (Cabinet Member for Environmental Services)  
and S Howell (Cabinet Member for Finance and Administration)

**SC45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**SC46 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2018 were signed and approved  
as a correct record subject to S Pugh (Assistant Director – Governance and  
Legal Services) being marked as present.

**SC47 CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

*Councillor Chambers entered the meeting at 7.35pm.*

The Chairman said the Cabinet meeting scheduled for the 12 June to discuss  
Local Plan business was not included in the Forward Plan. He asked for this to  
be noted.

In response to a Member question, the Assistant Director – Corporate Services  
said officers would be meeting to discuss the Local Council Tax Support Scheme  
proposals for 2019/20 which would inform the budget consultation process.

The Chairman asked when the proposal for the future management of the Day  
Centres within the District would be considered by Cabinet.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said the item did not have a  
confirmed date to be considered by Cabinet but had been added to the Forward  
Plan to ensure it did not slip off the work programme. He said he was uncertain  
as to whether this item required formal approval of the Cabinet.

#### SC48 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman invited requests from Members with regards to populating the Scrutiny work programme for 2018-19.

Councillor Light proposed to review the Council's Investment Strategy and the effectiveness of Section 106 agreements at the September meeting.

Councillor G Barker said the issues surrounding S106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) were complex and Members would have to be made aware of the differences. He said the remit of the scoping report would need to be targeted and focused.

Councillor Light said a brief presentation should be given at the September meeting, explaining the differences between S106 and CIL agreements, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each process.

Councillor S Barker said she had been looking into the issue of airport parking, particularly in Takeley, and had information she could share with the Committee, if members so wished.

The Chairman summarised the discussion and confirmed that S106 agreements, the Council's Investment Strategy and airport parking should be added to the Scrutiny work programme for the September meeting.

#### SC49 **CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY REVIEW - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said a CFPS Review report would be going to Cabinet later this month. He said officers would be meeting later this week to discuss the review, and a meeting would be scheduled with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee to incorporate the Committee's views.

The Chairman said he was pleased work was ongoing and the update was noted.

#### SC50 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING - SCOPING REPORT**

*Councillor Oliver entered the meeting at 7.50pm.*

The Project Manager – Planning Policy introduced the scoping report on the issue of affordable housing in the District. He said, due to the timing of the report, the issue of affordable housing was intrinsically linked to the ongoing Local Plan process and the proposed development of garden communities. He said the proposed communities would be developed with the principles of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) in mind, one of which was the provision of affordable housing. He said the aim of this scoping report was to

ensure the Scrutiny Committee was content with the Council's approach to affordable housing and to establish the objectives of an affordable housing policy.

Councillor S Barker said the Council's approach to developing specialist housing (for example, bungalows), as well as the target of 40% affordable homes for developments of fifteen units and above, needed to be reviewed. She said whilst the 40% target was an admirable aspiration, it was not always realistic due to the nature of S106 agreements and the negotiations that occur between planners and developers.

The Chairman said the Council should know more regarding the effects of house and room sizes on the health of residents. He would also like to know how residents waiting for affordable housing would be prioritised in terms of 'need.'

Councillor Gerard said the discussion needed to include how the term 'affordable housing' was defined. He said the feedback he had received from residents was that affordable housing was not affordable.

Councillor G Barker said the scoping report needed to be more exact and include specifics, for example an Uttlesford minimum home standard or size.

Councillor Davies said base line standards needed to be defined, such as the minimum size of food preparation areas and living spaces.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Project Manager – Planning Policy said stakeholders who would be working with the Council to deliver affordable housing, such as Housing Associations, would reflect the same standards as those held by the Council.

Councillor Felton said she had a number of issues with 'affordable housing', particularly the issue of shared ownership. She said the nature of shared ownership could trap residents in a property, as the market value of these properties did not rise in line with the market rate. She said the solution to the housing crisis was to protect social housing.

