

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
TUESDAY 20 MARCH 2012, AT 7.00 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors S Bull.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
Paul Pullin	- Economic Development Manager
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Neil Sloper	- Head of Customer Services and Parking

717 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held  
on 29 November 2011 be confirmed as a correct  
record and signed by the Chairman.

718 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that an item on Data Sharing, which should have been reported to this meeting, was part of a wider review of Data Protection which was due to be completed by the end of April 2012. A one-year action plan was anticipated, which would include Data Sharing.

719 HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report providing an update on the development of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) nationally and locally and the progress made by Hertfordshire LEP in setting its priorities.

The Economic Development Manager provided a summary of the background leading to the establishment of the LEPs, which had superseded the Regional Development Agencies. Their objective was to provide vision, knowledge and strategic leadership to drive sustainable private sector growth and job creation in the locality within a set of priorities established by a LEP Board, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report now submitted. The Economic Development Manager stated that East Herts was well represented on the Board.

The Chairman clarified the position with regard to the Hertfordshire Community Covenant, which aimed to ensure that armed forces personnel were not disadvantaged because of their mobility in terms of access to schools, dentistry and services.

Councillor J Ranger referred to the small amount of money LEPs had access to in comparison to the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and stressed that business should be leading and proactive in order to achieve any beneficial outcomes.

The Economic Development Manager assured Members

that the business leaders were very committed to the proposal. Councillor J Ranger asked that Officers ensure that they linked up with Ashridge Business School and the University of Hertfordshire to support the LEP to reach its full potential.

Councillor T Page expressed concern regarding East Herts Member representation on the LEP. He questioned why the Hertfordshire Nature Partnership should be considered a priority. The Chairman explained the basis of Member representation and the role played by Stevenage Borough Council.

Councillor J Wing stressed that LEPs should be driven by business or they would fail. He referred to the success of the Shropshire LEP and their pro-activity within the business community and in involving ministers in central Government. He sought clarification on how the Council was contributing to the LEP. The Economic Development Manager explained that its contribution was in “kind” i.e. that of Officers’ time, knowledge, and advice.

The Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

720 CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK (C3W) - PROGRAMME REVIEW

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The Head of Customer Services / C3W Programme Head submitted a report reviewing the Council’s vision, the benefits achieved following the Changing the Way We Work (C3W) programme and in respect of the lessons learnt for future programmes. The projects were categorised under the key themes, the detail of which was set out in the report and attached at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report now submitted.

The Chairman referred to page 28 (and page 35 of the subsequent report) and reminded Members that the report inferred that between 20 July 2010 and 20 March

2011 there had been no reports to members regarding progress on C3W. It was noted that a CBS meeting had been cancelled during the 2010/11 civic year but that Members had been provided with timely information via the Members' Information Bulletin in October 2010.

Councillor J Ranger referred to the External Auditors' review of the programme and their three recommendations relating to future large project work. He felt that the report should have specifically highlighted the lessons learnt from the exercise and how these could be used in the future. Councillor Ranger stated that keeping a formal record of the key strategic lessons learned as a result of the C3W process, would be a valuable exercise and asked that this be undertaken and reported back to Members. This was supported.

In response to a query from Councillor J Wing regarding the separate or dual roles of Officers in managing the change process, the Director of Internal Services explained that having dedicated staff for particular functions came about as a result of the learning process around IT. The Council now had a Business Improvement Team which provided project management as their "day job".

The Committee noted the report and asked that Officers report back on the key strategic lessons learned as a result of the C3W process.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) Officers report back on the key strategic lessons learnt as a result of the C3W process.

721 CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK (C3W) - REVIEW OF PROGRAMME SCRUTINY

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The Head of Customer Services and C3W Programme Head submitted a report concerning the governance and scrutiny of the Changing the Way We Work (C3W)

programme, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report now submitted.

A review by the External Auditor of audit and scrutiny arrangements recommended that six monthly reports be delivered to Members including a scrutiny evaluation of the programme. It was noted that Members had received a total of 10 detailed reports on the C3W programme and governance arrangements. The C3W programme had now concluded.

The Chairman, as in the earlier report, reminded Members that they had received regular, brief updates via the Members' Information Bulletin and a full/detailed report in October 2010.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

722 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTH CHECK – JANUARY 2012

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The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on the finance and performance monitoring for East Herts Council for the period January / Quarter 3: 2012.

The Director of Internal Services clarified the position regarding the Net Projected Variance of £182,000 and assured Members that the payroll estimates were within budget, advising that a saving of £400,000 would be achieved within the next financial year. Updates were provided on the capital programme and clarification was provided in relation to Capital Monitoring 2011/12 following a query by Councillor T Page regarding the Apton Road Car Park.

Councillor J Ranger expressed concern regarding the "red" issue relating to payment of invoices. He also expressed concern regarding an increase in short term sickness levels. The Director of Internal Services

explained how the sickness levels were recorded, stating that an element of “seasonality” should be read within the target to avoid any misrepresentation of the figures as presented. This was understood and Members informed that the targets for the forthcoming 2012/13 year had already been set and agreed.

The Committee received the report and agreed that an element of “seasonality” be considered within the short term sickness targets at the next round of target setting to avoid any misrepresentation of the figures.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) that a ‘seasonally adjusted’ target be considered in future for the short term sickness indicator in order to avoid the figures being misrepresented.

#### 723 WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Committee’s future provisional work programme for 2012/13, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report now submitted. It was noted that committee dates for the start of the 2013/14 civic year had now been agreed.

It was a request by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Head of Customer Services to bring the report on ‘Comments, Compliments and Complaints’ to the first meeting of the new civic year rather than to the second one. This was supported. It was also agreed that a further report by the Head of Customer Services (C3W - Key Strategic Lessons Learnt) and a report on Data Protection and Data Sharing would both need to be included within the 2012/13 work programme.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that there would be two Scrutiny workshops arranged for 17 and 24 April 2012, which would cover Evaluation and consider future topics

for scrutiny. An item would also be included in the new LINK Magazine asking the public for potential scrutiny topics.

Councillor G Jones expressed concern concerning the start time of 6.30pm for the workshops. Members were advised that if attendance provided difficult, comments could be forwarded electronically or on paper if necessary. Councillor J Ranger suggested that attendance at these workshops should be mandatory for all Scrutiny Chairmen. The Chairman undertook to contact his fellow Chairmen in this regard.

Councillor J Ranger referred to the need for further clarification in terms of where services fell in terms of responsibility. The Scrutiny Officer advised that, given the recent changes within the council, it was time to review the committees' Terms of Reference as currently set out in the Constitution and this was under consideration.

The Committee approved the report, as amended.

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

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

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