

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 11
JUNE 2019, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Wyllie (Chairman)
Councillors S Bell, M Brady, K Crofton,
I Devonshire, H Drake, J Frecknall,
M Goldspink, D Hollebbon, J Ranger,
D Snowdon, M Stevenson, N Symonds and
A Ward-Booth

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Alder, A Hall and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Ben Wood	- Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy

46 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor H Drake and seconded by Councillor I Devonshire that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed new and returning Members to the meeting. He provided a brief summary of the role of scrutiny in terms of challenging policy decisions and the performance of services.

48 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted the updated Terms of Reference for Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

49 AGREEMENT OF THE MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ANY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman referred Members to the Terms of Reference and Scoping Document in relation to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to evaluate the outcomes of the Council's approach to parking in East Herts, with reference to the Council's Climate Change principles.

The Democratic Services Officer explained that Members' comments were being sought on the document and of the need to nominate Members to serve on the Task and Finish Group. Members' views were also being sought as to whether the scoping document and approach to parking in East Herts delivered any benefits in terms of sustainable transport and climate change.

The Head of Communications Policy and Strategy provided background information into the development of the scoping document.

Councillor H Drake suggested that document should be expanded to include a review of residents' parking zones, especially where policy was not being applied. Councillor M Brady suggested that the remit be widened to include parking on grass verges outside of homes.

Councillor D Hollebon suggested that the impact of air quality and air pollution on residents be an issue for further review. Members' suggestions were supported.

In response to a query from Councillor Ward-Booth, the Head of Communications, Policy and Strategy provided background information around the development of a parking policy.

The Chairman sought Members' views regarding the timing of Task and Finish Groups and sought nominations from those Members who wished to participate on the work of the Task and Finish Group. Members supported the suggestion that they be held on an evening and that the T&F Group comprise five Members.

Councillors S Bell, I Devonshire, H Drake, M Stevenson and J Wyllie indicated their wish to be included on the Task and Finish Group.

It was moved by Councillor J Wyllie and seconded by Councillor I Devonshire that the scoping document, as amended, be approved and that the membership of the Task and Finish Group include those Members who wished

to participate, as detailed. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the scoping document, as amended, be approved as the basis of the Task and Finish Group’s Terms of Reference;

(B) the membership of the Task and Finish Group be determined by the Chairman, to include Councillors S Bell, I Devonshire, H Drake, M Stevenson and J Wyllie and any other Members of the Council where they have a particular interest or expertise to bring to the work of the Group; and

(C) Meetings of the Task and Finish Groups be held during the evening.

50 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2019/20

On behalf of the Scrutiny Officer, Members were provided with a draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Members’ views sought in relation to questions which could be asked in relation to the services updates on Waste and the Website which would be considered at the next meeting, on 17 September 2019.

Councillor M Goldspink queried the need to obtain detailed information regarding underperformance of the Waste Service, in advance of the meeting of the next meeting. The Chairman reminded Members that they could approach Executive Members and seek information, at any time.

In relation to Waste, Members sought further information

on:

- the large fluctuations (1st graph) on a month to month basis, on missed collections and sought clarification on this issue;
- Regarding recycling and composting (2nd graph) and the target of 50%; the variations and reasons for the targets not being achieved;
- The need to include North Herts' figures in the breakdown;
- Of the fact that the Council had a unified waste and disposal policy and for feedback in relation to whether this was a long term ambition or not viable unless forced to do so by the Government.

Members requested that the Portfolio Holder whose remit covered Waste Services be invited to the meeting.

In relation to the Website, the Head of Communications and Policy commented that each of the Council's web pages had a feedback mechanism (Gov.Metric) which enabled an individual to feed back information on the web page information being reviewed. He undertook to provide Members with a recent report about website usage.

Members expressed their concerns about:

- the impact (slowness) of using different browsers;
- IT as a service and the Laptops (inability to log on). A Member felt that the service was underperforming and of the difficulties that "silver surfers" experienced in trying to navigate the Council's website;
- Of the need to promote better use of front pages to

allow quicker access to information.

In relation to items on the draft Work Programme, Members supported the following changes to the draft:

- Website Customer Satisfaction be moved to the meeting on 4 February 2020;
- The IT Service be included on the work programme for the meeting on 17 September 2019;
- Pre-Planning Advice be removed from 5 November and included on the agenda for the meeting on 4 February 2020;
- The Parking (final report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group) be reported to Members on 10 December 2019; and
- Hertford Town Centre (blight issue) be removed from the agenda on 4 February and included on the agenda for the meeting on 5 November 2019

Councillor K Crofton referred to the IT Service and questioned whether the shared service was reducing costs given that the Council contributed £2.5M a year to the service. He suggested that the Portfolio Holder for the Shared Service and the ICT Partnership Manager be invited to the meeting on 17 September 2019. This was supported.

Members requested that at some point during the civic year, Executive Members be requested to present their aims and objectives to Members. This was supported.

It was moved by Councillor J Wyllie and seconded by Councillor K Crofton that the draft Work Programme, as amended be approved. After being put to the meeting and

a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the draft Work Programme as amended, be approved;

(B) the Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy provide members with the most recent Gov. Metric report.

51 URGENT ITEMS

Although not an urgent item of business, the Chairman allowed Councillor Ward-Booth the opportunity to express his concern that meetings of the Committee were currently confined to the single venue of the Council Offices at Hertford. He suggested that alternative venues such as The Rhodes, Bishop's Stortford Town Council and Schools, within the District should be used as alternative venues for Overview and Scrutiny Meetings. The Chairman and a number of other Members supported this view as they felt it enabled residents to better communicate and interact with the Council and become more familiar with the decision making process.

Councillor D Hollebon reminded Members that East Herts once had a Council Chamber in Bishop's Stortford but that this former venue was now a car park. She hoped that when the new Civic Centre was built, that meetings could be held there but in the interim, supported the use of venues at locations such as Buntingford, Sawbridgeworth, Ware and other sites. She felt that there was a need to be more inclusive and approachable to residents and that by moving away from Hertford (on an irregular basis) would help achieve this. Councillor M Goldspink supported other

Members' views on this issue adding that many people in Bishop's Stortford felt neglected. Councillor J Ranger supported a need to change the location. Councillors K Crofton and M Stevenson did not support a suggestion to change the location of meetings, adding that Hertford was the HQ and complied with essential needs such as microphones and accessibility.

It was moved by Councillor A Ward-Booth and seconded by Councillor H Drake that Member's views concerning the need to change the venue of Overview and Scrutiny Committee be given further consideration. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Member's views regarding the need to change the venue of Overview and Scrutiny Committee be given further consideration.

The Chairman raised the issue of Public Speaking and asked Members whether they wanted the public to speak at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that Meetings of Development Management committee had this arrangement in place. A number of Members supported such a proposal adding that this added transparency and openness of decision making. It was noted that further advice would need to be provided by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

It was moved by Councillor J Wyllie and seconded by Councillor D Snowdon that the proposal to seek to introduce public speaking at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be supported. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared

CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that further information be sought from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on a proposal to introduce public speaking at future meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Chairman
Date