

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman)
Councillors E Bedford, K Crofton, G Jones,
T Page, P Phillips, M Pope, J Ranger and
J Wing

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors S Bull and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Organisational Services
Lorna Georgiou	- Performance and Improvement Co-ordinator
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services

343 APOLOGY

An apology was submitted on behalf of Councillor G Williamson. It was noted that Councillor K Crofton was in attendance as a substitute for him.

344 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 August 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and

signed by the Chairman.

345 MTFP - REVENUES AND BENEFITS/HR

A report was submitted on behalf of the Director of Internal Services to update the Committee on the Human Resources support reduction and the Revenues and Benefits invest to save option, as had been requested by the Committee as part of a review of the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan).

Members expressed concern at the speed and extent of the reduction in Human Resources support. They felt Shared Services needed to be explored to ensure the resilience and standard of the service. In addition, further work was needed to ensure that more PDRs (Personal Development Reviews) were completed.

The Head of People and Organisational Services explained that it was planned that managers would take more responsibility for Human Resources matters. They had received core management training and would receive further training on Human Resources. This training was already ongoing in relation to the current restructure.

Members asked for more up-to-date information on the Revenues and Benefits activities. The Director of Customer and Community Services undertook to request an update report for the next meeting.

The Committee decided to make the comments detailed below to the Executive in addition to receiving the revised report on the Revenues and Benefits section.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Executive be informed that Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) accepts the direction taken for the Human Resources section but is concerned at the speed of changes which could jeopardise this excellent service;

- (2) believes that some key tasks need to be achieved before these changes e.g. improving completion of PDRs (Personal Development Reviews); and
 - (3) considers that resilience through Shared Services needs to be developed before these changes; and
- (B) Officers provide up-to-date information on the review of the Revenues and Benefits service and a full update report be provided to the next meeting.

346 SHARED SERVICES

The Head of People and Organisational Services gave an update on progress on Shared Services. She said that East Herts and North Herts District Councils and Stevenage Borough Council were committed to exploring Shared Services for areas such as facilities management, human resources, payroll, ICT, print and estates. Workshops had been held to explore the possibilities and develop options for structure, standards and costs. Areas of agreement and differences had been identified. A Strategic Business Case had been drawn up for consideration by the Executive on 8 November 2011. The Strategic Business case showed the possibility of savings above target, economies of scale and increased resilience for services. Following the approval of the Strategic Business Case, a more detailed case would be developed including governance, performance and location.

Councillor J Ranger requested that Scrutiny Committees be given the opportunity to comment before the final decision was taken on Shared Services for the services each one dealt with. He asked that the document on Shared Services produced by a task and finish group be circulated as part of this scrutiny. He commented on the good progress already made.

The Committee decided to make the comments now detailed to the Executive.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be informed that the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee (A) welcomes the progress on Shared Services; and

(B) believes that Scrutiny Committees should scrutinise Shared Service agreements for appropriate services before they are finalised.

347 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report supporting the Committee in reviewing and planning its work programme.

It was noted that the Committee had asked for a further report on Revenues and Benefits in November.

The Chairman undertook to raise concerns over the lack of a paper version of the Members’ Handbook as Members complained of the difficulty in finding information on the intranet.

Councillor J Ranger requested that the budget consultation take place at Scrutiny Committees and not online as had been trialled unsuccessfully last year.

RESOLVED – that the work programme now submitted be approved subject to the addition of an up-to-date report on the Revenues and Benefits section in November.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Chairman
Date