

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 27 MAY 2014, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor G Jones (Chairman).
Councillors S Bull, J Mayes, W Mortimer,
T Page, M Pope, J Ranger, G Williamson
and J Wing.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, P Phillips, P Ruffles
and S Rutland-Barsby.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Ceri Pettit	- Corporate Planning and Performance Manager
Neil Sloper	- Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

26 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor T Page and seconded by
Councillor S Bull that Councillor G Williamson be
appointed Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Business
Scrutiny Committee for the 2014/15 civic year.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken,

Councillor G Williamson was appointed Vice–Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for the 2014/15 civic year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor G Williamson be appointed Vice–Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for the 2014/15 civic year.

27 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Wyllie.

28 MINUTES – 18 MARCH 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed new and returning Members to the first meeting of the Committee in the 2014/15 civic year. The Chairman encouraged Members to suggest items for the work programme. He also encouraged the Committee to continue the work of the Committee between meetings and to ask questions of Officers when confronted with complicated issues.

30 WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Committee's future work programme for 2014/15, the detail of which had been set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report now submitted.

Councillor J Ranger commented that a good issue for scrutiny would be the emerging District Plan. The Scrutiny Officer advised caution in that Members would be walking a fine line in terms of what they would be able

to scrutinise in respect of the District Plan.

Following comments from Councillors J Ranger and T Page, the Chairman stated that financial implications of planning appeals and the income and expenditure of the Development Management function could be added to his list for potential future topics for the work programme and he would take the topic away to discuss in more detail.

In response to a comment from Councillor J Wing in respect of economic development, the Chairman reminded Members that a report would be submitted to the July meeting of the Committee relating to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP). He stated that economic development was on his list for potential future topics for the work programme.

The Chairman reminded Members that they might wish to consider extending invites to Executive Members to address the Committee on specific agenda items. He advised that Councillor M Tindale could attend the August meeting in respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Committee approved the 2014/15 work programme, as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the work programme, as now detailed, be approved.

31 EAST HERTS IMPROVEMENT PLAN – FINAL MONITORING REPORT

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report that monitored the delivery against the improvement plan that had been agreed by the Executive in June 2013, in response to the Council's Peer Challenge and Executive Away day.

Members were reminded that it had been agreed that the

plan would be monitored six monthly by Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for a period of one year. The 7 outstanding actions were detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C'.

In response to a query from Councillor T Page, the Committee was advised that the full Peer Challenge report had been sent to all Members and was also available online on the Councils website. Councillor M Pope referred to Action 16 and the review of financial and procurement regulations. Members were advised that a full time Officer appointment would ensure a more strategic approach to procurement also towards financial and procurement regulations.

Members were also advised that the IT Strategy had been delayed and was now due for completion by the end of June 2014, following Public Services Network compliance that had delayed the initial work. Actions to allow investment in property funds were underway and it was anticipated that investments could be made into funds during August 2014. The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the monitoring report be received and the outstanding actions be absorbed into 2014/15 Service Plans.

32 SERVICE PLAN MONITORING REPORT – OCTOBER 2013 TO MARCH 2014

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance and Support Services submitted a report in respect of the Council's achievements against its priorities for 2013/14, as well as details of the 16 service plan actions that were outstanding from 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Members were referred to paragraph 2.1 of the report for a detailed analysis of the 2013/14 service plans. Essential Reference Paper 'B' contained details of the outstanding 16 service plan actions.

Councillor J Ranger expressed concerns that the Micro Hydro Scheme for Hertford Theatre had not yet been the subject of a planning application. He congratulated Officers on achievements against the Service Plans.

In response to a query from the Chairman, the Director of Finance and Support Services advised that the revisions to the Business Continuity Plan had a revised completion date due to the roll out of new IT infrastructure. Members were advised that Officers were confident that the new deadline would be met.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the progress against the Council's priorities and the status of the outstanding actions detailed in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Service Plan actions be received.

33 2013/14 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR OUTTURNS

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance and Support Services submitted a report detailing the performance indicators that the Council was required to monitor and publish annually in the Annual Report. The purpose of the report was to advise Members of the performance outturns for 2013/14 and any changes to targets.

Members were advised that the February to March 2014 Healthcheck, which had been included within this report as an Essential Reference Paper, set out the finance and performance monitoring for the March/Quarter 4 for 2014.

Councillor J Ranger referred to where a number of Performance Indicators (PIs) showed a decline in performance. The Director of Finance and Support Services stated that although the PIs show a decline in performance when comparison is made to the previous financial year it did not mean that they were off target.

Councillor Ranger referred to a number of variances in the committed budget for a number of items referred to in the Healthcheck. The Director of Finance and Support Services stated that Corporate Management Team was generally willing to permit the commitment of extra funds if this was required to ensure the completion of a project that was nearing its conclusion.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the 2013/14 Performance Indicator Outturns report be received; and

(B) the February to March 2014 Corporate Healthcheck report be received.

34 DATA PROTECTION ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN –
PROGRESS AND CLOSURE REPORT

The Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services submitted a report updating the Committee in respect of the implementation of the Council's Data Protection Action Plan. Members were invited to comment on progress to date.

In response to a query from Councillor J Mayes regarding the data protection guidance detailed at paragraphs 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 of the report now submitted, the Head of Information Customer and Parking Services reiterated the advice of the Office of the Information Commissioner, which was that all Members should individually register themselves as data controllers.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the implementation of the Council's Data Protection Action Plan be noted and endorsed.

35 CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

The Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services submitted a report providing an outline of the steps that were required to define the Council's Customer Service Strategy for 2014 – 2020. The report also presented proposals for Member involvement.

Members were advised that the Council's current strategy had been approved in 2008 for a period of 4 years and the Authority needed to update this strategy to drive the approach of the Council in terms of service provision and delivery over the next 5 years.

The Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services detailed the outcomes of current strategy. Members were given an overview of strategic planning for service delivery and the Head stated that the Customer Services Strategy would set the Council's strategic goals and would shape future decisions regarding the services provided by the Authority.

The Chairman reminded Members of two Member consultation workshops. The first had been arranged for 6.30 pm at Wallfields on 4 September 2014 and the second would take place at 1.30 pm at Charringtons House, Bishop's Stortford on 9 September 2014.

In response to a query from Councillor J Wing, the Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services advised that the Council's "Here to Help" programme included encouraging Officers to signpost customers on the phone to the right person or find the appropriate phone number. The Director of Finance and Support Services commented that the Customer Services Strategy was particularly important in the context of the Council's role as a community leader.

The Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services advised that the strategy would guide the Authority regarding the best ways to deliver services to suit the

residents of East Herts. The strategy would also assist with delivering services dynamically for residents. The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the approach to define the Council’s Customer Service Strategy for 2014 – 2020 be noted and endorsed.

The meeting closed at 9.17 pm

Chairman
Date