

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
ON TUESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2009 AT  
7.30 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor J O Ranger (Chairman).  
Councillors D Andrews, R Beeching, R N Copping,  
R Gilbert, G Lawrence, J Mayes, J Warren,  
M Wood.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors M G Carver, N P Clark, M H Goldspink,  
M P A McMullen, T Milner, P A Ruffles, R I Taylor,  
C Woodward.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Ceri Pettit	- Head of Strategic Direction (Shared) and Performance Manager
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Peter Searle	- Head of Business Support Services
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Justin Collings and Paul Dossett	- Grant Thornton (External Auditors)
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591 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTACTION

Councillor N P Clark declared a personal interest in discussions referred to at Minute 596 - Corporate Strategic Plan 2009/12 in that they included references to Harlow North and he was Secretary of the Stop Harlow North Campaign.

RESOLVED ITEMS592 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

593 NEW CAA FRAMEWORK - IMPACT ON USE OF RESOURCES

Justin Collings and Paul Dossett of Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors were welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman. They gave a presentation on the new regime for the Use of Resources by the Council under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Framework. They explained the new emphasis on the Member role in the Council's assessment. The themes for the use of Resources Statement ie managing finances; governing the business and managing resources and the scoring system of 1 to 4 (with 4 as excellent) were explained. Similar assessments would be carried out for all public bodies eg Police, PCTs. The External Auditors pointed out the new areas involved such as cost and performance and procurement and commissioning. Authorities would need to demonstrate what difference their policies made to outcomes. Guidance was available on the internet. The External Auditors would present their initial assessment in May with a final version being produced in September 2009.

Members asked a number of questions. In response to these the External Auditors said that the Use of Resources would relate specifically to the Council although the CAA

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would look more widely at public services in Hertfordshire. In addition, evidence about the role of Members would be gathered by interviewing them, reviewing minutes of meetings and from the Members' self assessment.

The Committee decided to note the presentation and thanked the External Auditors for their attendance.

RESOLVED - that the presentation be noted.

594 2009/10 SERVICE PLANS

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on service plans for 2009/10. The Committee was invited to make recommendations on them to the Executive.

The Service Plans were part of the mechanism by which the corporate priorities and objectives were monitored and measured and the Community Strategy delivered. The Plans were produced every year by Heads of Service and set out key actions needed in line with the Council's budget. They were monitored and considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committees.

Members considered the Plans and discussed the following;-

1. 09-SD7 - a minimum score of 2 was the aim of the Council for its first Organisational Assessment;
2. 09-SD8 - IRIS was the research and information service which was going to be set up to provide support for the Council's services;
3. 09-BSS05 - the Head of Business Support Services confirmed that ICT for the Council's Changing the Way We Work Programme (C3W) was the top priority for the IT Section;
4. 09-BSS21 - Government Connect was a secure

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- system being set up for transferring sensitive information from local to central government;
5. 09-CCS3 - Officers explained the County Council was working on initiatives relating to the Olympics;
  6. 09-CCS5 - A Member queried whether this covered private facilities open to the public only and schools. The Director of Customer and Community Services undertook to give a written answer. DCCS
  7. 09-CCS7 - the age group covered was queried and the Director of Customer and Community Services undertook to give a written response. DCCS
  8. 09-CS4 - Members noted training on the restructured website should be available for them from May 2009. DCCS
  9. 09-DLSS3 - Electronic Document Management (EDM) involved large volumes of scanning of "live" material which was in hand.
  10. 09-ES2 - Officers informed Members that it was hoped the Ridgeway Open Space would achieve Green Flag status.

Members also discussed 09-DLSS23 and 09-DLSS7 and decided to inform the Executive that the Service Plans should be approved subject to the comments on these two items as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee considers the Service Plans 2009/10 should be approved subject to the following comments:

- (A) 09-DLSS23 - the composite forward plan and committee work programme will be very useful in planning the work of the Scrutiny

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Committees; and

- (B) 09-DLSS7 – investigating the possibility of a grant from Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) for developing Council Home Information Packs should be considered by the Executive.

595 PROPOSED LEISURE FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2009/10

A report was submitted seeking approval for fees and charges at the Council's leisure facilities, as proposed by Sports Leisure Management (SLM), the Council's contractors.

SLM had taken over the Council's leisure facilities. It was intended that there would be substantial development at Grange Paddocks and Hartham subject to the approval of robust business cases and granting of planning consent.

A Member queried whether the charges complied with the contract. The Director of Customer and Community Services agreed to check this before the meeting of the Executive when the charges were to be considered.

DCCS

Members expressed concern that the charge for large charities galas/sponsored swim was being raised to the same level as for commercial events and decided to comment on this to the Executive as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the leisure fees and charges proposed by SLM for 2009/10 in Appendix A7 of the report now submitted should be approved with the exception of the charge for large charities' galas/sponsored swim which it was proposed be increased to the same level as commercial events.

596 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2009/12

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The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the three year Corporate Strategic Plan. This outlined what the Authority would be striving to achieve in the next three years. The Committee was asked to make recommendations on it to the Executive.

It was reported that details of how the Council had performed against its targets each year would continue to be reported through the Annual Report. Parts of the plan had not been finalised and authority was being sought to allow the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to make any final non-material changes.

Members studied the Plan in detail and decided to make the comments now detailed to the Executive.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee considers that:

(A) the draft Corporate Strategic Plan in Appendix A8 of the report now submitted should be approved subject to the following comments:

1. an outline summary of the Local Development Framework (LDF) be added to Section 3;
2. the percentage figure given for Council Tax increases be reviewed by the Executive;
3. the term "Community Toilet Scheme" be explained in terms which will be understood by the public;
4. the second runway at Stansted airport be added as an example of unwanted development on page 11 of the document;
5. some drafting changes as discussed at the

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meeting be made in the interests of using plain English and making the document “user-friendly” for the public; and

(B) the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council should be given authority to make final non-material changes to the Plan.

597 CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - APRIL TO DECEMBER 2008

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The Director of Internal Services submitted an exception report on the performance of the key indicators related to Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for April to December 2008.

A Member asked if the Council would spend the whole of the Capital Programme before the end of the financial year. Officers assured him this would be achieved to a large extent.

The Chairman drew attention to a new National Indicator for new business registration (NI171) which would be an important indication of economic activity. Officers added that this would be included in the Healthcheck report to the Committee in May 2009.

Members considered the report and decided to inform the Executive it had no comments on the Corporate Healthcheck on this occasion.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be informed that the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee has no comments on the Corporate Healthcheck - April to December 2008.

598 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive submitted a report inviting the Committee to review its Work Programme.

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The Chairman commented that the work programme for 2009/10 would be considered at the meeting of the Committee in April 2009.

RESOLVED - that the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

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