

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 – RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT held at 7.30 pm at the COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 7 JULY 2004**

Present: - Councillor S Flack – Chairman.  
Councillors H D Baker, C A Bayley, M A Hibbs, D J Morson and J P Murphy.

Officers in attendance: -W Cockrell, R Kirmani and I Orton.

**SC2.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R M Lemon and S V Schneider.

Councillor M A Hibbs declared an interest in items SC2.8 and SC2.9 and left the room during discussions of these items.

**SC2.2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2004 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**SC2.3 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) SC2.57 Performance Management**

The Performance Manager reported that at the previous meeting Members had requested the definition of what was regarded as 'major planning application' in accordance with the Government regulations. He said that referred to DLTR Forms rows 1-5 but could not get an exact statement that defined this in clear terms.

**(ii) SC2.63 (ii) Planning Enforcement**

The Performance Manager reported that currently the Council had a reactive enforcement policy, if someone complained about any planning issue then the Council dealt with it. The Chairman said that she had identified three enforcement issues and it took a long time for the department to deal with these.

Councillor Murphy said that the residents should be informed that they could complain if they felt that anyone was in breach of planning regulations and did not comply with the conditions put on any planning application.

The Performance Manager reported that the Council's current Enforcement Policy was valid up to 2006.

**(iii) SC2.52 Local Service Level Agreement**

The Chairman inquired if any further information had been received on the County Council's gritting policy.

The Performance Manager suggested that someone from the County Council could be invited to discuss the gritting policy as part of the Scrutiny Two Committee work programme.

Councillor Hibbs said that the portfolio holder responsible for the Highways at the County Council could be invited to the next meeting to discuss the County Councils gritting policy.

At that meeting the County Council be asked to outline their policy and highlight the circumstances in which they gritted the pavements.

RESOLVED that

1. an Officer/Member be invited to the next meeting of this Committee on 6 October to discuss the County Council's gritting policy;
2. all Members of the Council be invited to this presentation.

SC2.4

#### **WORK PROGRAMME - SCRUTINY TWO COMMITTEE 2004/05**

The Performance Manager requested the Members to set this Committee's work programme for the civic year. A number of corporate and service areas were considered and Members selected themes that would require scrutiny during 2004/05 and also to be added to the Forward Plan of the Committee. The Chairman said that there was need to review recycling routes as some residents were not aware what the Council did with the recycled waste. She further informed the Committee that she had seen a leaflet of the Colchester Borough Council which highlighted recycling issues and how the Council redistributed the recyclable waste. The Council should find out what other districts were doing and what information was passed on to the residents. The Council's recycling officer should be invited to the next meeting with answers to all the above concerns.

It was agreed that the whole process of recycling and dissemination of information needed to be examined.

RESOLVED that Emergency Planning; Flood Control; Recycling Routes to be added to the Forward Plan for discussion at future meetings.

SC2.5

#### **FORWARD PLAN OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TWO**

The Performance Manager informed Members that each Committee of the Council was required to publish an Annual Forward Plan for the municipal year. The Plan would be available for the public who may wish to attend relevant meetings and view the democratic process. Members considered the themes to be included in the Forward Plan for this Committee.

RESOLVED that

1. the Forward Programme for 7 July 2004 meeting be noted;
2. the Forward Plan for 6 October 2004 to include
  - (a) Presentation from the County Council – Gritting Policy
  - (b) Presentation by the Environment Services Officer on the Recycling Process;
  - (c) Presentation by the new Emergency Planning Officer.
3. the meeting of the Committee on 1 December 2004 to be held in the Day Centre, Thaxted and the Forward Plan to include the following in addition to other items as detailed in the report
  - (a) Decriminalisation
  - (b) Communications and Publicity
  - (c) Flood control
4. the Forward Programme for the other two meetings of the Municipal Year, that is 9 February and 13 April 2005, be discussed later in the year.
5. the next meeting to be held on 6 October be given due publicity to encourage local residents to attend the meeting.

SC2.6

#### **REPORTS FROM INTERNAL AUDIT TO BE CONSIDERED DURING 2004/2005**

The Committee considered the reviews which the internal audit would carry out this municipal year and noted that these reviews were a very constructive insight into the way the Council was managed.

Councillor Hibbs said that the Internal Audit should submit any report to this Committee where it had highlighted serious concerns.

RESOLVED that Internal Audit be requested to submit its report on its review on Street Cleaning-DSO and Business Rates and these be considered during 2004-2005 by Scrutiny Two Committee.

SC2.7

#### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING 2003/04**

The Performance Manager reported the details of the Performance Management results for 2003/04 and Performance Targets for 2004/05. The report outlined the details of changes to the methods of collecting and reporting performance during 2004/05. He further informed the Committee that the CPA had criticised that the 10% tolerance between the three Traffic Light Colours was generous and diluted poor performance. He suggested that the tolerance between colours now be only 5%.

The Chairman expressed concern that the Best Value Review of Community and Leisure Services highlighted reduced number of people using the Leisure Centres especially the swimming pools.

Councillor Hibbs said that this could be due to high amount of chlorine used in the swimming pools.

The Chairman suggested that performance measurements be improved and a report be submitted to this Committee on the percentage of staff receiving appraisals and break this down department by department.

Councillor Morson said that if any serious problem was highlighted then a report could be submitted to the Resources Committee to consider ways of encouraging staff appraisals.

