

**PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 2 AUGUST 2007**

Present:- Councillor H S Rolfe – Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, A J Ketteridge and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- R Auty, S Bronson, A Clarke, C Croft, P Evans,
R Millership, P O'Dell, R Pridham, C Roberts, A Stewart and
T Turner.

PS13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M L Foley, M A Gayler,
and J Salmon.

PS14 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2007

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 June 2007 were
received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PS15 MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LIST

The Committee received the list of committee actions.

PS78 Action plan for financial management monitoring.

In answer to a question from Councillor S Barker the Director of Resources
explained the reason for the financial misstatement in housing stock valuation
which had been referred to in the Audit report to the meeting on 12 June
2007.

The Director of Resources asked the Chairman to confirm that the Committee
asked for financial health indicators to be prepared. The Chairman agreed
that this had been requested and the Director of Resources said that they
would be prepared for the September meeting.

PS4 Uconnect

Councillor S Barker asked whether arrangements to visit Uconnect were in
place and the Head of Community Engagement confirmed that arrangements
were being made.

PS69 Corporate Projects milestones

It was noted that the Corporate Projects milestones action was still being
progressed and a project manager would be invited to a future meeting.

PS78 Member training

Members were concerned that there should be monitoring of the cost of training, the individual member's need for it and their progress. The Chairman asked that a map be maintained of those receiving various types of training so that sensible representation and times be achieved. It was also felt that since more Members now had daytime employment, evening training should be encouraged.

RESOLVED that Member Training is discussed again at a future meeting.

PS6 Annual Audit and Inspection Plan

The Chairman of the Committee read the response from the Audit Commission to the Committee's request for information. It was noted that 120 days were listed and the Chairman commented that there would be a need to benchmark against the fees paid by other authorities.

PS16

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 1 2007/08 (APRIL – JUNE)

The Committee considered the report of the Performance Improvement Officer which presented a summary of performance data for 2007/08 Quarter 1 (April - June) Best Value Performance Indicators

It was noted that a total of 8 Best Value Indicators had been withdrawn from collection for 2007/08 by the Audit Commission. The Performance Improvement Team had recommended that each of the withdrawn Indicators be considered as a local Performance Indicator by the relevant Heads of Division.

The Members of the Committee were concerned about falling numbers of school visits to the Museum and the Head of Community Engagement explained that this was due in part to a number of cancellations and also to the absence of relevant staff.

It was noted that there had been a temporary reduction in abandoned vehicle collections.

In answer to questions the Head of Housing Management updated the meeting on factors affecting rent recovery and arrears. It was anticipated that figures would be back in line for the next quarter.

The Head of Partnerships and Performance said that the Police response regarding BVPI 127a and 128 would be circulated to Committee Members as soon as it was received.

The Head of Revenues and Procurement warned that staff numbers were so low in revenues and benefits services that there was no resilience so any minor staff shortage caused a major impact.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The reduction in educational visits to the Museum be referred to the Museum Task Group to investigate.
- 2 The Planning Department be congratulated on the excellent performance shown in BVPI 109 a-c.
- 3 The matter of staff shortage be examined in the next quarterly report.

PS17 ACCESS TO SERVICES INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

The Committee received the report of the Head of Community Engagement and the accompanying action plan.

Councillor Wilcock asked how Mosaic marketing data would be used and the Head of Community Engagement said that a proposal for use of Mosaic was being developed.

The Chairman of the Committee said that he wished to see an outline of the “vision of excellence”.

It was noted in the context of the Customer Service Centre that the public wanted to speak to a real person, and that the reference number aspect of the announcement should be dropped.

Councillor A J Ketteridge expressed concern that the organisational reengineering team still had a large target to meet four months into the year.

RESOLVED that a Dunmow Library scoping paper be prepared by the Director for Communities for consideration at the November meeting, together with costs of a “Citizen’s Kiosk”.

PS18 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – UTTLESFORD FUTURES

The Committee received the report of the Strategic Partnerships Manager updating the Committee on the activities of the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Strategic Partnerships Manager added that the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership future work comprised Training and Cohesion.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

PS19 CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK REPORT

The Committee received the report of the Performance Improvement Officer on the development of the Consultation Framework.

Members were informed about the draft consultation strategy, the consultation toolkit and the consultation software package “Snap”.

RESOLVED that the report be received and accepted.

PS20 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Acting Audit Manager which updated them on risk management arrangements and the progress made towards achieving performance level three. She explained in detail the risk management process of reviewing and reducing risks.

Councillor S Barker asked whether the system recognised the consequences of risks as distinct from the fact of mere non-achievement of targets and she gave as an example the failure to sign the accounts at the end of June 2007. She was concerned that senior officers should have a full understanding of the risk management needed for their work and she suggested this should be monitored in their appraisals.

RESOLVED that the Risk Management Update and recommended action be noted and endorsed.

PS21 INTERNAL AUDIT – SUNDRY DEBTORS

The Committee considered the report of the Acting Audit Manager on Sundry Debtors. It listed key areas of possible risk and issues, particularly staffing, which still required action to bring risk down to an acceptable level. The Acting Audit Manager expressed concern that there was a lack of management control in some areas.

The Director of Resources said that Sundry Debt was now within a corporate debt team and that this addressed the resourcing issues raised in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

PS22 INTERNAL AUDIT – INSURANCE

The Committee received the report of the Acting Audit Manager on a recent Internal Audit concerning insurance. Members noted the areas of concern including staffing.

The Director of Resources described difficulties which had been encountered in recent recruitment attempts but confirmed that the actions in the report were in hand and would be addressed.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and an update submitted to the next meeting including progress on interim management.

PS23 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Accounts process – substantive page 4

The Chairman said that a special meeting might be needed to look at the accounts as the accounts may not be audited before the next meeting. The Director of Resources said that the original date was the target but that a fallback date would be set up in case it was needed.

The meeting ended at 9.53 pm.