

MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF  
 PERFORMANCE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEES HELD IN THE  
 WAYTEMORE ROOM, THE CAUSEWAY,  
 BISHOP'S STORTFORD ON TUESDAY 22 MAY  
 2007 AT 7.30 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor P R Ballam, R H Beeching,  
 R Cheswright, R N Copping, D Clark, N P Clark,  
 K Darby, A D Dodd, A Graham, P Grethe,  
 Mrs D L E Hollebon, G Lawrence, Mrs J Mayes,  
 G A McAndrew, M. Pope, W Quince, J O Ranger,  
 M Wood, C Woodward.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors M R Alexander, M G Carver,  
 L O Haysey, A P Jackson, N C Poulton,  
 M J Tindale

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Karl Chui	- Performance Officer
Philip Hamberger	- Director of Internal Services
Ceri Pettit	- Head of Strategic Direction (shared) and Performance Manager
Jackie Sayers	- Scrutiny Officer

11 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman extended a welcome to all. She hoped that new Members would enjoy the work of Policy Development and Performance Scrutiny Committees.

ACTION12 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor P Grethe declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minutes 15 – The Grounds Maintenance Contract – Task and Finish Group. The nature of the interest was not disclosed.

RESOLVED ITEMS13 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon was appointed Chairman of the Joint Performance and Policy Development Scrutiny Committee for this meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon be appointed as Chairman of the Joint Performance and Policy Development Scrutiny Committee for this meeting.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting of Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 24 April 2007, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 REPORT OF THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT – TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor A M Graham, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group explained the background to the report and reminded Members of the Group's Terms of Reference.

Clarification was sought and provided on the definition of "vermin" and whether this included foxes. The Head of Environmental Services confirmed that the Contractor would be asked to take action as a result of any damage to the Council's open spaces by rabbits and moles. Assurances

ACTION

were given that the future contract would be less onerous on the Contractor with the Council specifying when they should take action. The length and timing of the contract period was explained.

A Member commented on the tender timetable and the potential need to find the estimated additional £160,000 by either cutting services or exploring areas where efficiency could be improved. The current value of the contract was £1million. Joint procurement and provision were suggested as methods of achieving savings. It was noted that this had been investigated in the past by the Task and Finish Group and savings from cross boundary working were limited. Assurances were provided that all Contractors would be assessed for their environmental sustainability and that the use of chemical sprays for weed control met with environmental regulations.

Members were keen to ensure that the Tender included clauses which encouraged contractors to improve services year on year. The Head of Environmental Services referred to the list of recommendations to improve the service. All Environmental Services' major contracts required the Contractor to demonstrate how they can improve services each year.

In terms of the recommendation to consider the option of handing over the maintenance of the management of Hartham Bowling Green to the Sele Farms Bowls Club a Member commented that three other clubs were using the Bowling Club facilities and were been charged £25.00 per annum for the use of the changing facilities.

The Head of Environmental Services confirmed that all the clubs using the facility would be consulted before any change was considered.

The Joint Committees agreed to recommend that the Executive be requested to support the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group as now detailed.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that the Executive be requested to support the recommendations within the report of the Task and Finish Group in the report now submitted.

16 CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK – QUARTER FOUR  
(JANUARY TO MARCH 2007)

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The Chief Executive submitted a report which set out, on an exception basis, performance and risk monitoring covering the fourth quarter of 2006/07. No financial data was detailed, as this was set out in the general fund outturn report which would be presented to the Executive in July 2007. It was noted that the fourth quarter focussed on the old structure of the Council and this would change format in the civic year 2007/08.

Clarification was sought and provided in relation to a question about Service Plans eg Property and Customer Services which had been re-dated to March 2008. The Head of Strategic Direction (Shared) - Performance Manager agreed to provide a written response on this issue. The Chief Executive confirmed that the improvement in the percentage of building sites re-inspected in less than three months was as a result of increases in staff efficiency.

Members commented on the absence of performance indicators covering leisure provision and suggested that a further report be presented on this issue. The Head of Strategic Direction confirmed that work was being undertaken to establish Indicators for 2007/08.

