

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2005

PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (Chairman).
Councillors H G S Banks, G L Francis,
Mrs M H Goldspink, D Richards, J D Thornton,
N Wilson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors M R Alexander, P R Ballam,
D A A Peek, N C Poulton.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Daniel Burden	- Access Officer
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Contract Services
Jenny Greaves	- Environmental Support Officer
Mary Orton	- Director of Policy and Performance and Acting Director of Direct and Contract Services
Su Tarran	- Head of Benefits Service
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co-ordinator

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Buss	- Papworth Housing Advice
Alan Dinning Cathy Dunnett Denise Radley	} - Hertfordshire County Council

443 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A D Dodd, J Hedley, D E Mayes, Mrs S Newton and G Scrivener.

444 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed guest speakers and reminded the Committee that it would be examining policies relating to the Council's priorities during the next year. It would be looking at whether or not policies enabled work to be done to support the Council's priorities. The Committee would consider if policies needed to be adjusted or new policies introduced.

RESOLVED ITEMSACTION445 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

446 CORPORATE PRIORITY - "PROTECT AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE MOST VULNERABLE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS"

The Director for Policy and Performance and Acting Director for Direct and Contract Services explained that the District Council and its partners were working through the Local Strategic Partnership to carry out the community strategy. This included supporting vulnerable people in the district.

Alan Dinning of Herts County Council gave a presentation on Children's Trusts which were being set up to help co-ordinate work with children and young people. He outlined the aims and hoped for outcomes of the new arrangements.

ACTION

Cathy Dunnett of Herts County Council gave details of a pilot scheme for a Children's Trust in Stevenage. Two of the more deprived areas in Stevenage had been chosen. A team of staff from different agencies was working with schools in the area. They were working with individuals, whole schools and the community. There had been fewer exclusions, more favourable GCSE results, health policies had been updated and gaps in information had been identified. The team wanted to work on a system for all professionals to use to assess children and young people and to involve more agencies in their work.

Will O'Neill explained the District Council's roles in working with partners on summer activities, reducing anti social behaviour, walking routes to schools and affordable housing, the District Council's Youth Council and Annual Youth Conference.

Members discussed problems of engaging young people themselves in these arrangements particularly those from more deprived backgrounds. They thought the Youth Council could be consulted on the questions raised in the Government's Green Paper "Youth Matters". They expressed concern at the lack of training for the post 16 age range in Bishop's Stortford.

DPP

Denise Radley of Herts County Council gave a summary of Government proposals for older people. These aimed to give older people independence and choice and ensure their wellbeing. A group was looking at implementing these across the whole county. Various initiatives were being introduced such as extra care housing and telecare (using new technology to raise help where needed). In East Herts, funding was being provided to target rural areas. Residential and nursing care was being updated.

Other groups with problems with drugs, alcohol, mental health or learning difficulties were also included in work for vulnerable people.

ACTION

Local Area Agreements would include this work.

Robert Buss outlined the work carried out by Papworth Housing Advice Service to help vulnerable adults. Houses were being kept in good condition and advice on saving energy was given to residents. A handyperson service carried out small but vital maintenance work. The staff could also alert other agencies of other types of care which might be needed as part of their duties. Piper alarms were installed so people could call for help when necessary.

Su Tarran explained the work done by East Herts Benefits Service to raise awareness of benefits available and make sure people were claiming the full benefits to which they were entitled.

Members noted the work being done for vulnerable people in partnership with other agencies. The Committee decided policies relating to this priority did not need changing.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Committee considered the policies relating to the priority to protect and provide support to the most vulnerable, in partnership with others, to be robust and that partnership arrangements were working well.

447 REPORT OF THE RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP - RECYCLING OPTIONS 2006 ONWARDS

A report was submitted by the Chairman of the Recycling Task and Finish Group which set out options for recycling for 2006 and onwards.

The Group had considered how recycling should be expanded in the short and medium term. A range of options had been considered including greater enforcement and alternative weekly collections. It was felt that options such as Alternate Weekly Collection should be

ACTION

investigated further in future, but would not be practical until kerbside collections had been expanded so that residents were provided with the facility to easily recycle more types of material.

There was a demand from the public for plastic to be recycled and this would be dealt with by providing plastic banks rather than boxes for collections which were more questionable from an environmental perspective. Plastic bottle banks in the main towns would be provided by December 2005.

Members decided to agree with the Group's recommendations and thank it for its work.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Recycling Task and Finish Group be thanked for its work, and

(B) the Executive be informed that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee considers that the recommendations of the Group should be supported as follows:

- (1) The Council expands its recycling service to provide all households in the District with kerbside collection of paper, glass and cans in 2006/07 at a Revenue cost of £161,500 per annum and a one-off Capital cost of £57,500.
- (2) Householders be advised to place all paper, glass and cans in the box provided and that, where necessary, to place any excess in bags to the side, subject to the findings of the current trial.
- (3) Additional boxes be provided upon request at no charge.

ACTION

- (4) The existing Green Waste collection scheme to 34,300 properties be retained at the current level.
- (5) The Council proceeds with extending the existing Green Waste scheme to include the collection of kitchen waste and card when the new County Council facility to permit the composing of these materials becomes available, at a cost of £15,500 per annum.
- (6) The Council provides comprehensive publicity and communication to inform householders of the new services and how to make best use of them.
- (7) Officers be asked to monitor the introduction of the extended recycling services and to report their findings to the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee during 2007/08.
- (8) Following the implementation of recommendations (1) - (7), the Panel be reconvened to provide a further report to be brought to Policy Development Scrutiny Committee to consider how to further improve the benefits and efficiency of waste and recycling services, including options to expand the Green Waste Service, Alternate Weekly Collection schemes and recycling enforcement measures.

DCG

448 REPORT OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chairman of the Energy Efficiency Scrutiny Panel tabled a report on the work of the Panel.

The Panel had discussed a wide range of issues and actions relating to the preparation of an energy strategy for

ACTION

East Herts. A draft strategy was circulated with the report together with a list of short, medium and long term actions. These covered the Council's operations and buildings, the business sector, schools and local residents.

The Policy Development Scrutiny Committee felt they needed more time to consider the report and asked for more detail of the cost and priority of actions so it could recommend the Executive to follow particular actions and include them in the budget process.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Panel be thanked for its work on the Energy Efficiency Strategy, and

(B) a further report be submitted to the next meeting with more details of costs and priorities for the actions relating to the strategy.

DCS

449 BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL

The Budget Scrutiny Panel had considered the Divisional Establishment Round 1 Revenue Estimates, Base Budget Review Process, Growth Items and Budget Consultations. Details had been circulated to all Members. The Committee decided to refer the Round 1 Estimates considered by the Panel to the Executive.

RESOLVED - that the Round 1 Estimates be referred to the Executive for consideration.

450 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/06

The Director of Policy and Performance submitted a report on the work programme for the Committee for 2005/06.

The Committee received and approved the work programme attached to the report with the addition of reports from the Castle Hall Working Group (January 2006) and Long Term Leisure Strategy Group (February 2006).

ACTION

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved with the additions agreed.

The meeting closed at 10.10 pm.

Nps\Policy Dev Scrutiny\15 Nov 2005\Minutes 15 November 2005