

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
10 MARCH 2015, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs D Hollebon (Chairman)
Councillors S Bull, G Cutting, J Jones,
P Moore, N Symonds, M Wood and J Wyllie

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, L Haysey, P Phillips,
P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Mark Kingsland	- Leisure Services Manager
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Julie Pomfrett	- Anti-Social Behaviour and Projects Officer
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Falko	- SLM Limited
Mathew Nicholson	- SLM Limited
Chris Yearly	- SLM Limited

575 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors J Mayes and K Warnell.

576 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

577 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to last week's Members' Information Bulletin and drew attention to the update in relation to the Council's Empty Homes Policy.

The Chairman welcomed Chief Inspector Gerry McDonald to the meeting who was in attendance to provide a perspective on the part of the Police, on the Implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act and its new powers. The Chairman also welcomed representatives from SLM Limited.

The Chairman stated that this was the last meeting of the civic year which, she said, had been interesting and informative. To those Members retiring she wished them a long and happy retirement.

The Chairman also stated that this was the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services' last meeting and wished him a long and happy retirement having done a splendid job and thanked him personally for his continuing support. On behalf of Members, the Chairman thanked Officers for their continuing hard work and support.

578 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASB, CRIME AND POLICING ACT - NEW POWERS

The Head of Community Safety and Licensing submitted a report on the Use and Implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the new powers

available to the Council.

The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Projects Officer gave a presentation which outlined what the new Act sought to achieve and summarised the six new powers available to the Council in relation to:

- Civic injunction
- Criminal Behaviour Order
- Community Protection Notice
- Public Spaces Protection Order
- Closure Notice /Order
- Dispersal Powers

The ASB Projects Officer explained that the Council, together with the Police, were joint lead agencies for the East Herts Community Safety Partnership (CSP) required by statute, to work together to reduce crime and disorder.

Chief Inspector Gerry McDonald summarised his concerns in relation to Closure Orders and Closure Notices, the limited resources of the Police and the need to work closely with the Council.

Councillor N Symonds referred to inaccurate information contained in leaflets and on the website about “Community Triggers”. Officers confirmed that this information had been amended. In response to a query from Councillor M Wood, Officers confirmed that the “Community Trigger” had been used on three occasions.

Councillor J Jones was pleased to see a reduced number of powers and queried whether any powers were or could be devolved to Towns or Parishes particularly in relation to Public Space Protection Orders. Officers confirmed that the powers were vested in the District or Borough Councils, as appropriate but that Towns or parishes would be closely consulted.

In response to a query from Councillor P Moore regarding how closely the Police worked with families and schools particularly in relation to truancy issues, Chief Inspector

McDonald confirmed that the Police did work closely with agencies on such matters and referred to the use of “Safety Net”, a web based application which was important in flagging up community and family issues with agencies. He stated that the East Herts Community Safety Partnership was the only CSP to reduce crime by 10%.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked the Chief Inspector for attending and for the presentation.

The Committee supported the recommendations as now detailed:

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that the Committee supports (A) authority for setting Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) fee rates being delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment;

(B) Fixed Penalty Notice income and costs awarded to East Herts District Council at Court being reinvested back into and ring-fenced to the ASB Service;

(C) records of the use of these powers being kept by the ASB Officer, to avoid duplication; and

(D) East Herts District Council leading on Closure Notices and Orders for Housing Association properties.

579 SLM LEISURE CONTRACT - YEAR 6

The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report on the sixth annual review of the Council’s leisure contract with Sport and Leisure Management Limited (SLM). The Leisure Services Manager provided a summary of the contract in terms of performance in relation to the contract specification and qualitative successes and improvements, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

The Leisure Services Manager outlined future opportunities to ensure that the Council’s leisure centre assets were

maintained effectively, improvements to environmental performance secured and carbon emissions reduced.

Councillor S Bull referred to the low satisfaction figures in relation to Ward Freman swimming pool in Buntingford, and of parents' dissatisfaction with the viewing area. He referred to the substantial increases in planning development now and planned for the next 10 years and the impact this would have on leisure demand.

The Head of Environmental Services referred to an extensive debate at a recent joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees during which, a number of Members had expressed a need to improve leisure provision, particularly in relation to football pitches and swimming. The Executive had subsequently agreed to a 2015/16 Service Plan Action to develop a strategy to improve leisure services in the context of sustainability. The Head of Environmental Services stated that there had been a national decline in swimming and that provision in East Herts was over-supplied when compared to most other Councils.

