

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE  
WAYTEMORE ROOM, THE  
CAUSEWAY, BISHOP'S STORTFORD  
ON TUESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2004 AT  
7.30 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon (Chairman).  
Councillors P R Ballam, S A Bull, N Burdett,  
E J Cain, A D Dodd, R Gilbert, A M Graham,  
J Hedley, D E Mayes, S Newton, J O Ranger,  
J P Warren.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Miranda Steward	- Executive Director
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Simon Hawkins	- Performance Officer
Mary Orton	- Assistant Director (Policy and Performance)
Ceridwen Pettit	- Head of Performance
Bernard Perry	- Assistant Director (Human Resources)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors A P Jackson and M Wood.  
Keith Williams, Hertfordshire Highways

323 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of  
Councillors G McAndrew, D Richards and L R Pinnell.

324 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor A D Dodd declared a personal interest in the  
matter referred to at Minute 326 – Highways Maintenance

Issues, in that he was a Member of the Highways Joint Member Panel.

### RESOLVED ITEMS

### ACTION

#### 325 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2004 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 326 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE ISSUES

Following a request by Members, an officer from Hertfordshire County Council updated Members on the functions and performance of the Highways Maintenance Service.

The report detailed:-

- areas of responsibility
- staffing and resources
- Budget resources
- Policy Framework
- Service standards
- Street lighting
- Winter Maintenance
- Cleaning of signs, bus stops and bollards
- Grass cutting
- Service Statistics - Performance Management
- Public Complaints
- Forward Programme
- The role of the Joint Member Panel

Members raised a number of queries in relation to:-

- Signs and “paraphernalia” etc left following works undertaken by a contractor
- Obstruction of signs by hedgerows and the dangers to the public
- Cleaning of signs (especially on heavily used roads)

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- and road spray)
- The promptness in responding to complaints
  - Pothole repairs and the cost effectiveness of temporary vs permanent fillings
  - Maintaining and monitoring road condition standards following the completion of major housing developments.
  - Gully emptying and reviewing the frequency levels where appropriate

A Member sought reassurance from Hertfordshire Highways, that grass along the A1250 Bishop's Stortford, would be cut next year.

The Officer from Hertfordshire Highways commented on the success of a tour of the County by Hertfordshire County Council Members. East Herts Members were asked whether they would wish to take part in a similar tour of the district in an effort to identify specific problems or issues requiring further attention. Members welcomed the suggestion.

RESOLVED – that Hertfordshire Highways liaise with appropriate District Members and officers concerning arranging a tour of the District at some future date.

ACS

327 YOUTH SHELTER

The Assistant Director (Policy and Performance) submitted a report providing an update in relation to £2m funding which had been made available by Government Offices. The Assistant Director confirmed that East Herts was not eligible for this funding as East Herts was not considered to be a “deprived area”. Alternative funding in the sum of £120,000 (for a three year period) was however, available for community related needs including the provision of youth shelters.

It was noted that East Herts Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had been involved in the provision of three

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Youth Shelter projects across the district at Watton at Stone, Hertford Heath and Parsonage Lane, Bishop's Stortford. The Hertford Heath shelter had recently been resited, following feedback from local residents.

The Assistant Director stressed the need for community involvement and input on any suggestion in relation to the provision and location of a Youth Shelter. A Member sought feedback in relation to provision of Youth Shelters and possibly of Anti-Social Behaviour.

The Assistant Director reassured Members that Youth Shelters themselves were not the cause of Anti-Social Behaviour and that there was a need to foster good relationships with the Police and other community based organisations. She commented that the County Council was currently experiencing recruitment difficulties in relation to the employment of a Youth Worker.

A Member commented on the recent closure of a Youth Club in Braughing and of attempts to find alternative provision, and agreed to discuss the matter further with the Assistant Director.

RESOLVED – that the report be received, and that officers ensure that in terms of new build, the “Youth Aspect” always be given consideration in relation to Section 106 negotiations.

### 328 BEST VALUE REVIEW ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Leader of the Council submitted an Executive Summary of the key findings of the Best Value Review of Organisational Development. The full report and operational improvement plan was attached to the report, now submitted.

The Executive Director explained that the aim of the review, was to identify current organisational values and its culture to assess whether they delivered the Council's

ACTION

corporate vision and priorities and how they contributed to the organisation's development. As such, the review had been based on the key organisational findings which had emerged from the Peer Review, CPA and the recent MORI staff survey.

The Review Team concentrated on how staffing management practices impacted on organisational development, notwithstanding the role of Members in terms of strategic direction and as a conduit for constituents.

The definition of Organisational Development was explained together with how the Review had been managed through four phases of activity, with due regard to the principles of Best Value. These were:

- clarifying the organisational values we aspire to and identifying the gap between our aspirations and our current culture;
- assessing the extent to which our systems, processes and policies support the organisational values and determining options for change;
- structure and capacity of Human Resources (HR) to ensure that it supports improving performance and continuous change; and
- competency and skills within East Herts Council.

The aim of the review was explained and the need to foster a culture of mutual respect and trust between management and staff, as the Council aimed to progress towards excellence in terms of a CPA rating.

It was noted that staff had been involved in the evolution of values and were aware of the need to "own" those values, as well as sharing them from a corporate viewpoint and embed them within the ethos of the organisation.

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Methods of working and reward were outlined, the need to develop a skills framework for staff, and the need to continue to look “outside” East Herts Council in both the public and private sectors, to compare best practice and learn from others. The aim being to address the needs of the individual and customer service provision.

In order to meet the Council’s priorities, it was necessary to ensure that staff had the right skills and competencies before a skills framework could be formed. To support this, it was also considered important to investigate and develop training opportunities available to Members, including the need to develop role descriptions and in establishing what training Members felt they needed to help them in their roles.

Key recommendations emerging from each phase of the review were set out in the report. Of particular concern to Members, was the number of competencies set out in the report. It was suggested that these appeared to be excessive and should be reduced in order to become an achievable goal.

The report was debated at length and specifically in relation to competencies, performance related pay, job evaluations, recruitment and retention and requests for feedback from staff in relation to the publication of “Our Values”.

The Executive Director agreed to liaise with the Assistant Director (Communications and Customer Services) on the issue of staff feedback in relation to “Our Values”.

The Committee agreed that the Executive be advised of its comments, as now detailed.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked all concerned for their input in producing this detailed and informative report.

ACTION

RESOLVED - that (A) the Executive be advised that, whilst Performance Scrutiny Committee supported the report in the main, further consideration should be given to reducing the number and content of the competencies detailed in the report to levels which were more realistically achievable; and

ALC/APP

(B) the Review Team take the comment set out in (A) above on board and address this as part of Action 28 (in the Action Plan), which related to the implementation of the competency framework.

ED(RO)

329 FORWARD PLAN

The Assistant Director (Policy and Performance) submitted an updated Forward Plan in relation to the work to be undertaken by Performance Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.53 pm.