

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
TUESDAY 28 MAY 2013, AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman).  
Councillors E Bedford, G Jones, J Mayes,  
T Page, M Pope, J Ranger, R Sharma,  
G Williamson and J Wing.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors S Bull, Mrs D Hollebon and  
P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Ceri Pettit	- Corporate Planning and Performance Manager
Andrew Pulham	- Parking Manager
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Neil Sloper	- Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

40 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor E Bedford and seconded by Councillor J Ranger that Councillor G Williamson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for the 2013/14 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 2013/14 civic year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor G Williamson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for the 2013/14 civic year.

41 MINUTES – 19 MARCH 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and in particular, Councillor R Sharma to his first meeting of the Committee. The Chairman encouraged Councillor Sharma to ask whatever questions he wished regarding the issues under discussion to aid his understanding of the scrutiny process.

43 DATA PROTECTION GOVERNANCE TRAINING

The Head of Information, Customer and Parking Services gave a presentation in respect of data protection and governance. Members were provided with background information in terms of what had been previously agreed by Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee in respect of data protection and information security.

The Committee was divided into 3 groups to discuss different aspects of data protection and information security in the context of the governance role of Members, Members' roles as Committee Members and Members' roles as Ward Councillors.

Officers provided feedback to the Committee following these discussions. The Chairman thanked Officers for the informative presentation and for coordinating the breakout and feedback sessions.

Members received the presentation.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

#### 44 EAST HERTS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report that set out the improvement plan for the Authority following on from the Peer Challenge review and the Executive's recent away day session to consider the recommendations and service priorities for 2014/15 onwards.

Members were reminded of the recent peer challenge review, which was part of the sector led improvement plan coordinated via the Local Government Association (LGA).

Councillor J Mayes commented that the results of the organisational culture questionnaire for the Council had indicated that a higher proportion of operational staff than senior Officers (Head of Service and above) had expressed an opinion that the Authority provided good customer service.

In response to a query from Councillor J Ranger in respect of when the Community Engagement checklist would be re-launched and made available to Members, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services undertook to provide a written

response after the meeting.

In response to a Member query, the Director of Finance and Support Services advised that the Authority had to consider new ways of delivering services in order to adapt to changing demands from customers, whilst also taking account of new methods and opportunities for service delivery and sources of funding.

Councillor G Jones stated that he welcomed the opportunity to get more involved with discussions regarding the development of work programmes for the Scrutiny Committees as outlined in one of the actions.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services advised that Officers welcomed the active involvement of Members and would support their greater role in shaping what each scrutiny had on its work programme.

The Committee suggested the following additions to the action plan:

- 11a – debates to be held at scrutiny meetings to revitalise and focus topics on Members' scrutiny priorities.
- 18 – action so early interventions might reduce future demands for services.
- 26a – include an event for Parish/Town council Members.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Improvement Plan be recommended to Executive for approval following consideration of the points raised on actions 11, 18 and 26, as now detailed; and

(B) the Improvement Plan be monitored on a six

monthly basis by Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for one year.

#### 45 2012/13 PERFORMANCE OUTTURNS

The Leader of the Council 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 2012/13 and any changes to targets.

Members were advised of the new ICT performance indicators as well as the new Leisure performance indicator. Members were also advised that a review was underway in respect of the most suitable performance measures for the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service.

Councillor J Mayes expressed concerns in respect of EHPI 184 and food establishments being “broadly” compliant with food hygiene law. The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager undertook to seek further information on the technical definition of ‘broadly’ and respond to Members after the meeting.

In response to a query from Councillor J Wing, Members were advised that performance monitoring of the leisure service was carried out by the Council’s Leisure Provider using Gov Metric devices which were also used in the Council’s receptions. Members were also reminded that a detailed report and analysis of leisure performance indicators had been received by Community Scrutiny Committee at their last meeting in March 2013 and all these papers were available on the website.