In terms of analysing adverse outturns the Chief Executive confirmed that regular reports were presented to CMT where performance slipped.

The Joint Committees noted the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted;

ACTION

(B) Officers report back on the development of Performance Indicators for Leisure; and

CE

(C) the Head of Strategic Direction (shared) Performance Manager, provide a written response on the re-dating of some service plans.

CE

17 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking potential topics for scrutiny to support the development of the work programmes for Performance and Policy Development Scrutiny Committees for the 2007/08 programme.

The Chief Executive commented that the report set out options for building up on the work programme to address issues which were relevant to the business of each Committee. Recommendations in (A) and (B) of the report now submitted, referred to issues of transferring business from the old Council to the new and were recommendations from previous meetings and Task and Finish Groups. The recommendation in (C) of the report now submitted, however, looked forward to the future in terms of establishing new business. Appendices to the report, now submitted set out other potential subjects for scrutiny.

The Chief Executive stressed that the process of scrutiny was dynamic in process changing over time. Plans were in hand to widen the process and involve more Members.

Topics for potential scrutiny for both Committees were discussed:

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee

- Swimming
- Leisure recreational policy / specification of next contract

ACTION

- Report Style, Plain English
- Housing allocation
- East Herts night-time economy (All towns) – (an integrated vision) to include planning, community, licensing/enforcement, resident input
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Park and Ride: Pay on Foot; concession Fares
- Empty Homes Strategy – protocols for implementation
- Choice Based lettings
- Closure of shops in towns
- Provision for young people
- Forward Plan – improving and expanding to track all up and coming issues.

Performance Scrutiny Committee

- Swimming Pools' performance
- Cleanliness of towns (centre, outskirts and surrounds); problems with litter
- Travel Plans – performance
- Planning enforcement
- Public housing (housing associations)
- Markets (including Farmers' Markets)

ACTION

- Road condition (via Hertfordshire Highways JMP)
- Forward Plan (Tracker) – improving and tracking all up and coming issues.

The Leader referred to Councillor R L Parker's remit to produce a paper on how the Council should input on health issues following the restructuring of health scrutiny. Councillor Parker had been asked to prepare a report on this for the Executive. The Scrutiny Committees agreed to wait for this report before discussing this further.

The Scrutiny Officer agreed to write to Heads of Service to outlining the potential topics identified for scrutiny and seeking their input in terms of scope and reporting timetables.

The Joint Committees approved the list of topics now detailed for development within the Committee's respective Forward Plans.

RESOLVED – that (A) the aforementioned list be used for development within the respective Committees' Forward Plans;

(B) the Scrutiny Officer write to Heads of Service outlining the topics for further scrutiny and seeking input in terms of scope and reporting timetables;

CE

(C) Scrutiny Committee set up a task and finish group to inform the Council's use of performance indicators; and

(D) the task and finish groups on concessionary fares, recycling and energy efficiency be retained by the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee.

ACTION18 PROGRESS AGAINST THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN – INFORMATION REPORT

A report was submitted by the Director of Customer and Community Services updating Members of the progress made by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in achieving the East Herts Together Community Strategy Action Plan for 2004-2007.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

19 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2007/09 – INFORMATION REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the Corporate Strategic Plan for 2007/08 and the current position on 2006/07 outturns for all national and external local performance indicators.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

20 PROGRESS AGAINST THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN - INFORMATION REPORT

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report concerning the progress on the East Herts Children and Young People's Trust Partnership (CYPTP) against the Children and Young People's Plan for 2006/07.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

21 PROGRESS AGAINST THE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN – INFORMATION REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the progress made by the Council and its partners on delivering the Community Safety Strategy (2005-08) and the action plan for the period 2006-07.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

22 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (BVPI) SURVEYS – INFORMATION REPORT

The Chief Executive submitted a report which set out the results of the Best Value Performance Indicators Surveys undertaken between August 2006 and March 2007.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

23 2006/07 SERVICE PLANS (PROGRESS) – INFORMATION REPORT

The Chief Executive submitted a report which highlights actions which had not been completed by detailing 2006/07 Service Plan actions which require a revised completion date.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Chairman	.....
Date	.....