

# **Uttlesford District Council Meeting**

## **22 July 2025**

### **Written Questions to Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs**

#### **Responses published on 21 July 2025**

##### **1. By Councillor Gregory to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:**

“To ask Cllr Coote for an update on progress on remediation works at Reynolds Court and any other properties requiring fire safety works, the costs thereof and any recovery of costs from contractors.”

##### **Response from Councillor Coote:**

##### **“Regarding Reynolds Court, Newport**

UDC’s litigation lawyer is currently preparing a comprehensive assessment of the potential for a claim against Lovells, the contractor which led on the redevelopment of the scheme in 2018 (including the cost of the waking watch which had been put in by the council place to mitigate the fire risk arising from contractor failure). The Legal Team has highlighted that there may be an issue concerning the limitation period, specifically regarding our first awareness of the faults for which we are seeking compensation. We anticipate having a detailed report ready by 18<sup>th</sup> July, which will outline our options and the likelihood of success in pursuing this claim.

The fire remediation works at Reynolds Court have been successfully completed by the contractor, Lovells. Importantly, these works were carried out without incurring any costs to the council, which is a positive outcome. We are also in the process of recovering costs associated with defects in the heating system and other related issues that have arisen. This recovery process is crucial, as it will help mitigate any financial impact on our resources.

**With regards to The Close, Hatfield Health** – The required remediation work to the fire doors has been completed and the waking watch removed.

**Priorswood Court, Takeley** - The required remediation work to the primary doors has been completed and the waking watch removed. Work is ongoing to complete the reinstallation of the secondary fire escape doors to each dwelling.

For both of the above Schemes, the doors which required remediation had been fitted by UNSL sub-contractors. The removal of the secondary fire doors was carried out by UNSL. The council is now considering its options as part of the wider post-contract analysis being carried out.”

**2. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy:**

“For the last financial year what was the total income received from firms based in our London Road and Canfield Park offices?”

**Response from Councillor Hargreaves:**

**“For 24/25**

London Road - £96,061

Canfield - £424,288

Total - £520,349

Members will recall the details for the much increased income from London Road I supplied in a recent report to Council, and that all unused space is now let or in final stage of lease signature. Not requested, but I think useful for members to know about all those rentals which are extra to the commercial property portfolio. These are the current figures (assuming full occupancy)

**Current rents**

London Road - £302k

Canfield - £425k

Walpole - £60k

Shire Hill - £70k

Turpins - £25k

Total - £882k per annum

There is a further room at Walpole about to be advertised, not included above.”

**3. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Lees – Leader of the Council:**

“Does Cllr Lees agree that the proposed mega unitaries by Conservative controlled Essex County Council would remove the local from local government? What will she and others be doing in the coming months to lobby Essex MPs in favour of the Councils five unitaries business case?”

**Response from Councillor Lees:**

“As I think Cllr Sell is aware both from the regular party group leader briefings on LGR over recent months and of course from the position he and I have shared at the various full council discussions on the topic, I have consistently for months thought that the Essex County Council proposals for such large new unitary councils would be too distant from residents – much as Essex County Council itself has proven itself to be for years. I am delighted at the prospect implicit in his question that he continues to support my administration’s position on this important question for the future of local services, and hope to be able to count on his and all of his fellow Liberal Democrat votes when I bring the matter back to full Council in September, ahead of the Government’s deadline.

I have of course been in touch with Uttlesford’s three MPs on the matter, though what positions they variously ultimately take will be interesting to see over coming weeks.”