The Scrutiny Committee would look at the rescue recovery plans and see what impact these had and look at figures that had not improved.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Performance Outturns for 2003/04 be noted;
- 2 the Rescue Recovery Packages for the 9 Red Indicators be noted;
- 3 the additional performance measures for 2004/05 be noted;
- 4 the Committee look at the Performance Measures of area like percentage of staff training plan and look at whether the target to determine major planning applications in 13 weeks had been met;
- 5 Traffic Light System be changed to Amber for on Target or within 4% tolerance: Green for 5% above Target and Red for 5% below Target.

SC2.8

### **BEST VALUE REVIEWS 2003/04- PROGRESS WITH DELIVERING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Councillor Hibbs declared a prejudicial Interest in this item and left the room. The Performance Manager reported that this Committee had agreed the Best Value Reviews of Planning Services, Revenue Services and Refuse & Recycling at its meeting on 3 December 2003. At that meeting it was requested that progress in delivering the Service Improvements Plans from the reviews be reported back twice a year.

The Chairman suggested the report should continue to enhance the critical success areas. Members expressed concern at item 6.3.3 in critical success areas, which established an action plan for backlog removal. They suggested that this area should be looked at as it had not been achieved yet.

Councillor Murphy said the all areas which had 'd' or 'e' marked as these were of low importance should be deleted from the list.

The Chairman asked the officers to put a date on when the areas of high importance would be achieved.

Councillor Hibbs was invited back to the meeting after consideration of the above item.

Members discussed the Revenue Service Best Value Review.

Councillor Bayley said that she was involved with the review of this service and found that this service was very good and the review was well organised. The Service Improvement Plan was progressing and was well on target.

The Chairman said that only two people had complained that they had difficulty in making on line payments. As the Council was managing well there was no need to appoint outside service providers.

Councillor Hibbs said that as regards Item 1.2 'Increase in office opening hours' some people were unable to come to the Council offices on a weekday, for them Saturday opening would be very useful.

In response to Members query the Performance Manager reported that access to services on Saturday would include all council services and it would be based on building society type shop layout in the town centre.

RESOLVED that the progress in delivering the Service Improvement Plans arising from the Planning, Revenues and Refuse/Recycling 2003/04 Best Value Reviews be noted.

## SC2.9

### **BEST VALUE REVIEWS 2004/05**

The Principal Environmental Health Officer reported details of the scope document of the Best Value Review of Environmental Health.

The Chairman enquired as to what areas of health promotion were required by law and what was discretionary.

Councillor Hibbs said that the Council should look at health issues in the District that needed attention. He further requested information on how the Department functioned.

Members requested that they should be informed of the date for the meeting that would discuss the Best Value Reviews.

Councillor Hibbs declared an interest in the following item and left the room.

The Performance Manager reported that the 2004/05 Best Value review for Access to Services. The review would examine how the Uttlesford's citizens currently accessed the Council's services and opportunities available for

providing more choice, improved service and greater integration with other agencies.

RESOLVED that

1. the progress with the Best Value Reviews of Environmental Health be noted;
2. the progress with the Planning Best Value Access to Services be noted.

#### SC2.10 **SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The Performance Manager reported that as part of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan a project to conduct a formal review of the Democratic structure of the Council would be carried out. The project would be completed by 31 December 2004. Part of the process would involve seeking the views of Members on ways to strengthen the democratic process within Uttlesford.

RESOLVED that this report be considered at the Council meeting in October 2004.

#### SC2.11 **MATTERS ARISING FROM ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – 8 JUNE 2004**

The Committee noted the decision list from the Environment Committee held on 8 June 2004.

##### **(i) Gold Enterprise Zone**

The Performance Manager reported the current situation of the management and lettings of units at Gold Enterprise Zone, Elsenham and informed the Committee that all Units but two had been let to date.

#### SC2.12 **MATTERS ARISING FROM TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE – 21 JUNE 2004**

The Committee noted the decision list from the Transport and Highways Committee held on 21 June 2004

##### **(i) Public Speaking Time**

The Chairman expressed concern that two Members were allowed to speak during Public speaking time.

##### **(ii) Saffron Walden Town Centre Management Scheme**

Councillor Hibbs expressed concern at the decision of the Committee regarding the Town Centre parking arrangements for the blue badge holders. He said that a report was considered at the Access Group regarding allocating parking spaces for blue badge holders on Market days (Tuesdays

and Saturdays). The recommendations made by this Group were not reflected in the decisions taken by the Committee.

The Performance Manager said that he would check the reasons for this with the Policy and Development Control Liaison Officer and inform Members.

**SC2.13      MATTERS ARISING FROM RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 24 JUNE 2004**

The Committee noted the decision list from the Resources Committee held on 24 June 2004.

**(i)      Refurbishment of Hill Street Toilets**

Councillor Bayley inquired as to why the report on refurbishment was referred back, as the toilets urgently needed refurbishment.

The Chairman informed the Members that the report was referred back to look at actual specifications and try to reduce these. The tenders that were received were way ahead of the estimated costs for refurbishment.

**SC2.14      MATTERS ARISING FROM LICENSING COMMITTEE – 9 JUNE 2004**

The Committee noted the decisions of the Licensing Committee held on 9 June 2004.

The meeting ended at 10.05 pm.