Councillor J Jones echoed Councillor Bull's concerns adding that Ward Freman had been neglected and needed financial investment. He supported the development of a proper strategy.

Councillor N Symonds was pleased to see that steps had been added to the Grange Paddocks swimming pool. She expressed concern at the increase in the price of private swimming lessons. Councillor N Symonds also referred to the fact that swimming teachers wore T-shirts in the pool and stated that people with poor body image and those from different cultural backgrounds be allowed to wear clothing in the pool. Mathew Nicholson explained that specific body costumes were available for particular groups of people and that the 1:1 swimming sessions had increased from £19.00 to £21.00. Mr Nicholson undertook to provide Members with a written explanation regarding the use of body suits.

In response to a query from Councillor G Cutting regarding the unhealthy snacks in vending machines at leisure centres,

Mr Nicholson undertook to review this and provide an update on what could be done to produce a healthy alternative.

Councillor M Wood stated that during the budget process, it had been suggested that Hartham Leisure Centre might be getting a 3G Football Pitch and queried whether this might be possible for Bishop's Stortford. The Head of Environmental Services confirmed that a pitch was planned for Hartham but that this had been delayed. It was hoped that one would also be provided at Grange Paddocks once the pitch at Hartham had been fully evaluated.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked representatives of SLM Leisure for attending the meeting.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the annual review of its sixth year's performance by the Council's leisure contactor Sport and Leisure Management, be received.

580 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - HEALTHCHECK
OCTOBER 2014 - JANUARY 2015

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the performance of key indicators relating to Community Scrutiny Committee for the period October 2014 to January 2015.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services stated that (EHPI 181 – Time taken to process housing benefit new claims and change events) was still "red". He hoped that the recruitment drive and advertising would secure more benefits staff.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that performance figures for October 2014 to January 2015 as detailed in the report now submitted, be received.

581 REPORT FROM THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PANEL

Councillor N Symonds, Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Panel stated that she had attended health meetings at Hertfordshire County Council and had played an active part in the health process. She referred to a new urgent care centre at the Lister Hospital and had had first hand experience of how 111 calls were handled.

Councillor Symonds referred to the full programme which the Health and Wellbeing Panel had experienced during the civic year, adding that the pinnacle of its success was, she thought, in relation to a review of Doctor's surgeries.

Councillor Symonds was pleased to see that health issues had been integrated within the Council's policies and services and thanked Claire Pullen, the Scrutiny Officer for her support in the process.

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

(B) the Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Panel meeting held on 24 February 2015 be received.

582 EVALUATION OF SCRUTINY AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

The Chairman submitted a report evaluating the work programme for 2014/15 and sought suggestions on which to develop a work programme for 2015/16 to be agreed at the next meeting of the civic year.

The Scrutiny Officer provided Members with an "Evaluating Scrutiny" form on which they could comment on last year's scrutiny process and identify areas of scrutiny for improvement by a deadline of 23 March 2015. It was noted that, subject to confirmation, there would be a new Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that as a result of comments to the Executive raised at the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees in February 2015, Community Scrutiny Committee would be

given the opportunity of reviewing its Fees and Charges. It was suggested that this be considered at the meeting on 22 September 2015. This was supported.

The Scrutiny Officer referred to the need for a Crime and Disorder item for consideration but a subject for discussion had yet to be identified.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that there would be “twilight training” at the start of the civic year on the Choice Based Lettings system to help new Members.

Councillor J Wyllie expressed concern that there had not been an item on the agenda in relation to the outcome of the Market Tendering process. The Executive Member for Economic Development explained that as the contract had not yet been signed there was no work to scrutinise. He suggested that this might be added to the Committee’s work programme. Members supported a suggestion that the work programme should be amended to include the outcome of the Market Tendering process.

Councillor J Wyllie referred to the need to review markets as a whole. The Scrutiny Officer stated that markets had been looked internally and externally, as part of a Task and Finish Group. She undertook to review the outcomes agreed by the Task and Finish Group to see if all the work had been undertaken. The Scrutiny Officer undertook to speak to the Executive Member for Economic Development on this issue and would focus on a date for the markets to be added to the work programme.

Councillor N Symonds stated that Members had visited Riversmead and Circle Anglia Housing Associations but had yet to meet with Aldwych. She asked that a report arising from those meetings should come to Scrutiny during 2015/16.

The Committee approved the report, as now amended.

RESOLVED – that (A) Members’ comments to be submitted separately as part of the evaluation exercise be used to frame the draft 2014/15 Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report; and

(B) the work programme, as amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman
Date