

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
ON TUESDAY 8 JUNE 2004 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (Chairman).  
Councillors K Barnes, R.N. Copping, G Francis,  
G McAndrew, D.E.Mayes, D Richards, T K H  
Robertson, A. Schweizer, J D Thornton, N Wilson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor D Clark, R Parker and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Miranda Steward	- Executive Director
Rachel Stopard	- Executive Director
Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Phillipa Brent-Isherwood	- Graduate Management Trainee
Shirley Clark	- Assistant Director (Direct and Contract Services)
Simon Drinkwater	- Assistant Director (Law and Control)
Will O'Neill	- Head of Community Development and Housing
Mary Orton	- Assistant Director (Policy and Performance)
Ceri Pettit	- Head of Performance
Claire Potts	- Planning Officer
Paul Pullin	- Acting Head of Economic Development

67 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of A J Cain, A Dodd, Mrs M H Goldspink, Mrs D L E Hollebon and H Penson.

68 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee passed a resolution pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public during consideration of the business referred to in Minute 75 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

69 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillor declared a personal and prejudicial interest as follows and left the meeting during consideration and voting on it.

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>By virtue of:</u>
A Schweizer	M75 Housing Options Review	Not stated.

RESOLVED ITEMS

ACTION

70 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2004 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71 “PROGRESSING A SHARED VISION” - THE DRAFT REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

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The Assistant Director (Policy and Performance) reported that the Regional Economic Strategy for East of England had been published recently. Copies had been circulated

ACTION

to Members of the Committee

A presentation was given at the meeting. This showed how the strategy fitted in with others for the region. Goals for the strategy included skills, competitiveness, innovation, quality of life, social inclusion, internal transport, information technologies and environmental protection. A broad profile of East Herts was given with details of work patterns, travel, qualifications and earnings, type of employment, training skills gaps, higher education establishments and East Herts Council projects. Employment land issues and planning policies in East Herts were also considered.

East Herts Council had been invited to give their views on the strategy and Members suggested a number of comments which should be passed to the Executive on skills, supporting businesses and ensuring communities were preserved during periods of economic and housing growth.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee considers the following comments should be made on the Draft Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England:

- (a) skills shortages had been noted in the District in the areas of numeracy and literacy and formal keyboard skills;
- (b) the District Council are concerned at the difficulty in finding a balance between promoting economic development and affordable housing, and preserving the environment but consider every effort should be made to achieve this balance and it is recommended that preserving communities should be promoted as part of sustainability;

ACTION

- (c) it is recommended that Business Start Up Schemes should be extended to cover the first five years of a business's life;
- (d) the Stansted Harlow Sub-region Section of the report (page 75) the Committee comments that rural villages are primarily dormitories for London workers but in East Herts only 13% of the workforce commute to London;
- (e) the Committee strongly supports the statement on p43 of the EEDA report that rural businesses and the rural community need to be engaged in developing appropriate employment opportunities in villages including the reuse of redundant farm buildings.

72 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Assistant Director (Law and Control) submitted a report on a revised procurement strategy for East Herts Council. This set guidelines for purchasing of goods and supplies and contracts for works and services as part of the Best Value Action Plan following the review in 2003.

Members considered the strategy and decided to recommend it for approval to the Executive subject to the addition of the promotion of joint commissioning by the Corporate Procurement Strategy Group.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee considers the procurement strategy submitted in Appendix A of the report before the Committee should be approved subject to the addition of 'Promote Joint Commissioning' to page 10 after 'The Corporate Procurement Strategy Group'.

ACTION73 PARKING ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES

The Assistant Director (Direct and Contract Services) submitted a report on parking enforcement guidelines for the management of parking when it was regulated by East Herts Council.

East Herts Council was seeking authorisation from Herts County Council to undertake the regulation of on-street parking within the District. The submission to the County Council had to include certain information on enforcement. In addition, early consultation on the location and operation of controlled parking zones required further information on key issues relating to enforcement.

Guidelines were given for staff dealing with appeals against parking charge notices and issuing notices.

Members considered the guidelines and decided to recommend them to the Executive for approval subject to minor drafting amendments.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee considers the parking enforcement guidelines submitted in Appendix A of the report before the Committee should be approved subject to drafting amendments noted at the meeting.

74 FORWARD PLAN FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee Chairman submitted a Forward Plan for the work of the Committee. The Chairman suggested an additional item for the next meeting on policy aspects of development control in rural areas and Members agreed to this. He explained that the report on energy efficiency in July would cover the subject in broad terms and include details of what the Council could do itself to contribute to energy saving and to set a good example.

ACTION

RESOLVED - that the Forward Plan for the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee as set out in Appendix C of the report submitted be approved as amended.

75 HOUSING OPTIONS REVIEW

Councillor R. Parker, Executive Member (Community) attended the meeting for this item.

The Assistant Director (Policy and Performance) submitted a report presenting the findings of an officer group set up to investigate the options for delivering housing advice/homelessness and related housing services after the expiry of the current service contracts on 31 March 2005. The existing structure was based on arrangements before the Council's housing stock was transferred to Housing Associations.

Options were considered on register and allocations policy; independent housing advice; homelessness service; hostels; piper alarms; and home improvement agency.

Other service areas the Council provided included housing strategy, housing needs assessment, social housing development, supporting people, private sector housing assistance and enforcement.

Members considered future arrangements for the housing service and made a number of comments on them for consideration by the Executive.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Committee had considered the housing options review and would relay comments to the meeting on 22 June 2004.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.