

PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 14 JUNE 2006

Present:- Councillor A Dean – Chairman.
Councillors V J T Lelliott, and M J Savage.

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

PS 22 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M L Foley, A J Ketteridge, E Tealby-Watson and P A Wilcock.

The Chairman of the Committee asked whether any Member had any interest to declare and no interests were declared.

PS 23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 19 APRIL 2006

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 April 2006 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the addition of Councillor Lelliott's name to the list of those who submitted apologies for absence.

PS 24 MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that the "Covalent" demonstration had been postponed to a later meeting.

Officers confirmed that all necessary action had been taken under Minute PS22 (Corporate Performance Standards).

PS 25 PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME 2006/7

The Committee received the report of the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) providing an annual report on the Performance Select Committee 2005/06 as well as setting out the work programme for 2006/07.

An amended version of the report was tabled and the Chairman of the Committee asked that the Committee approve the work programme and the amended version of the report for submission to the next meeting of the Council.

He added that he thought the Council's Statement of Accounts Report should be considered by the Performance Select Committee, regardless of any time-tabling problems, and that a further meeting of the Committee should be arranged to enable the Performance Select Committee to have first sight of this report. The Audit Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the Committee was required to consider the Council's Statement of Internal Control, for which reminder the Chairman thanked him.

The Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) confirmed that the External Audit report would come to the August meeting of the Performance Select Committee.

Councillor Savage expressed concern about the time available to carry out necessary investigations arising from the report. The Audit Partnership Manager explained that all internal audit reports were now made available on the intranet and that Members would be advised by e mail as and when new ones were added. New reports would be e mailed to Members. It was thought that the pre-meeting would be a good opportunity to identify the aspects of reports which Members wished to investigate.

In answer to a question the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) confirmed that the corporate consultation strategy should be brought to the Performance Select Committee. Councillor Savage flagged up the importance of consulting community groups.

RESOLVED that the revised annual report on the Performance Select Committee 2005/06 and the work programme for 2006/07 be approved and submitted to the next meeting of the Council.

PS 26

ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND OPINION

The Committee received the report of the Audit Partnership Manager advising on work carried out by Internal Audit during 2005/06 and providing an overall opinion on the Council's control environment for 2005/06. The report also showed the state of compliance with The Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government (The Code).

In answer to questions the Audit Partnership Manager agreed to document the escalation processes governing monitoring and control of non-compliance and to circulate his report to a wider audience. The Chairman also asked him to provide on a future occasion a report on what criteria should be adopted for monitoring the performance of internal audit.

PS 27

INTERNAL AUDIT - PERSONNEL

The Committee considered the Report of the Audit Partnership Manager incorporating a recent internal audit of Personnel with a management action plan. This item had been included in the agenda in response to Members request that internal audit reports were discussed at the Performance Select Committee.

The Executive Manager (Human Resources) answered questions about the improving appraisals situation and explained work undertaken to verify eligibility for employment and to address and review the steps to be taken should an employee advise that they feel they have been exposed to asbestos.

PS 28 **BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the report of the Performance Improvement Manager recommending a different approach to Best Value Reviews (BVRs) using Uttlesford District Council's Organisational Re-engineering (OR) programme.

The Committee was concerned that Members should be involved in any reviews which might take place as successor reviews to the original best value service reviews and have an adequate understanding of Organisational Re-engineering. The Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) agreed to timetable this matter for the next meeting and to send out an extract describing the ICM project.

PS 29 **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) updating Members on the CPA framework for district councils. The Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) stressed the importance of the option preferred in the most recent consultation whereby the Commission would identify whether further activity was required to assess whether the council should be re-categorised. The Commission would undertake re-categorisation activity only where there was significant evidence to indicate a potential change in CPA category. This would apply only where councils could demonstrate performance significantly better than that identified in the original corporate assessment, and where the council wanted to be considered for re-categorisation. Direction of travel statements would play a large part in this process.

The Chairman asked that the report be drawn to the attention of the other Members of the Council, and added that Paul King would attend a meeting of the Committee, probably the next one, to explain the new process.

PS 30 **ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) which provided a brief update on progress following the Annual Audit letter. She confirmed that all Member Champions had been appointed and that the appropriate workshop would take place during the summer.

The Chairman stressed the importance of Committee Members attending this workshop

PS 31 **CAPACITY BUILDING**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) attaching information on Building Capacity East (BCE), the region's Improvement Partnership. The BCE Bulletin annexed to the report explained that the Partnership was under the auspices of the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), and that significant funding was available under three streams.

The Chairman commented that he did not think it was necessary to declare an interest on this one. He referred to a "Member version" of the report which he believed he had sent for distribution that afternoon. However, the Committee Officer

informed the meeting that she had not been made aware of this and did not have copies of the document available.

The Chairman explained that he was Chairman of the EERA regional committee which had been handed £6,200,000. Some things would be paid for and they were looking for authorities to do things in partnership; bids had to be received by the end of July and he expected that a peer review would be paid for.

Councillor Savage commented that the Council had six weeks to decide what it wanted to do. The Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) explained that a dialogue was taking place with Members, particularly around the corporate plan projects. There would be a strategic planning workshop at the end of June.

Councillor Savage asked what particular leadership skills were required, or how would the Council decide where the gap was to fill. Individual mentoring was mentioned and the Chairman suggested working with other District Councils to identify the need.

The Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) suggested that a bid could usefully cover issues such as diversity and equality and said that she would highlight the BCE funds to the Executive Management Team. She would advise other Members too.

It was agreed that the Members version of the report should be circulated to all Members and the Chairman asked that the Executive Manager (Strategy and Performance) undertake networking to flesh something out and prepare an appropriate bid in the light of the two year programme.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm