

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT FOR SMPC 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

Sorry I could not give you a written report before your meeting. But, as I will explain, UDC is the focus a serious degree of controversy that delayed me. Last night's Full Council meeting spilled over into much of today and will resume formally tomorrow evening because much of the agenda was abandoned last night owing to running out of time! However:

1. The Council met last night and agreed a Council Tax Requirement of £6,158,684. This results in a District Council Band D Council Tax of £161.61, an increase of £5.00 (3.19%) on the previous year.
2. Airport appeal: This resumed after a half-term week's break. It's expected to come to an end in March. Quite a few councillors sympathised with a message from Brian Ross of SSE read out at last night's UDC Full Council meeting. The message expressed a view that Uttlesford's defence of the nem con planning refusal of airport expansion amounted to accepting the appeal being upheld – in other words STAL could get its permission controlled by a planning condition, BUT GET IT. That's not what my colleagues and I expect of UDC. Some Members – especially amongst the ruling group - seem content with that outcome.
3. A major controversy is attracting national and local controversy. It concerns the Council's plan to invest around £35 million of borrowed money in premises for a company nowhere near this county that is part of the military arms industry. The national and local *Independent* newspapers have run stories identifying the name of the company – that I am not supposed to report to you for commercial confidentiality reasons. You may know that all Stansted's DC's voted against the investment on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

Meanwhile, Oxfam issued a strong statement yesterday attacking UDC and highlighting that the company had supplied equipment that has caused civilian deaths in Yemen.

At last night's Full Council meeting a Stansted resident was treated very badly when attempting to make a public representation to Council. Unpleasant attempts were made by both officers and some Residents for Uttlesford members to "mute" the speaker from being heard and mentioning the company's name. In my opinion, it was an appalling example of attempted censorship of a private person wishing to object to matters that are already in the public domain.

4. The police are continuing to investigate a person(s) at UDC who is/are the cause of UDC's annual accounts still not having been signed off by auditors.
5. Uttlesford is showing traits towards becoming a dysfunctional council that is being distracted from doing what it exists to do – serve local people with local services – by these governance failures and others to a degree that I have never know before is 34 years as a district councillor.

**Cllr Alan Dean for Councillors Melvin Caton, Ayub Khan and Geoffrey Sell**

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2021**