

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY, 14 APRIL 2009 AT
7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (Chairman).
Councillors D Andrews, R N Copping, R Gilbert,
G Lawrence, J Mayes, P A Ruffles (substitute for
Councillor R H Beeching), J Warren, M Wood.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor D Clark

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Lorna Georgiou	- Performance and Policy Co-ordinator
Philip Hamberger	- Programme Director of Change
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services

713 APOLOGIES

ACTION

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors R H Beeching and N Wilson. It was noted that
Councillor P A Ruffles was in attendance as a substitute for
Councillor R H Beeching.

714 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that as he would not be standing
for Chairman of the Committee for the next Civic Year this
would be his last meeting in the chair. He thanked
Members and Officers for their support. Members and
Officers also thanked him for his work as Chairman.

RESOLVED ITEMS

715 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 February 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

716 CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK (C3W) UPDATE

The Programme Director of Change submitted a report on progress on the Changing the Way We Work Programme (C3W). There had been some slippage on some dates and details of these were given. This would not cause a change to the expected finish date. He reported that there had been good progress overall including plans for work on the reception area at Wallfields and the ground floor. Consultation with staff had been completed and a rating given for responses. The consultants used previously would return to refine seating plans for Wallfields. Details of other work in hand including telephony were given.

Members asked a number of questions on the programme. In response to these, the Programme Director of Change explained that an ATM machine would be installed at Wallfields to take payments from the public. Officers would be visiting Staffordshire to see an example of joint use of reception facilities between the Police and a local authority. He gave information on work on the website to help the public access services without the help of staff (self-service). In addition, a period of staff sickness which had affected IT development for the programme had been resolved.

Members also asked about provision for election preparations and parking. The Programme Director said space would be made available for election administration and changes to parking and travel patterns were being explored.

Councillor D Clark asked when the business case for the programme would be available and why the staff survey

ACTION

had shown such a small number of staff who thought the programme would be effective. The Programme Director said the business case would be prepared now a decision had been taken on the future of the offices in Bishop's Stortford. He thought the staff, who did not think the programme would be effective, had not experienced similar ways of working and that successful implementation in the initial service would help allay their concerns.

He confirmed that plans for improvements to the Council Chamber were also part of the programme and were progressing well. He undertook to give a written response to the Chairman of the Development Control Committee concerning introducing Electronic Document and Record Management Systems (EDRMS) in Development Control as requested.

Members decided to note the progress on C3W and thank the Programme Director for his work.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted and the Programme Director of Change be thanked for the report.

717 REPORT FROM PLAIN ENGLISH AND REPORT WRITING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman of the Plain English and Report Writing Task and Finish Group reported on the work and recommendations of the Group. She explained a guide to plain English had been delayed for further consideration by the Group but a revised report template had been prepared for adoption. The Group had decided not to recommend trying to obtain the Crystal Mark for Council documents because of the expense of it. However, it had received guidance and information from internal and external sources, particularly the Plain English Campaign and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

ACTION

Members decided to commend the recommendations of the Group to the Executive and consider the guide to plain English at a later date.

RESOLVED - that (A) the agenda report template as appended to the report now submitted be recommended to the Executive for adoption; DIS

(B) Members of the Report Writing and Plain English Task and Finish Group and supporting Officers be thanked for their work and

(C) the East Herts Plain English Guide be agreed by the Task and Finish Group and considered by the Committee at a future meeting. DIS/AF

718 REPORT OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman of the Performance Indicators Task and Finish Group presented the report of the Group. The Group had sought to ensure that performance indicators (PIs) were actively being used and contributing towards meeting the Council's priorities and objectives. The Group had made recommendations on which PIs should be considered by the three Scrutiny Committees and the format of the reports.

The Committee decided to support the recommendations in the report and commend it to the Executive. It was also agreed to thank the members of the Group for their work, in particular Councillor N Clark.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Committee approves the recommendations in the report of the Task and Finish Group be supported;

(B) the Executive be informed that the report is commended to them by the Committee; and

ACTION

(C) Members of the Performance Indicators Task and Finish Group be thanked for their work and in particular Councillor N Clark.

719 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09 AND CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROGRAMME

The Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee submitted a report on reviewing its work programme through the Annual Report for 2008/09 and planning the future work programme for 2009/10.

The Annual Report contained a summary of the work of each Scrutiny Committee, an evaluation based on feedback from Members and outline plans for the year ahead. Workshops had been held with Members to consider past and future work. The Scrutiny Officer reported that some updates to the draft report as submitted to the Committee had been made in the light of Member feedback and events at other recent Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Councillor D Clark raised a query on the wording of changes to the Constitution as presented in the Annual Report. She believed it should refer to consideration of budget "proposals" not "processes" by the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee. She said she had also raised this with the Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services. The Scrutiny Officer undertook to make sure this was accurate in the final version of the report.

The Committee decided to note the Annual Report and add some items to the work programme as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the draft version of the Scrutiny Annual report 2008/09 be noted;

ACTION

(B) the proposed Work Programme for 2009/10 be approved with the addition of the following items:

- Results of Place Survey (to the first practicable meeting after their release);
- Targets for all Performance Indicators (not just National Indicators)(to be included in Out-turns and Targets report at next meeting);
- Corporate Procurement Strategy (July 2009);
- Partnership protocol; governance and risk management when working with other agencies (summer 2009); and

(C) all Members of Scrutiny Committees be invited to the meeting on 19 May 2009 which would consider Service Plan Monitoring (October 2008 to March 2009) and 2008/09 Out-turns and Targets.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Chairman
Date