Councillor Lemon questioned the affordability of 'affordable housing'. He said there should be restrictions on private landlords accruing social housing and renting on the private market.

Councillors G Barker, S Barker and Lemon all declared non-prejudicial interests at this point as private landlords.

Councillor Chambers said the District, and the country as a whole, was in dire need of more houses. He said there was no such thing as affordable housing for people on low wages and provisions needed to be put in place to house lower earners. He said the answer to this was council housing.

Councillor Oliver said he agreed with the comments of Councillor Chambers and Councillor Felton; he had residents in his ward who felt trapped by shared

ownership as they could not buy 100% of the property, and yet they could not afford to move out. He said the solution to this crisis was social housing.

Councillor Light said the concept of 'need' had to be defined and the procedure by which people were assessed also had to be identified.

Councillor G Barker said Members had given the Project Manager – Planning Policy much to think about and the views expressed needed to be put in a more concise manner.

The Chairman said affordable housing was a huge issue for the District and this discussion should be continued outside of the meeting.

The Project Manager – Planning Policy said he would meet with the Chairman, the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, to consolidate the views of Members. He said presently there was a kaleidoscope of ideas regarding affordable housing but to take this policy forward effectively, a single set of objectives needed to be established.

Councillor Felton, as Chairman of the Housing Board, and Councillor Gerard, a Member of the Housing Board, said they would also like to be involved in this discussion.

#### SC51 **RECYCLING UPDATE**

Councillor S Barker introduced the report on waste and recycling. She said changes in the international market for waste, namely the tightening of China's import quality control and the banning of certain waste categories, meant the Council was facing far higher recycling costs. Whereas previously the Council had been able to generate revenue from exporting recyclable waste to China, it would now have to pay for it. To increase recycling rates and reduce costs, the Council would need to work with local communities to improve the quality of recyclable waste and prevent contamination. Education would be key in lowering the amount of contaminated recyclable material placed in Uttlesford's recycling bins.

#### SC52 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

*RESOLVED that under section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.*

#### SC53 **RECYCLING UPDATE (PART 2)**

*Councillor Chambers left the meeting at 8.50pm.*

In response to a Member question regarding the District's refuse collection cycle, the Operations Manager – Street Services said she would need to review projections and modelling analysis to ascertain the economic benefits of such a change, but confirmed that other authorities had switched to a three weekly collection scheme to cut down on costs.

Councillor Oliver said it would be a good idea if a 'welcome leaflet' was provided to new residents who had just moved into the District, explaining Uttlesford's waste and recycling system. He said this information needed to be communicated to new residents due to the variances between recycling systems across different districts. He added that press releases were of limited value in rural areas, as local papers were not always circulated in the villages.

Councillor S Barker said she could produce communication material which targeted a rural audience to be advertised in parish magazines.

In response to a Member question, the Operations Manager – Street Services said the Council were already committed to dealing with waste in an innovative way. She said the residual waste collected in the black bins was also recycled and converted into fuel. She said the standard of the material was much lower, due to the high levels of food contamination.

Members discussed the issue of contaminated recycling material and agreed that education and communication with residents would be the way to improve the rates and quality of recycling across the District.

The Operations Manager – Street Services said educational campaigns had been rolled out by national organisations such as Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which were focused on the quality, rather than the quantity, of recyclable materials. The new approach to recycling could be summarised as "If in doubt, leave it out," and further communication materials would be provided.

Councillor S Barker said she would draft an Action Plan, along with the Operations Manager – Street Services, which would be brought back to the Committee at a future meeting. She invited Members to visit the District's recycling plant to gain an understanding of how this process worked in practical terms.

Councillor Gerard said it would be interesting to attain the views of the Youth Council, and to ask them how they would approach educating the public in terms of recycling and the issue of contamination.

Councillors Lemon and Light agreed and said they would approach the Youth Council to ascertain their views. They would also invite members of the Youth Council to visit a recycling plant/multi re-use facility (MRF) with other members of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm.

