

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE WAYTEMORE ROOM,
BISHOP'S STORTFORD ON TUESDAY,
15 JANUARY 2008 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Woodward (in the Chair).
Councillors S A Bull, Mrs R Cheswright,
N P Clark, P Grethe, Mrs D Hone, M Wood.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors D Andrews, R Beeching, L O Haysey,
J O Ranger.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Will O'Neill	- Head of Community and Cultural Services
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Joy Stevenson	- Interim Scrutiny Officer

459 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors Mrs D L E Hollebon and J J Taylor.

460 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor C Woodward announced that the Chairman,
Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon was recovering in hospital.
Members asked that their good wishes be forwarded to the
Chairman for a speedy recovery.

461 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Hone declared a personal interest in Minute
466 (Health Engagement Panel) by virtue of the fact that

she was a Governor of Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillors M Wood and C Woodward declared personal interests in Minute 467 (Community Strategy Action Plan) by virtue of the fact that they were Members of Parsonage Residents' Association.

RECOMMENDED ITEM

462 TERMS OF REFERENCE - COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services submitted a report detailing the Terms of Reference for the newly formed Community Scrutiny Committee

In noting the Terms of Reference, Members were of the view that it was important to be able to review performance and requested that the Terms of Reference, appended to the report now submitted, be amended to reflect this.

RECOMMENDED – that the word “performance” be inserted after “review” in the first bullet point, (first sentence) of the Terms of Reference appended to the report now submitted.

RESOLVED ITEMS

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463 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon, it was moved and seconded that Councillor C Woodward be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor C Woodward be appointed as Chairman for this meeting.

ACTION464 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was moved and seconded that Councillor C Woodward be appointed as the Vice Chairman for the Civic Year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor C Woodward be appointed as Vice Chairman for the remainder of the Civic Year.

465 PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MINUTES

The Minutes of Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 13 November 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting of Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 13 November 2007 be noted.

466 HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL

The Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services submitted a report concerning the establishment of the Health Engagement Panel. The proposed Terms of Reference for the Panel were attached to the report, now submitted.

In establishing the Panel, Members supported the suggestion by the Leader that no more than five Members be appointed proportionally represented, i.e. four Conservative and one Liberal Democrat.

Members noted that the first meeting of the Health Engagement Panel would need to be convened week commencing 18 February 2008 in order to consider a report on the East Herts Health Strategy.

Councillor N P Clark commented that he was aware that a Health Strategy document was being emailed for the purpose of consultation. He was assured that Members

ACTION

would get the opportunity to comment on the Strategy.

Members supported the establishment of a Health Engagement Panel and approved its Terms of Reference. The need to convene a meeting of the Panel, week commencing 18 February 2008 was noted.

The Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services was requested to seek two further Conservative nominations from the Leader.

RESOLVED – that (A) a Health Engagement Panel be established comprising 5 Councillors;

(B) seats on the Panel be allocated to political groups in accordance with the matrix appended to the report now submitted and that the following Members be appointed in accordance with the wishes of political groups:

Conservative (4) : Councillors S A Bull and Mrs D Hone and two vacancies

Liberal Democrat: (1) : Councillor M Wood

(C) the Terms of Reference for the Health Engagement Panel as now submitted be approved;

(D) the Head of Democratic and Legal Support services be authorised to appoint Members to the vacant seats, in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom these seats have been allocated; and

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(E) the first meeting of the Health Engagement Panel be convened during the week commencing 18 February 2008 and that it be asked to consider a report on the East Herts Health Strategy in order that its findings can be reported directly to the Executive on 1 April 2008.

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467 COMMUNITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report updating Members on the progress made in the delivery of the Community Strategy Action Plan for 2007/08. The Action Plan appended to the report now submitted, highlighted what achievements had been made and the deadlines for ongoing priorities.

Clarification was sought and provided on a number of issues raised by Members. Specifically:-

- Funding issues associated with the LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) in its delivery of the Community Strategy Action Plan across the District.
- Snowley Parade, Bishop's Stortford and the views of the Highways JMP following its meeting on 14 January 2008 concerning development proposals. The need to adopt a cautionary approach in announcing the project was suggested.
- Funding associated with development initiatives to improve town centre economies. The Head of Community and Cultural Services undertook to write to the Member.
- The publication of Service Level Agreements delivered from Bishop's Stortford and Hertford.

DCCS

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DCCS

- The LSP's approach to the "spatial needs of the community" and how this complemented the Council's other policies. The Head of Community and Cultural Services undertook to write to the Member.
- Within the context of Diversionary Activities, whether additional projects were being funded by Hertfordshire County Council.
- The Disabled Property Register recorded "on hold" following a request by Papworth Hospital and process changes in relation to Choice Based Lettings and affordable housing. Members were assured that a monitoring process was in place concerning adaptations carried out.
- The need to review the Meals on Wheels service for vulnerable people. The service was reported as being very poor over the Christmas period.
- The suggestion that the "healthy life style" might be better funded by the PCT.

Members acknowledged the large amount of work undertaken by the voluntary sector in the achievements made within the Action Plan. Members supported a request that a report be submitted to the next Community Scrutiny Committee on 22 April 2008 on the future plans of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress made in delivering the Community Strategy Action Plan for 2007/08 be noted;

(B) the large amount of work undertaken by the voluntary section in the achievements made within the Action Plan be noted; and

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(C) a report on the LSP action plan for 2008/09 be submitted at the first meeting of Community Scrutiny Committee following its agreement.

DCCS

468 LEISURE CONTRACT SPECIFICATION

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report outlining the principles of the leisure tender specification in order to achieve the best possible balance between value for money and a service which would achieve the Council's stated outcomes and priorities. The detail provided in the report now submitted, would provide the foundation for the invitation to bid documents which would be provided to tenderers at the end of January 2008.

The Head of Community and Cultural Services explained that tenderers would be asked to submit one price only as part of their bid, i.e.; either using the existing programmes and charges, or, within the constraints of being within 25% of existing programmes and charges.

Comments were offered and clarification was sought and provided on a number of issues raised by Members. Specifically:-

- The issue of the 25% variation in the programme; levels of flexibility in relation to the tenderers' ability to meet service provision and achieve outcomes within the context of priorities in the Cultural Strategy.
- Castle Hall and the need to promote joint programming with the Rhodes Arts Complex in Bishop's Stortford to interested groups such as the theatre for children and young people.

ACTION

- The amount of flexibility given to prospective tenderers at the pre-tender stage but that the “rules of engagement” must be explicit. It was acknowledged that once the tender had commenced the tenderer could only propose changes by up to 10% each year and then only with the agreement of the Council.
- The reference to the report’s suggestion to an “oversupply of swimming pools” and “gym provision”; was challenged.
- The question of which party would bear the financial risks was raised. It was stated that the contract was written to pass management responsibility and financial risk to the Contractor. Officers would undertake due diligence to ensure that any investment proposals would be scrutinised and challenged with best officer advice.
- The level of capital investment; the Council’s rationale for capital investment in leisure facilities was challenged. It was also challenged whether the list of possible capital projects developed as part of the capital investment proposals should be provided as this might limit the tenderer’s flexibility. It was explained that they were indicative only. The Director explained that the tender document did not commit the Council to any specific capital spend. It would be for the tenderers to convince the Council that any proposals they put forward had a sound financial argument. Broadly speaking this would mean that the investment would
 - Improve the facilities available to residents of East Herts
 - Reduce the revenue costs of running the facilities by at least as much as the loss of interest on the capital sum expended.

ACTION

- The issue of car parking charges was raised.

Members noted and supported the approach and principles as the basis for the specification set out in the report now submitted and requested that Members' comments as detailed, should be submitted to the Executive on 29 January 2008.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be informed that Community Scrutiny Committee (A) notes the facility specific detail as set out in the report now submitted;

(B) supports the approach for each of the three lots together with Members' comments as detailed above; and

(C) supports the principles set out in the report now submitted as the basis for the specification documents to be sent to prospective bidders at the end of January 2008.

469 WORK PROGRAMME 2007/08

The Chief Executive submitted a report detailing the proposed work programme for Community Scrutiny Committee for 2008/09. The Committee requested that the programme for April 2008 be amended by the inclusion of a report on Leisure Performance for 2007 (4th Quarter) and an update on the Local Strategic Plan. Members also requested that the May programme be revised by the inclusion of a progress report on the Meals on Wheels service and a review of the contract.

RESOLVED - that the Work Programme as amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

ACTION

Chairman
Date

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