

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
12 NOVEMBER 2013, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Abbott (Chairman)
Councillors W Ashley, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, M Pope, K Warnell,
B Wrangles and J Wyllie

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors L Haysey, P Moore, M Newman,
J Ranger, P Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby and
N Symonds

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Karl Chui	- Performance Monitoring Officer
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Marian Langley Ceri Pettit	- Scrutiny Officer - Corporate Planning and Performance Manager
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services

349 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence was submitted from Councillor P

Ballam and C Rowley. It was noted that Councillor R Beeching was substituting for Councillor Ballam.

350 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

351 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman was pleased to see so many attending and welcomed other Members of the Council to the meeting.

352 CIL (COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY): THE POSITION IN EAST HERTS

The Head of Planning and Building Control gave a presentation updating Members on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Members were advised that the Council had yet to make a decision on whether to adopt a CIL and that the first step in the process, was to ensure that the Council had in place, a recognised District Plan. The Head of Planning and Building Control explained what a CIL was, what it tried to achieve and how this affected other funding streams such as Section 106 Agreements and the New Homes Bonus.

The Head of Planning and Building Control explained that developing a strategy for a CIL, should the Council wish to progress it, was a highly complicated process and that, once the District Plan was in place, then it was about identifying an infrastructure the Council wanted to deliver in relation to that District Plan. The complications of finding the right financial balance to encourage private developers to come forward were recognised, together with the restrictions on which funding streams could be used to secure development.

The Head of Planning and Building Control explained the steps in the process in terms of producing a preliminary draft

charging schedule, what this was and how this worked. This would then be sent out for consultation and independent examination. He reiterated that once the District Plan had been submitted for consultation, the feedback would be analysed and used to cost out a CIL. It was noted that the Council was not obliged to proceed with a CIL.

Councillor L Haysey sought clarification on the percentage calculation of the CIL awarded to Councils bearing in mind the requirement that Towns and Parishes should receive 25%. The Head of Planning and Building Control acknowledged there was a need to find out what Towns and Parishes were trying to achieve in their areas but that that this issue needed further clarification from the Government.

Councillor E Buckmaster suggested that the Council should seek within its CIL specification, whatever was necessary to fulfil the needs of any large scale future development. The Head of Planning and Building Control explained that the Council could not seek to fund the same infrastructure from both a CIL and Section 106 agreement, i.e. not for the same purposes. He further explained the difficulties associated with producing a District Plan up to the year 2031 including the difficulties faced with costing infrastructure needs so far into the future.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching regarding funding schemes via Section 106 Agreements and the New Homes Bonus, the Head of Planning and Building Control explained how the process worked in terms of large scale infrastructure developments and how localised infrastructure could be funded. He also told Members that from April 2015 it would not be possible to 'pool' more than five separate Section 106 funds together for a single infrastructure purpose.

Councillor M Newman expressed concern at the possibility of losing control over local infrastructure if persuaded to do so by the County Council to progress a more strategic scheme via a CIL.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope regarding the

menu of charging, the Head of Planning and Building Control explained that the schedule of charges could be reviewed and would need to be from time to time given the timescales involved.

Councillor J Ranger sought clarification on the percentages awarded to rural areas if the Council decided not to progress a CIL. The Head of Planning and Building Control referred to the uses of Section 106 Agreements and the development of Neighbourhood Plans to fund development.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked the Head of Planning and Building Control for his presentation.

The Committee received the presentation.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

353 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the future work programme for Environment Scrutiny Committee for 2013/14 to 2014/15, the detail of which had been set out in Essential Reference Paper “B”.

Councillor J Wyllie suggested that in the light of the performance indicator review recently undertaken, Members might wish to include temporary road closures and their impact on service users as a subject for scrutiny. This was supported.

The Committee approved the work programme, as amended and as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the work programme, as amended and now detailed, be approved.

354 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY HEALTHCHECK AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER 2013

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and

Community Services submitted a report on the performance of key indicators for Environment Scrutiny Committee for the period August to September 2013, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted and within the attached Essential Reference Papers.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager explained that two targets showed a declining trend:

- EHPI 2.1d (Planning Enforcement: Initial Site Inspections; and
- EHPI 2.2 (45) Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections' of household waste.

Councillor R Beeching expressed concern at the concave design of the blue-topped bins especially in the wet.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager referred to Essential Reference Paper "D" set out in the report now submitted and sought Members' views on whether they would want information to be set out in the format indicated in future reports to Committee. The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager explained the features of the "Dashboard" Analysis.

Councillor E Buckmaster supported the "dashboard" format but suggested that the word "value" be amended to "achieved".

Councillor J Wyllie suggested that the display of so much information might confuse the public. Concerns were expressed concerning the display of the "best and worst performing indicators" in terms of how the data might be misinterpreted.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager explained that if there were red and amber indicators shown, then this might help to show the information more clearly.

In summary, Members felt that there was too much information which might cause confusion, with all the features

as shown and there was general support for some of the features to be utilised.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the reported performance for the period August to September 2013 be received; and

(B) Members' comments regarding the Dashboard Module as set out in Essential Reference "D" of the report now submitted be noted.

355 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REVIEW

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report, following a request by the Executive on 4 June 2013, to review the relevance of the Council's performance indicators and to establish whether any new measures needed to be introduced to support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

Members noted the recommendations of the Review Team, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" (paragraph 1.5) of the report now submitted and agreed that these be incorporated into the 2013/14 Performance Indicator Estimate and Future Targets report for consideration by the Executive in March 2014 in preparation for 2014/15.

RESOLVED – that the recommendations of the Review Team, as set out in the report now submitted be incorporated into the 2013/14 Performance Indicator Estimate and Future Targets report for consideration by the Executive in March 2014 in preparation for 2014/15.

356 SERVICE PLANS MONITORING APRIL 2013 - SEPTEMBER 2013

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report summarising the Council's achievements against its priorities for 2013/14.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager provided a summary of the 29 actions within 2013/14 Services Plans including those which were either off target, had their completion dates revised, been suspended or deleted.

Councillor J Wyllie referred to Essential Reference Paper Ci (“Dashboard Analysis”) stating that with less information, this was more clearly understood.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked the Corporate Planning and Performance Manager and her team for all their efforts.

The Committee received the progress report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman
Date