

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE  
WAYTEMORE ROOM, BISHOP'S  
STORTFORD ON TUESDAY,  
14 AUGUST 2007 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs D L E Hollebon (Chairman).  
Councillors N P Clark, A D Dodd, G E Lawrence,  
Mrs J Mayes, G McAndrew, M Pope, J O Ranger,  
M Wood.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors D Andrews, A P Jackson, P A Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Karl Chui	- Performance Officer
Martyn Dutfield	- Senior Leisure Manager
Philip Hamberger	- Director of Internal Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Will O'Neill	- Head of Community and Cultural Services
Ceri Pettit	- Head of Strategic Direction (shared) and Performance Manager
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Jackie Sayers	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Searle	- Head of Business Support Services

174 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R H Beeching.

175 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that Ceri Pettit would be taking maternity leave in November and Jackie Sayers would be taking up a post at South Cambridgeshire District Council in October. The Committee congratulated them and gave them their best wishes for the future.

RESOLVED ITEMSACTION176 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2007 were submitted. Councillor McAndrew asked that the duplication of the resolution to appoint him as Vice-Chairman be deleted from Minute 128.

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the deletion of the duplicated resolution from Minute 128.

177 DRAFT YOUTH STRATEGY

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the Youth Council's draft Youth Strategy.

It was reported that the Youth Strategy guided the work of the Youth Council. It needed to link with and contribute to the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) which guided services for children and young people in the District. The review of the Community Strategy, Cultural Strategy and Children's Play Strategy would also influence the Youth Strategy. Members were asked to receive the Strategy before it was submitted to the Executive.

ACTION

When the Strategy had been endorsed by the Council the new Youth Council would produce an action plan for it. Main objectives would include attracting Youth Councillors from more areas in the District and publicising the work of the Youth Council.

Members expressed concern that Youth Councillors did not represent all parts of the District and asked Officers to increase efforts on this.

They were also concerned that the Strategy included the ideas of young people but used inappropriate language more suited to Council Strategy documents. However, it was explained that the document was deliberately formal in order to help young people engage with Council business and introduce them to this format as part of citizenship training. The Youth Council produced a magazine each year written in a more youthful style.

Members asked that a summary flyer be produced to publicise the Youth Strategy using a style more fitting for young people.

A Member asked if the Youth Council had been consulted on recent decisions on swimming pools and was told they had not been.

Members asked if the Youth Council had a budget and how this was allocated and Officers explained the Youth Council was very cautious about spending its budget. Officers prepared options for it but the Youth Council made the final decision.

Another Member queried if there were too many Youth Councils when it was often difficult to recruit young people to these bodies. It was suggested a networking event should be organised to bring all these bodies together.

Members were disappointed that no one from the Youth Council had attended to present the Strategy. It was

ACTION

pointed out that Members could attend meetings of the Youth Council as observers.

Members supported the Strategy subject to more efforts to recruit Youth Councillors from different areas; a summary of the Strategy being produced in a format attractive to young people; and a joint event being organised for Youth Councils to meet. It was also suggested that Members should visit meetings of the District Council's Youth Council as observers.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Performance Scrutiny Committee supports the Youth Council's draft Youth Strategy and makes the following comments:

- (A) Greater efforts should be made to recruit Youth Councillors from all parts of the District;
- (B) a summary of the Strategy should be produced in a format attractive to young people to publicise it;
- (C) consideration should be given to arranging a joint event to bring together different Youth Councils in the District; and
- (D) Members should be encouraged to visit meetings of the Youth Council as observers.

178 LEISURE CENTRE CONTRACT MONITORING PERFORMANCE

The Senior Leisure Manager submitted a report on the performance of the Leisure Management Contract.

Client monitoring visits were continuing and operational and development issues were discussed at monthly meetings. Consultants had been asked to negotiate the extension of the contract with Stevenage Leisure Limited

ACTION

(SLL) for the management of the Council's Leisure Centres when the current contract expired.

Details of finance and throughput were given. It was reported that a variable management fee was paid each month to meet the difference between income and expenditure. The Leader of the Council explained services were being realigned so that they met needs better.

A Member of the Committee said he thought that the decision to close Leventhorpe Swimming Pool on Sundays would save only an insignificant amount and this decision was illogical. He asked that his comments be recorded in the Minutes.

The Committee noted the Officers and Executive Members' comments and decided to receive the report.

RESOLVED - that the report be received.

179 CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - QUARTERLY MONITORING (APRIL - JUNE 2007)

The Leader of the Council submitted a report which set out, on an exception basis, issues relating to finance, performance and risk monitoring for the Council for the period of April to June 2007. The report contained a breakdown of revenue and service information for each Directorate. Members considered the report in detail.

They expressed concern at the sick leave figures and the Chief Executive explained this was being improved through regular monitoring and meetings with Directors on a case by case basis. Better information would be provided for future meetings but the privacy of individuals concerned had to be protected.

Members were also concerned that Internal Services might fail to achieve a large saving relating to procurement efficiencies and also foresaw difficulties with IT services. The Director of Internal Services reassured Members that

ACTION

this was being closely monitored. The IT Section was now up to strength and the priorities were being reassessed.

The Chief Executive reported that Planning Officers were now seeking a pre-application fee where appropriate and a recovery plan had been drawn up for Building Control. She agreed to send details of charges for Section 106 Agreements to all Members of the Committee. She stated that the Director of Neighbourhood Services would attend the next meeting to give details of plans for Building Control.

CE/DNS

Members also asked for information on back funding as detailed at page 8.19 of the report submitted and a delay in taking enforcement action as detailed at page 8.9 of the report submitted.

CE

Members agreed that the Executive should be informed that the report on the Corporate Healthcheck be noted, subject to a report being brought back to the Committee on future IT arrangements and the Director of Neighbourhood Services attending the next meeting to update Members on the Building Control Section.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed the Committee notes the report subject to a report on the review of IT being brought to the next meeting of the Committee and the Director of Neighbourhood Services attending that meeting to update Members on performance in the Building Control Section.

180 BACKWARD EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2006/07

The Director of Internal Services submitted a report concerning the Backward Annual Efficiency Statement for 2006/07. This had been submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government. Members were asked to consider how the monitoring process could be made more robust.

ACTION

It was reported that the Government required certain efficiencies to be achieved by the Local Government Sector. The Council had achieved these in previous years but had not achieved them for 2006/07 for a variety of reasons. It was reported that the Council had met cumulative targets and the Department of Communities and Local Government was happy to accept the Council's statement on this basis.

Members agreed that the Statement be noted but expressed concern that the estimated efficiencies would not be achieved. Officers responded that the revised Corporate Healthcheck process should help to improve efficiency monitoring.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Committee notes the Backward Efficiency Statement for 2006/07 as reported to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

181 WORK PROGRAMME 2007/08

The Chief Executive submitted a report detailing the work of the Performance Scrutiny Committee for 2007/08. The Committee decided to accept the programme without any amendments pending the revision of the Council's scrutiny arrangements.

RESOLVED - that the Work Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

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