

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY, 31 MAY 2005

PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (Chairman).
Councillors H G S Banks, K A Barnes,
R N Copping, G Francis, Mrs M H Goldspink,
Mrs D L E Hollebon, G McAndrew.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor D A A Peek

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Paul Griffin	- Community Safety Officer
Julie Lawrence	- Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator
Mary Orton	- Director of Policy and Performance
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co-ordinator

72 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors A D Dodd, D E Mayes, S Newton, D Richards,
T K H Robertson and N Wilson.

RESOLVED ITEMS

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73 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held
on 15 March 2005 be confirmed as a correct record
and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION74 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman drew attention to the new style work programme circulated with the agenda. The Committee would be looking at the Council's priorities during the next year. The item on the agenda before the Committee on Community Safety Action Plans fell within the priority of reducing people's fear of crime.

75 COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLANS 2005-2006

A report was submitted to seek endorsement of the Community Safety Action Plan 2005-2006.

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) had to create a three year Community Safety Strategy. The strategy had been approved by the Executive having been considered by the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee in January. Actions Plans were produced to deliver the targets within the strategy. The plans had been endorsed by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) and presented to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). A presentation was given on them by the Community Safety Officer.

He began with some examples of projects carried out with partners in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. One example was the Community Safety Accreditation Pilot. Under this scheme East Herts Council was working with other partners to enhance the role of certain staff members e.g. dog wardens to help with dealing with crimes by training them and linking with other partners. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator was working to reduce problems in certain trouble hotspots which had been identified in the District. A number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) had been issued to help control this behaviour.

As part of building safer communities, action against rural crime had included introducing a pager system whereby

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shopowners and publicans could alert others to possible trouble makers in the area. Activities for young people had been introduced for the summer holidays when problems were at their peak. A community chest had been used to provide funds for improved lighting which helped to deter crime. Mobile CCTV cameras had also been a good deterrent against crime. In cases of domestic violence, some people had been helped to create a “sanctuary room” within their property. Instead of having to leave their homes to avoid a threat of violence, people could take refuge in such a room and telephone for help.

The five priorities for the strategy for the next three years were anti-social behaviour, violent crime, acquisitive crime, sense of community safety and alcohol and drugs. The performance and delivery of the plans would be monitored by a group of officers from partners of the District Council.

Members discussed the action plan. It was explained that the progress column would be completed during the next year and outcomes would be reviewed at the end of each year. The plan was a flexible document. Items could be added and deleted during its lifetime.

Members questioned whether being “named and shamed” for ASBOs might be seen as an achievement for some offenders. It was explained that this aspect was considered before publicity was given to ASBOs and not used if it was felt to be inappropriate. However, overall it was considered that residents needed to know the individuals concerned so they could be involved in detection of further crimes and know that action was being taken to help reduce fear of crime.

Members agreed with arranging for offenders subject to community service punishment orders undertaking hours of unpaid work for community safety projects. They noted the handyman scheme could be used to improve security for homes of vulnerable residents. In addition, youth shelters needed to be provided at sites that were safe but did not cause nuisance to residents. The Committee agreed to

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endorse the action plans subject to some amendments.

RESOLVED – that the Committee (A) endorses and supports the delivery of the Community Safety Strategy Action Plans 2005-2006 subject to:-

1. residents being asked to report crimes in areas where CCTV was not “monitored” but used for recording only as this type of CCTV sometimes gave a false sense of security with residents assuming crimes could be detected without them reporting them with an accurate time of the event;
 2. watch schemes be used to spread information about crime prevention wherever possible;
 3. the use of parking attendants to record details of cars having valuable items on display be monitored in case this proved to be too onerous a task in return for the benefits of it;
 4. links with early education eg Crucial Crew be encouraged; and
- (B) notes the value of partnership in this work in providing funding and co-operation for schemes which could be “joined up” and flexible.

76 REPORT OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY PANEL

Councillor D A A Peek, the Chairman of the Energy Efficiency Panel, attended to report on the work of the Energy Efficiency Panel so far.

The Panel had been set up to determine the scope and content for a new energy efficiency policy for the Council and to make recommendations to the Policy Development

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Scrutiny Committee.

The Panel had met a number of times including visits to examples of energy efficiency projects and a briefing with guests from private enterprise involved with energy efficiency.

The Panel had decided to suggest building the Council's new energy efficiency policy around four topics: internal, business, school and district/domestic.

The Panel would be meeting again to consider a draft action plan.

Members noted the work of the Panel so far.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

77 ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Corporate Governance submitted a report summarising the work undertaken by the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee during the previous civic year.

The Council's Constitution required the Committee to give an annual report on its work to full Council.

The Committee had considered a number of policies and made comments to the Executive on them during the previous year. Panels had been set up to consider certain matters in detail.

Members noted the importance of monitoring whether their comments had been effective in amending policies and that the annual report was an aid to this.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted and referred to full Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

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78 ESTABLISHMENT OF SCRUTINY PANELS

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Governance to seek approval for the establishment of Scrutiny Review Panels. This was to continue work started previously.

Members noted that all Councillors were encouraged to participate in these Scrutiny Panels if they wished to do so and agreed to the establishment of the Budget and Energy Efficiency Scrutiny Panels.

RESOLVED – that (A) Policy Development Scrutiny Panels be established as follows:-

1. Budget (8 Members)
2. Energy Efficiency (8 Members)

(B) the Terms of Reference for the Panels in (A) above, as set out in the report submitted to the Committee be approved;

(C) the allocation of seats on the Panels in (A) above be as follows:-

<u>Panel</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Lib Dem</u>	<u>KAB</u>	<u>JPW</u>	<u>BWJS</u>	<u>DRA</u>
Budget	8	7	1	0	0	0	0
Energy Efficiency	8	7	1	0	0	0	0;

and

(D) Members be appointed to the Panels in (A) above, in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom seats have been allocated.

ACTION79 WORK PROGRAMME FOR NEXT YEAR

The Chairman explained that a new style work programme had been devised for the Committee. Members would examine the Council's priorities by looking in detail at certain aspects of them. This would contribute to work on revising the priorities, if necessary, when the next Council was elected.

Members were invited to suggest aspects for debate to the Committee Secretary between meetings to enable reports to be prepared and expert witnesses to be invited.

Members suggested looking at unadopted open space areas and frequency of street cleaning in rural areas. In addition, a local society had asked for clearer information on delegated decisions on town and country planning.

The Committee supported the proposed work programme including the topics suggested.

RESOLVED – that the Work Programme as set out in the Appendix to agenda item 9 of the report now submitted be approved with the inclusion of:-

- (a) policy on unadopted open space areas;
- (b) frequency of street cleaning in rural areas; and
- (c) information made available on delegated decisions on town and country planning.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm