

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
ON TUESDAY, 25 APRIL 2006

PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (Chairman).  
Councillors H G S Banks, A D Dodd,  
Mrs M H Goldspink, Mrs D L E Hollebon,  
G McAndrew.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors M G Carver, D Clark, A P Jackson,  
M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Philip Thomas	- Interim Executive Director
Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Dave Cooper	- Performance Officer
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Corporate Governance
Ceri Pettit	- Head of Performance
Jackie Sayers	- Scrutiny Officer

807 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of  
Councillors K A Barnes, R N Copping, G L Francis,  
J Hedley, S Newton, G Scrivener, J D Thornton and  
N Wilson.

RESOLVED ITEMSACTION808 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

809 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/2006/2007

The Interim Executive Director submitted a report outlining the Committee's agreed work programme for the remainder of 2005/06 and 2006/07 and criteria for selecting issues for review.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee had considered a work programme for scrutiny at its last meeting. A number of topics had arisen at that meeting which might be suitable for discussion by Policy Development Scrutiny Committee or Performance Scrutiny Committee. A list of these was circulated at the meeting.

A newly created Audit Committee would deal with some of the work of the Performance Scrutiny Committee and further details of this had been received from central government.

The Committee was invited to consider the scrutiny work that it would like to undertake. It selected a number of issues for review.

RESOLVED - that the following items be selected for review:

- (A) designing out crime with the Herts Constabulary being invited to attend the meeting;
- (B) the work of the Youth Council with Members of the Youth Council being invited to attend;

ACTION

- (C) Community Voice meetings;
- (D) Local Strategic Partnership;
- (E) Sustainable Transport/Strategy including the Bishop's Stortford Transport Plan;
- (F) the budget process.

810 ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees submitted an annual report on scrutiny for approval by the Committee

Members considered the report and decided it should be submitted to the Council for approval subject to an amendment to show that the Policy Development Committee had made suggestions for improvements in services and to the inclusion of current plans for the future work programmes.

RESOLVED - that the annual report be approved for submission to the Council meeting on 17 May 2006 subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting.

811 REVISIONS TO CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report on amendments to the Council's Constitution. These had arisen from the regular review of the constitution and the Member Challenge meetings which had considered it. Further amendments suggested by a team of six Members set up to consider the constitution were also circulated.

Members discussed the changes. They noted a Human Resources Committee was to be created to consider the Council's policies relating to human resources and that the creation of an Audit Committee was being strongly recommended by central government.

ACTION

Various drafting amendments were pointed out.

The Committee agreed topics for discussion should be supported by at least two Members and seven days should be allowed for response to matters under consideration by panels in connection with Executive decisions. It agreed members of the public should be allowed to speak at meetings of Scrutiny Committees by invitation. It noted that there was a proposal to abolish the Call-In Scrutiny Committee and thought Policy Development Scrutiny would be a suitable body to consider decisions which were the subject of the call in procedure.

Some Members expressed concern at the loss of the Call-In Scrutiny Committee which had been chaired by a Member of the Opposition in the past. These Members expressed a belief that it was good practice to share the scrutiny chairing roles between the parties of the Council. There was also some concern at the reduction of Members on the Licensing and Development Control Committees.

Members discussed present arrangements for the Development Control Committee whereby Members of that Committee could relinquish the right to vote on an application if they wished to speak as a Ward Member on it. The Committee also agreed that an issue tracker was needed in addition to the forward plan and work programme for the Executive and Executive Members and Ward Councillors should have the right of reply to petitions at Council meetings.

The Committee thought Ward Members already had access to funds for local improvement schemes and the proposal in paragraph 3.1(B) of the report submitted to the meeting was not necessary.

It was noted that titles of officers might be changed after the new Chief Executive took up her post in June.

The Committee welcomed the introduction of substitutes at

ACTION

more Committee meetings. It was also in favour of the appointment of Vice-Chairman and Deputy Co-ordinators.

It was noted that the Constitution could be amended further after the annual Council meeting.

RESOLVED - that the Council be informed that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee considers the Constitution should be amended to provide a revised decision making process based on the Member Challenge meetings as set out in the report submitted to the meeting subject to the following:

- (A) Each request for a new agenda item should be supported by two Members;
- (B) Delete paragraph 3.1 B;
- (C) Retain the current Constitution definition of a “Key Decision” and do not mention a sum of money. Member Panels working with Executive Members to have four diarised meetings a year with other meetings as necessary being virtual meetings. The quorum for these meetings to be three;
- (D) Lack of response from a panel Member to be interpreted as acceptance of the recommendation. Seven working days to be allowed for a response;
- (E) Each Member Panel working with Executive Members to comprise five Members and have a Co-ordinator and a Deputy Co-ordinator, the latter being responsible for ensuring attendance at meetings. Proportionality of Members to be achieved over the total number of Panel Members rather than on each Panel;
- (F) An example of a report from a Panel working with an Executive Member to be circulated at full Council for information;

ACTION

(G) Matters which would normally have been referred to the Call-In Scrutiny Committee to be considered by the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee;

(H) Numbers of Members on Committees to be as follows:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>
Development Control	16
Licensing	12
Policy Development Scrutiny	12
Performance Scrutiny	12
Human Resources	7
Audit	7
Standards (District Councillors)	3

(I) Unnamed Member substitutes to be allowed on the following Committees:

Performance Scrutiny  
 Policy Development Scrutiny  
 Human Resources  
 Audit

(J) All Committees with the exception of Standards to have a Vice Chairman;

(K) The provision of an Issue Tracker in addition to the Executive's Forward Plan and Work Programme to be given a higher priority; and

(L) The right of reply to petitions to be extended to Executive and Ward Members at Council meetings.

ACTION

812 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

A report was submitted by the Interim Executive Director on the Corporate Strategic Plan 2006/07 which included a revised set of priorities and key objectives. The aim of this was to achieve a clearer focus in defining objectives and increasing challenge of performance.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee would be responsible for monitoring the plan.

The Committee considered the draft plan and objectives and agreed that they should be supported. The Committee recommended a number of improvements to the text subject to the text improvements suggested.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee considers the draft Corporate Strategic Plan for 2006/07 including the revised set of corporate priorities and key objectives should be supported, subject to the text improvements suggested.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Chairman	.....
Date	.....