

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
24 APRIL 2007 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (In the Chair)
Councillors P R Ballam, H G S Banks, S A Bull.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor T Milner, P A Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Phillipa Brent-Isherwood	- Community Project – Team Leader
Ceri Pettit	- Head of Strategic Direction (shared) and Performance Manager
Jackie Sayers	- Scrutiny Officer

722 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors D R Atkins, A L Burlton, Mrs D L E Hollebon, L R Pinnell, D Richards and N Wilson.

723 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor J O Ranger explained that the Chairman, Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon, had undergone surgery. She had requested that her thanks for all the hard work achieved through the year be recorded. She had thanked the Scrutiny Officer and the Committee Secretary and the many Officers who attended Performance Scrutiny

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Committee. The Chairman had commented that she had enjoyed her time on Performance Scrutiny Committee and wished good luck in the forthcoming elections and to those who were not running for election.

Councillor J O Ranger, on behalf of Members, thanked Councillor H G S Banks for his work on the Committee.

724 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor S A Bull declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 728 - Community Voice Review Action Plan by virtue of the fact that he was Chairman of Buntingford Community Voice.

RESOLVED ITEMSACTION725 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Members were requested to appoint a Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor J O Ranger be appointed as Chairman for this meeting.

726 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting of Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 27 February 2007, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

727 ANNUAL REPORT

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report in association with the respective Chairmen of Policy Development and Performance Scrutiny Committees on achievements during the 2006/07 civic year. The report summarised the activities of both committees during the year and detailed proposed

ACTION

plans for the coming year.

Councillor J O Ranger thanked the Scrutiny Officer for preparing such a useful document. Councillor J O Ranger sought confirmation that the format would be given a professional finish. It was hoped that the Annual Report could be given a wide circulation and copies made to new Members.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted; and

(B) the Annual Report be given a wide circulation and specifically to new Members of the Council.

CE

728 COMMUNITY VOICE REVIEW ACTION PLAN

The Director of Community and Customer Services submitted a report seeking endorsement of the Community Voice Review Action Plan. The Community Projects Team Leader commented that following on from the review, Community Voice was seen as a model of good practice in comparative terms. The Action Plan had been produced following a request by the Executive.

A Member commented on the use of the newly proposed “Town Name Area Community Voice” and of possible confusion this may cause. It was noted that this new name ensured that rural areas were engaged in the consultation process. Members supported the inclusion of a map showing the areas covered by each Community Voice meeting. This was felt to be useful especially to new Members.

The Community Projects Team Leader assured Members that the timeframes within the Action Plan were achievable.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Action Plan be agreed;

(B) a map showing the areas covered be included in the publicity notices; and

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(C) progress in September 2007 and February 2008 be monitored by the Committee.

729 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive submitted a report detailing the work of Performance Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2006/07 Civic Year.

Councillor J O Ranger commented that the new Committee would wish to establish its own programme. It was noted that a joint meeting with Policy Development Scrutiny would take place on 22 May 2007 when Members could do so. A training session would also be held in advance of the meeting. Councillor J O Ranger suggested that there was a need to review fewer items more thoroughly.

The Chief Executive referred to a review which was being undertaken to consider improvements to the scrutiny function and its wider remit outside of the Council. The Government's White Paper proposed wider powers for scrutiny of external organisations. Members discussed how this might be used effectively.

Health Scrutiny was an issue which the Council could pursue through the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

730 BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLANS: PROGRESS REPORT- INFORMATION REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive detailing the progress made in implementing the Action Plans arising from Best Value Reviews and the Leisure and Recreation Services Improvement Plan. The Head of Strategic Direction (shared) and Performance Manager confirmed that with the exception of Housing, which would be monitored regularly, all had been completed.

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RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

731 2006/07 EAST HERTS CPA IMPROVEMENT PLAN –
INFORMATION REPORT

A report was submitted by the Leader of the Council giving a six-month progress report on the Council's Improvement Plan and which summarised the results of the 2006 Use of Resources and Direction of Travel judgements. The Head of Strategic Direction (shared) and Performance Manager confirmed that the Council was moving in a positive direction of travel and that progress was being made in rolling forward and developing the CPA 2007/08 Improvement Plan.

The CPA Improvement Plan for 2007/08 would be submitted to Policy Development Scrutiny in the new civic year.

It was noted that Member training was in place and it was hoped that this would be well attended. The Chief Executive explained that training would initially focus on the induction process, followed by how the Council and Committees work, the Code of Conduct and specific training for Members of Development Control and Licensing.

Officers would try to ensure that training was held as close to an event as possible. On the issue of Licensing, a Member commented that there was a requirement to sit on three hearings before being allowed to be a part of the decision making process.

Councillor J O Ranger referred to ward profile information in the form of a hard copy diary insert which had been circulated some time ago to Members which he felt was useful. The Head of Strategic Direction (shared) and Performance Manager confirmed that ward profiles and census data would be updated on the website and made available.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

ACTION

The meeting closed at 8.10. pm.

Chairman
Date

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