

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 – COMMUNITY AND HOUSING held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on
17 NOVEMBER 2004**

Present:- Councillor A R Row – Chairman.
Councillors M A Gayler, R T Harris, S Jones, A J Ketteridge,
E Tealby-Watson A Wattebot and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, M Dellow, M Purkiss, C Roberts and
J Sadler.

S1.21 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Corke.

S1.22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2004 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

S1.23 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Performance Management – Bin Collections

Councillor A J Ketteridge asked that a “failure to collect” be recorded in future in all cases of complaints made notwithstanding that a remedying collection may have been made in the following 24 hours. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to investigate whether this could be done within the limits of the criteria defining the data to be measured.

S1.24 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER

The Committee received the report of the Chief Accountant on provisional performance management results for the second quarter.

He explained, with references to the statistics in the report, that efforts were being made to identify trends in the results over periods of time.

A Member asked for further details of reference 2.23 in the report which dealt with removal of flytips, and another Member recalled that the service had been short-staffed in the first quarter. The Chief Accountant confirmed that the Council, being a small organisation, was dependant on small numbers of specialist staff, and staff turnover was increasing.

Members noted that performance results EC7 and EC9 required comparison with benchmark targets.

Councillor E Tealby-Watson commented unfavourably on the very small number of completed appraisals. She felt that an action plan was necessary

to remedy the situation. Members asked for a report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee and to the Resources Committee. They were concerned that the Chief Executive and the Human Resources Department should be alert to this problem.

Discussion took place also about standards of telephone answering. It was considered that the 510510 switchboard gave a prompt and excellent service, with a wonderful voice, but that some of the office phones rang for far too long. Members were concerned to express appreciation for the "real" answering service on the switchboard, but asked that standards be improved as regards voicemail.

Members asked that details be provided of 1030 compliments received (performance result SP8), and also requested details of how far the performance indicator data was used to advise future performance and policy, rather than merely providing an information bank.

S1.25

ROLE OF MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered a report by the Democratic Services Manager about Members role on outside bodies. This followed the Committee's request on 16 June 2004 that a questionnaire be sent to all Members to establish how useful were the contacts with outside bodies and how much representing the Council on outside bodies actually cost, and the review by the Committee of responses to the questionnaire at its September meeting.

It had been agreed that Members on outside bodies should produce an annual short report on the work of the organisation. The report of the Democratic Services Manager expressed the concern of the Chairman that the Council should continue to review the value of attending the outside bodies and that the proposed annual short reports on the work of each organisation should include a brief evaluation of the value to the Council of attendance and involvement with the relevant organisation.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the evaluation should form part of the short annual written report required from each Member as agreed at the last meeting.
- 2 the connection between outside bodies and particular Committees be re-established and a procedure be established for collation of reports and their submission to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- 3 in the event of failure to submit a report the Council be asked to consider whether the Member should continue to represent the Council on the particular outside body in the following year.

S1.26 **WORK PROGRAMME: COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Committee considered the report of Mr Ian Orton formerly the Council's Performance Manager on communications within the Council.

RESOLVED that the Communications and PR Officer submit a full report to the next meeting of the Committee.

S1.27 **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Leisure Manager presented a report on work undertaken to date on the best value review of services to young people.

She explained that data had been acquired as a result of a number of surveys. Young people had made a very clear plea for

- (i) provision of enough clean sanitary lavatories in schools and
- (ii) access to discounted leisure facilities.

The Primary Care Trust had been alerted to the request for lavatories.

Members discussed the report at length and commented that they found it most helpful. They asked for further information on holiday child care facilities, after school clubs, water bottle/water machine access in schools and provision of safe play/sports areas near children's homes.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

S1.28 **COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE – 2 NOVEMBER 2004**

At Members' request the Leisure Manager outlined the negotiations which had taken place with Leisure Connection at the meeting immediately before the Community and Leisure Committee meeting on 2 November 2004.

She explained that the identified problems of cleanliness, lack of staff in the gym, pricing, lack of instructors and cancellation of classes without adequate notice, were raised and were now being addressed in different ways by Leisure Connection staff and /or Council officers.

Councillor P Wilcock gave an update on possible action which might be taken as regards the Newport Youth Club.

The meeting ended at 9.17 p.m.