

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 9 MARCH 2006

Present:- Councillor A Dean – Chairman.
Councillors B M Hughes, V J T Lelliott, M J Savage and E Tealby-Watson.

Officers in attendance: - T Fennell, C Hughes, S Martin, M Perry, C Roberts and T Turner.

PS 7 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F E Silver and P A Wilcock.

PS 8 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Committee received from the Audit Manager a comprehensive report and presentation about this initiative. He distributed a copy of the Council's Risk Management Strategy and a copy of an Institute of Internal Auditors publication on "The Role of Internal Audit in Enterprise-wide Risk Management".

The Executive Manager (Corporate Governance) explained that constant monitoring of the risk register was inhibited by insufficient numbers of staff, but that the Risk Management Steering Group was expected to meet more often.

Members were of the view that a report on risk management should be brought to the Committee bi-annually.

It was noted that Councillor Lelliott was the Member Champion for Risk Management, and that the Audit Manager could not take responsibility for the management of individual risks, which were in general the responsibility of the Executive Managers or Committees. It was felt that implementation of the Risk Management Strategy must be the purview of the Risk Management Steering Group with input from Sarah McLagan's Project Management Strategy as a standard process for running a project.

Members also flagged up communications, training and the political/reputational risk of project outcomes, as subjects for deliberation and asked for an update on performance in the next risk management report.

PS 9 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07 TIMETABLE

The Performance Manager presented a report giving guidance on best value performance plans and the proposed timetable for the Best Value Performance Plan 2006/7. The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance explained the statutory requirement to produce and maintain

performance statistics, the way in which this linked with Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the consequences to the Council if the deadline dates were not met.

Members expressed the wish for the Committee's timetable to be drawn up so as to accommodate necessary deadlines for performance and associated reporting. They asked that an outline programme for the following year be provided at the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the tight deadlines imposed by the Best Value process and asks all officers for their help and support in meeting those deadlines.

PS 10

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TARGET SETTING BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07 2007/8 AND 2008/9

The Committee received the report of the Performance Improvement Manager on Performance Indicator Target Setting for the Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07 presenting the proposed Performance Indicator targets for 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09. Where appropriate, all 2006/2007 targets for Best Value Performance Indicators were challenging and aimed to reach the performance level of the top quartile of district council performers in 2004/05 outturns.

Members were informed that many of the Police-derived performance target figures had not yet been received.

They discussed the merits of several of the proposed targets and noted that many of them were prescribed by the Government.

Councillor V Lelliott declared an interest in so far as he was a member of the Saffron Walden Museum Management Committee.

The Chairman suggested that current indicators were predominantly ones of internal process, and that the Council should shift its focus to cover matters of importance to external observers eg street cleanliness, abandoned vehicles etc. He asked officers to give thought to such possible performance indicators for the future.

A query was also raised about planning deadlines and the timetables of parish and town councils.

RESOLVED that the Executive Manager Strategy and Performance prepares an appropriate letter to the Chief Constable for signature by the Chairman and submits a report to a future meeting of the Committee on adopting outward facing reputational performance indicators.

PS11

APPRAISALS

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Manager Human Resources on operation of the system of appraisals within the Council.

She informed the meeting that approximately 70% of last year's appraisals had been returned to Human Resources for recording. The programme for improving the appraisal process was in place and included monitoring by EMT and "Snowdrop". The forms had also been redesigned to make them more developmental and to link into a competency framework which had been designed with the assistance of the Essex County Council funded by an ODPM bid.

In answer to questions about previous appraisal completions, she explained that whilst the identity of non-returns was known, the improvements, with supporting training, were expected to lead to much better returns in the future.

RESOLVED that an update on this report be submitted to the Committee in the Summer.

PS 12

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

The Chairman reminded Members that it was inappropriate to take urgent other business because the meeting was an extraordinary one.

The meeting ended at 10.13 pm