MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 17 JULY 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman)
             Councillors E Bedford, S Bull, J Mayes,
             W Mortimer, T Page, J Ranger, G Williamson
             and J Wing.

ALSO PRESENT:

             Councillors K Crofton and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

             Lorraine Blackburn   - Democratic
                                     Services Officer
             Marian Langley   - Scrutiny Officer
             Alan Madin   - Director of Internal
                                     Services

192   APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor G
Jones. It was noted that Councillor S Bull was
substituting for Councillor G Jones.

193   MINUTES - 29 MAY 2012

In respect of Minute 57 - Review of comments,
compliments and complaints April to 2011 to March 2012,
the Chairman referred to the comments made at the last
Council meeting held on 4 July 2012. The Chairman
stated that he was satisfied that the Minutes were a
correct representation of what had occurred at the
meeting on 29 May 2012. Councillor J Wing agreed that
the Minutes were a correct representation of what was
said. He stated that in view of the comments and emails

which had subsequently been exchanged, these would be reviewed and a response circulated.

> RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

194   CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that the report on the Annual Governance Statement had been delayed and would be submitted to Members in August 2012 as the public consultation period had been extended.

195   TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON ICT

The Director of Internal Services submitted a report proposing the terms of reference for a Task and Finish Group in respect of ICT. He urged Members to focus on a particular aspect of ICT for the terms of reference.

In response to a query from Councillor J Mayes, the Director provided an overview of "cloud based technology". Councillor T Page queried whether "cloud based technology" should be investigated carefully in terms of risk to privacy and security and suggested that the whole structure of ICT should be reviewed.

Councillor J Ranger outlined the role, structure, function and reporting lines of a Task and Finish Group. He suggested that the Task and Finish Group should have a more finite and narrower focus for it to achieve something useful and add value. He suggested that the focus could be the public's use of the Council's website, i.e. making it easier for them to use and provide efficient ways of interacting with the Council.

Councillor G Williamson supported the suggestion, adding that the Council should be exploring technology which made residents' use of the website easier. Councillor J Ranger also referred to the difficulties of software used in

different sections of the Council and of their integration.

The Chairman referred to shared services and how this would impact on the Council's ICT. He supported the suggestion that the focus should be on making the Council's systems easier to use for its customers. Councillor J Wing agreed that customer focus and customer interaction was fundamental to the remit of the Task and Finish Group.

The Director of Internal Services reminded Members that staffing and other resource demands would mean that a Task and Finish Group could not be established until later in the year. As a way forward, he suggested that a training event for Members could be organised to provide a focus on what other customer focused issues the Task and Finish Group could eventually review. This was supported.

Members supported the suggestion that a Task and Finish Group be established to review the customer experience of the Council's website with a view to encouraging greater usage. Members also supported the suggestion that a training event be arranged around the customer–focused experience of the website.

> RESOLVED – that (A) a Task and Finish Group be established to review the customer experience of the Council's website; and
>
> (B)   a training event be arranged for the next meeting centred on the customer–focused experience of the website.

196   REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Director of Internal Services submitted a report concerning the Council's representation on outside bodies. The Director reminded Members of the informality of the process, in that nominations on outside bodies were within the Leader's "gift", as set out within the Council's Constitution and that no formal nomination processes existed. The Chairman expressed concern that Members did not know what was expected of them and suggested that there should be a "generic expectation" to assist Members.

The Director of Internal Services explained the risk concerning a nominee acting as a Trustee on an outside body. The Director reminded Members that a list of representatives could be viewed on the Members' pages. He referred to the link in the report now submitted.

Members expressed a wish to introduce a level of formality and rationale, into the nomination making process and that those Members should be provided with guidance on what was expected of them on the external body. They also supported the need to formalise the reporting feedback procedures.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that (A) Council representation on outside bodies be maintained; and

(B)   the Leader be invited to submit the list of his nominees to each Annual Council and provide Members with guidance on what was expected of them, with consideration being given to formalising the reporting feedback procedures.

197   SHARED SUPPORT SERVICE CONSULTATION ON DRAFT
        DETAILED BUSINESS CASE

The Director of Internal Services submitted a report outlining the draft detailed business case in respect of shared services with North Herts District Council (NHDC) and Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted. The Director stated that 850 representations had been received and that due to the overwhelming response, Corporate Management Team needed time to consider the content of those representations.

It was noted that the Executive had already agreed to the development of a detailed business case supporting a shared service with the two Councils on 8 November 2011. The business case showed an opportunity to achieve financial savings of about £0.8m per year shared equally across the three Councils. The Director of Internal Services explained how the baseline budgets of each Council had been reviewed and how this determined how the savings would be apportioned and shared equally.

The Director of Internal Services highlighted the need for all Councils to come together under a single infrastructure and that this would need to be managed and paced to mitigate risk. He stated that ICT proposals would be closely reviewed and that a peer review would be undertaken.

In response to a query from Councillor J Mayes concerning pension rights, the Director of Internal Services explained the protection arrangements under TUPE legislation.

The Director of Internal Services stated that a large core of staff were enthusiastic about the proposals, citing those employees in IT who saw it as an opportunity to "buy in" expertise. By way of example, the Director referred to Stevenage Borough Council's resource of Business Improvement to manage change and the ability to "buy

into" that resource.

Councillor J Ranger supported the concept but was concerned at the speed at which the proposal could happen. He referred to "problems" which might need to be resolved before all Councils could come together. The Director of Internal Services explained the pace of the transitional arrangements and how these would be managed.

Members supported the draft business case for the shared service and agreed that the Executive be advised that measures be introduced to ensure that staff who were affected by the proposals, would be adequately resourced and that assurances be provided that the pace of change would not impact negatively on service delivery.

>RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that (A) the draft business case for the shared service be supported; and

>(B)   measures be introduced to ensure that support for staff who were affected by the proposals, was adequately resourced and that assurances be provided that the pace of change would not impact negatively on service delivery.

198   SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Committee's future work programme for 2012/13, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" to the report now submitted.

The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that the Annual Governance Statement would be reported back to Members on 21 August, 2012. She also advised that the biennial Data Sharing Protocol would now be subsumed within a wider Information Security Policy report which would be incorporated into the Work Programme at a future date.

Members approved the Work Programme, as amended.

RESOLVED – that the Work Programme as amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Chairman	....
Date	....