

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
 PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
 WAYTEMORE ROOM, THE
 CAUSEWAY, BISHOP'S STORTFORD
 ON TUESDAY, 7 DECEMBER, 2004 AT
 7.30 PM

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors M R Alexander, N C Poulton,
 Jonathan Free (East of England Regional
 Assembly).

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Miranda Steward	- Executive Director
Rachel Stopard	- Executive Director
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Contracts
Shirley Clark	- Assistant Director (Direct and Contract Services)
Alaine Clarke	- Research and Information Officer
Dave Cooper	- Performance Officer
Sara Mellor	- Recycling Officer
Mary Orton	- Assistant Director (Policy and Performance)
Ceridwen Pettit	- Head of Performance
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co-ordinator

435 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A M Graham and G McAndrew.

436 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A D Dodd declared a personal interest in Minute 439 - Best Value Review of Environmental Stewardship, in that he was a Hertfordshire County Council Member.

RESOLVED ITEMSACTION437 MINUTES

In respect of Minute 326 (Highways Maintenance Issues) - it was agreed that Councillor A D Dodd's comment on the success of the tour be reflected in the minutes, and not, as stated by "an officer from Hertfordshire Highways".

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meetings held on 26 October, as amended and 8 November 2004, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

438 BULKY WASTE SERVICE REVIEW

Following a request by Members in July 2004, on the issue of fly tipping, the Head of Contract Services submitted a report which reviewed East Herts' charging policy for the bulky waste collection service.

It was noted that under the Environment Protection Act 1990 – Part 2, the Council could charge for any item of household waste that did not fit or could not be fitted into a receptacle for household waste.

In terms of charging options, 26 local authorities had been surveyed. All charges were based on the number of units rather than the time taken to remove an item. The survey results revealed that East Hert's charges were slightly

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higher than others, but similar to those charged by other Hertfordshire Authorities.

Of particular concern was the number of collection requests which were then cancelled (450), and the administrative impact this had on the service. It was suggested that a cancellation fee of £5.00 be introduced to encourage customers to consider whether they really wanted the service, before booking.

Members raised a number of issues in relation to:-

- the speed of collection;
- access and the abilities of residents in being able to move bulky items to a specified collection point (especially those who were vulnerable and less able bodied);
- operation of a replacement fridge scheme;
- contributing factors in relation to fly-tipping;
- restrictions imposed by household waste sites and the disposal of bulky items; and
- whether an £18 fee for bulky items was an appropriate sum.

The Committee agreed that its views on the Bulky Waste Service, as now detailed, be conveyed to the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the Executive be advised of the Committee's views that:

(A) the Council introduce a booking cancellation fee of £5.00 for a trial period of one year;

(B) the current charging framework be retained, subject to annual inflation increases;

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subject to annual inflation increases;

(C) the Assistant Director (Direct and Contract Services) seek to influence the County Council with respect to policies for accepting bulky waste at Civic Amenity Sites.

ACS

(D) the issue of the £5.00 cancellation fee be included in the annual review of Fees and Charges by the Head of Contract Services.

ACS

439 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The Executive Director (Head of Paid Service) submitted a report detailing the results of the Best Value Review of Environmental Stewardship and the Action Plan which had resulted from the Review. Essentially the Review set out to reduce the detrimental effects the environment could have on the quality of residents' lives.

Four sub groups had been created to concentrate on specific areas of the review. These were:

- East Herts' historic, rural and "new build" environment;
- Working with other agencies to encourage and facilitate the use of environmentally friendly forms of transport;
- Land and habitat management; and
- Considering how residential areas look and "feel".

Two elements of the scope relating to communications / information and encouraging / promoting good environmental performance / practice through the concept of sustainable development were considered to be overarching to the themes.

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The Review had been undertaken in the context of the principles of best value in terms of consultation, comparison, challenge and competition.

Officers and Members of the Review Steering Group, outlined the specific areas of their responsibility in terms of the Review process. Each scope of the Review had highlighted key recommendations which formed the basis of the Action Plan.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues, specifically:-

- the re-use of “grey” water - plans to prevent excessive use and waste;
- Bio-diversity plans action (BAP’s) – in terms of consistency;
- The need to protect areas of life via Bio-diversity surveys;
- Standardisation of waste receptacles;
- Graffiti removal, the use of jet washing equipment and the need to review the Council’s policy on this issue (and especially in relation to the removal of chewing gum);
- Weed control, the use of pesticides and the need for this to be physically removed from pavements and guttering;
- Encouraging sustainable development in the environment and the need to disseminate this information to the public in simple terms, and in a user-friendly manner;
- Public transport and the general lack of co-ordination between providers in terms of timetabling, lack of

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between providers in terms of timetabling, lack of service; and

- Changes to the street scene resulting from properties being demolished and replaced by several properties.

The Review Steering Group concluded that East Herts was able to illustrate good performance in environmental stewardship with “excellent” prospects for improvement. Evidence to support this view would necessitate:

- the provision of a Historic Buildings Grant;
- success of the Herts Solar Club;
- support for school travel plans;
- support for rural transport;
- working with partners eg Hertfordshire County Council (on transport issues), Countryside Management Services (Pishiobury Park) etc.
- promotion of East Herts owned local open space; and
- a reduction in complaints in relation to abandoned vehicles, noise, nuisance etc.

It was noted that the operational Action Plan would contribute to these improvements.

The Committee agreed to commend the Best Value Review of Environmental Stewardship and to forward its comments, as now detailed, to the Executive

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RESOLVED – that (A) the Executive be informed that, Performance Scrutiny Committee commend the Best Value Review on Environmental Stewardship; and

ED (Head of Paid Service)

(B) the need to improve communications / information and to build on stakeholder workshops be noted.

440 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTERLY MONITORING JULY – SEPTEMBER 2004

The Assistant Director (Policy and Performance) submitted a report detailing performance statistics for July, August and September, 2004 in relation to the Council's National and local performance indicators.

It was noted that of the 29 indicators (and sub parts):-

- 17 (59%) were on or above target,
- 4 (14%) were 1-5% off target, and
- 8 (28%) were 6% and more off target.

The report detailed the reasoning behind the targets which were 6% and more off target.

Members expressed concern in relation to LPI BV8 (% of invoices paid by the Council within 30 days) and the fact that performance was dropping. The Executive Director (Head of Paid Service) remained positive that this could be addressed by performance management measures.

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A Member commented on the use of “weather symbols” and whether future monitoring reports could be adapted to use such a system. The Assistant Director (Policy and Performance) highlighted the shortcomings in the use of weather symbols but was happy to include them as and when appropriate.

The Committee agreed that the report be received.

RESOLVED – that the report on performance statistics for the period July, August and September 2004 be received.

441 FORWARD PLAN

The Assistant Director (Policy and Performance) submitted the Forward Plan in relation to the work of Performance Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that an additional Joint meeting with the Executive and Performance Scrutiny Committee had been programmed to be held on 4 January 2005.

A Member raised the issue of the Local Strategic Partnership and commented that as the minutes were no longer submitted to the Executive they should be circulated to all Members of Performance Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Chairman
Date