

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
ON TUESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2007 AT  
7.30 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (Chairman).  
Councillors P R Ballam, Mrs R F Cheswright,  
D Clark, K Darby, A M Graham, G Lawrence  
(substitute for W Quince), J Mayes, C Woodward.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors N Clark, A P Jackson, L O Haysey,  
M J Tindale.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Linda Bevan      | - Committee Secretary                             |
| Karl Chui        | - Trainee Performance<br>Officer                  |
| Philip Hamberger | - Director of Internal<br>Services                |
| Ceri Pettit      | - Head of Strategic<br>Direction<br>(Performance) |
| Will O'Neill     | - Head of Community<br>and Cultural Services      |

294 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor W Quince. It was noted that Councillor G Lawrence was in attendance as a substitute for him.

295 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to new arrangements for scrutiny which were expected to be in place soon. He thanked Members for their participation in scrutiny to date. The Committee agreed with his comments on the very helpful

contribution made to the process by the former Scrutiny Officer, Jackie Sayers and looked forward to working with her replacement.

296 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor M J Tindale declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute 299 - Treasury Management 2006/07 and Prudential Code Review by virtue of Scottish Widows being a client of his own firm and left the Chamber during discussion of the item.

RESOLVED ITEMS

ACTION

297 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

298 EAST HERTS DATA QUALITY STRATEGY

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on a draft strategy for ensuring data was accurate, timely and relevant.

A new framework from the Audit Commission would lead to less intensive assessments for many District Councils. As a result, the Council was required to produce this strategy so services could clearly identify good quality data.

The report gave details of the principles of good quality data and roles and responsibilities for performance management. An action plan with future objectives and targets had been produced. Consultation was still taking place and would be completed for and reported to the Executive.

ACTION

A Member of the Committee commented on the need for complete and accurate information to be provided for Members at meetings and was assured officers were aware of the need for this.

The Committee commented on the need to use systems which were compatible with the performance management system if these became available in the future.

The Committee suggested a number of changes to the draft strategy and decided to inform the Executive it should be approved subject to these.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that  
(A) the draft data quality strategy be approved subject to the amendments discussed at the meeting; and

(B) systems compatible with the Covalent system be used in future if possible.

299 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2006/07 AND PRUDENTIAL CODE REVIEW

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The Leader of the Council presented a report on the annual review of the Council's treasury management and Prudential Code for 2006/07.

The report gave details of the Council's debt and investment position. The Council's Treasury Adviser had recommended a strategy based on a view of the performance of the economy overall. Growth had been expected to be weak and inflation well contained.

The Council managed a proportion of investments in-house and a creditable return had been achieved on these. Other investments were managed by Scottish Widows and Investec. The return on these had been mixed. It had not been possible to repay any debts without incurring too large a premium.

ACTION

Regular meetings took place with fund managers to monitor the situation and Members had been involved in these and the selection of fund managers.

The Committee noted the current position and decided to inform the Executive that no changes should be made to investment parameters or Prudential Indicators subject to the addition to the report for the Executive of a graph showing last year's position compared to this year's and a footnote being added to explain the variable amount of in-house investments for Members' information.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the 2006/07 treasury management and Prudential Indicator out-turn should be noted and no changes should be made at this stage to the investment parameters or Prudential Indicators for 2006/07.

DIS

300 LEISURE SERVICES OPERATIONS - FANSHAWE POOL AND GYM - REPORT ON CASUAL SWIMMING SESSIONS AT WEEKENDS

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The Executive Member for Community Development, Leisure and Culture submitted a report on proposals for Fanshawe Pool, Ware.

The Executive had deferred a decision on closing the pool at weekends pending further analysis of usage and potential impact of closure. This had revealed that the main risk was losing the thriving direct debit membership. The expected economic success of Fanshawe was unique because the gym was more modern and bigger than Leventhorpe, Sawbridgeworth and Ward Freman, Buntingford did not have a gym. The management company had recommended that the existing weekend timetable be retained for six months and then be reviewed. Officers would be able to gather further information on the use of the pool during this time.

Members welcomed the continuing opening of Fanshawe

ACTION

pool but expressed concern at the closure of Ward Freman and Leventhorpe. They requested that more details about the information used to reach this decision be included in the report to the Executive and the Leader agreed to supply this.

The Committee decided to inform the Executive that the current weekend programme for Fanshawe pool and gym should be retained but this should be reviewed in six months and the opening of Ward Freman and Leventhorpe at weekends should be reviewed at the same time.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that  
(A) the current weekend programme for Fanshawe Pool and gym should be retained;

DIS

(B) the programme should be reviewed in six months; and

(C) the weekend opening of Ward Freman and Leventhorpe should be reviewed at the same time.

301 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2007/08

The Chief Executive submitted a report on the Committee's work programme. It had planned for the first part of the year only as changes to scrutiny arrangements were expected.

The Committee discussed the need for the existing Task and Finish Groups to continue and an item which could be considered under the new arrangements.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Task and Finish Group on concessionary fares be discontinued in the light of new consultation procedures;

CE

(B) the Energy Efficiency Panel be re-scoped and report to the Environment Scrutiny Committee;

CE

ACTION

(C) the Task and Finish Group for Refuse and Recycling be reconstituted and report to the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee; and CE

(D) the use of plain English be considered by an appropriate Scrutiny Committee. CE

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

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| Chairman | ..... |
| Date     | ..... |