Councillor T Page commented on EHPI 3a, the percentage of under 16s swimming at the Council’s leisure facilities. He stated the actual number of under 16s using the pools was higher than that stated in the report. He also queried whether the figures included members of swimming clubs.

Councillor M Pope commented on the extra resources that had been allocated to help the performance of the Revenues and Benefits Service. Members were advised that the resources approved by the Executive on 4 September 2012 had made a difference and continued to provide intensive support to target backlogs and successfully reduce waiting times.

Councillor T Page commented on EHPI 197, in reference to the local biodiversity. He referred to the importance of better wildlife management in East Herts and it was suggested that Environment Scrutiny Committee might wish to review this indicator and the topic in more detail during the coming year. Councillor J Mayes referred to the importance of the prompt removal of fly tips, and was pleased with the excellent performance in the prompt removal of abandoned vehicles.

In response to a comment from Councillor J Ranger regarding an under spend in respect of certain economic development activity, the Director of Finance and Support Services advised that any under spend would be carried forward as part of the process of closing the accounts in 2012/13.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received;

(B) the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee supported the inclusion of performance indicators for the new ICT service within the Monthly Corporate Healthcheck it receives.

46 2012/13 SERVICE PLANS – END OF YEAR MONITORING REPORT

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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 2012/13,

as well as details of the 20 service plan actions that were outstanding from 2011/12.

In response to a query from the Chairman regarding publicity for community grants, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services advised that discussions had already taken place with the Communications team in respect of issuing a photo and press release for each community grant that was awarded by the Authority.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that a report in respect of all community grant applications and awards for the six months to the end of March 2013 would be submitted to the 25 June 2013 meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor T Page commented that, based on his conversations, the RingGo system for topping up parking tickets was not sufficiently well advertised and more should be done to promote and explain the advantages of RingGo. He stated that retailers should be encouraged to promote RingGo to customers who were worried about their parking ticket expiring whilst out shopping.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services stated that leaflets had already been distributed to retailers in Hertford and Bishop's Stortford in respect of RingGo. Councillor J Wing commented on whether a roadshow approach for advertising could be used to promote the benefits of RingGo.

In response to a query regarding air quality management, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services undertook to send a copy of the Air Quality Management Acton Plan to Members.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress against the Council's priorities and the status of the

outstanding actions detailed against the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Service Plan actions be received; and

(B) the Executive be advised that Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee considered that the car parking payment system 'RingGo' would probably benefit from an active marketing exercise as informal, local feedback appeared to indicate a low level of awareness of the scheme.

#### 47 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Committee's future work programme for 2013/14, the detail of which had been set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report now submitted.

Members were advised that the report in respect of the Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 and the 2013/14 action plan would now be submitted to the 27 August 2013 meeting of the Committee, to allow more time for public consultation.

The Director of Finance and Support Services advised that the Shared Services Business Plan for ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design would be scrutinised and approved at a special meeting of the Executive on 23 July 2013. Members were advised that the report could not come first to Corporate Business Scrutiny on 2 July as originally planned due to the time was required to allow for statutory consultation with staff and time for any responses to be reviewed and analysed.

The Scrutiny Officer invited Members to suggest items for inclusion on the Committee's work programme. She suggested a number of possible topics for scrutiny and wider discussion which had already been raised as part of the Members' scrutiny evaluation and planning workshop in April 2013.

Councillor J Ranger suggested a day long scrutiny event



relating to the Council’s asset base, which could be used to initiate wider discussions and also Task and Finish Groups focussing on more specific issues.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services encouraged Members to set their own scrutiny agenda rather than relying on Officers to submit reports for Members to consider. Councillor J Wing suggested that Members scrutinise the general area of economic development activities and business support, particularly the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

A new item on current asset holdings and economic development was agreed for the next meeting of Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee to initiate debate on these topics. The Committee approved the 2013/14 work programme, as amended.

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

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm

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