

**To: All Members of the County Council  
All Chief Officers**

**From: COUNTY SECRETARY'S  
DEPARTMENT**

**Ask for: Joan Blake**

**Ext: 5560**

**My Ref: /jb**

**Your Ref:**

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**COMMUNITY INFORMATION & PROTECTION SELECT COMMITTEE  
16 JANUARY 2001**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE**

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

J Beesley, P T J Channell (Vice-Chairman), M D Colne, D J Drake, B P Hall,  
B N W Hammond, J A Hobday (Chairman), S J Mills, J W A Usher, B Wing

Other Members in Attendance

D A Ashley, R J M Ellis, D B Lloyd, R J Smith, C White

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Community Information & Protection Select Committee meeting on 16 January 2001, as circulated, copy annexed, action was taken or decisions were reached on individual items as recorded below.

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(i) Membership changes**

Jenny Beesley had replaced John Morton

**(ii) Terry Standing, Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

The Chairman and members of the select committee congratulated Terry Standing on being awarded the City & Guilds' Gold Medal for Excellence for outstanding achievement in fire service management.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 October 2000 were confirmed as a correct record.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS**

None.

**QUESTIONS**

None.

**PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS****ACTIONS****1. (a) BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRAMME FOR 2001-02**

[Officer contacts: Clare Kaye 01992 555300  
Ahmed Farooqui 01992 588395]

**1.1 Cabinet Proposal**

Members discussed the proposal from Cabinet on 20 November 2000:

*"That the timetable for Best Value Reviews 2001/2 be agreed and that progress in implementing agreed Best Value Reviews be reported quarterly to the Cabinet."*

1.2 It was suggested that, in light of the unfortunate spate of fire deaths over the Christmas period, the review of Community Safety should take precedence over the review of Fire Service Procurement.

**1.3 Response to Cabinet**

That the programme of reviews be agreed but that it be ensured that the issue of fire safety be addressed by the review of Community Safety.

D Roberts

**(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF MEMBER BEST VALUE REVIEW GROUP**

[Officer contact: Clare Kaye 01992 555300 ]

1.4 The select committee established a Best Value Review Group of 5 members (3:2) for the review of Fire Service Procurement.

1.5 The names of members (and two substitutes) to be appointed by the County Secretary following notification by spokesmen.

J Blake

1.6 Clare Kaye advised members that the list of required groups in paragraph 1 of the report was incorrect and that Fire Service Procurement was the only review group this select committee needed to establish.

**2 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN (BVPP) 2001/02**

[Officer contact: Anne Fisher Tel: 01992 588690]

**2.1 Cabinet proposal**

Cabinet on 18 December 2000 proposed:

*"That the draft Best Value Performance Plan be approved."*

ACTIONS

- 2.2 Anne Fisher advised that production of a BVPP was a statutory requirement and this was the second year the County Council had had to produce one. She outlined the "promise" sections which applied to this select committee and explained that, as the Plan was still in draft form, there were a number of gaps which would be filled in when the information was available.
- 2.3 She reminded members they were invited to a workshop reviewing the Best Value Performance Plan 2001/02 and scrutinising the County Council's Performance from the BVPP 2000/01 which would be held at the Resources, Prosperity Partnership and Consultation Select Committee on 25 January at approximately 11.30 am.
- 2.4 The select committee's comments would be fed back to Cabinet and a final draft submitted to County Council on 15 February 2001.

2.5 Response to Cabinet

That the draft Best Value Performance Plan be approved.

D Roberts

### 3 **PROPOSED RESOURCE BUDGET 2001/2-2004/5 FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION & PROTECTION PORTFOLIOS**

[Officer contact: Andrew Nightingale Tel: 01992 555331]

3.1 Cabinet Proposal

*"That the resources budget proposals detailed in the report, including the use of reserves, be approved."*

- 3.2 The committee were provided with replacement pages 34 and 36 as the original pages contained typing errors. They were advised that the words "service enhancements proposed" in paragraph 1.5 on page 3 should read "capital programme proposals".
- 3.3 Members discussed the budget report and made a number of comments. These included:-
- (a) the welcome of a £250,000 boost to the materials fund and the enhancement of £50,000 towards work on community fire safety;
  - (b) concern that part of the materials fund monies might be used to fund pilot schemes on new forms of public access (Jane Pitman, Executive Member, Community Information and Development, gave her assurance all the money would be used to provide book stock);
  - (c) a request for the reservation charge scheme to be extended to materials other than books;

A Robertson

(d) a request for Jane Pitman to press the Executive Committee to restore the materials fund to the level it was prior to the cuts made in the 1992 budget;	
(e) a query as to when all libraries would have disabled access (Jane Pitman advised this would be by 2005 or earlier);	
(f) concern as to whether the delay in replacing the fire service radio system could attract criticism at the forthcoming HMI Inspection and/or affect service delivery (Steve Seaber, Chief Fire Officer, advised that a solution to the replacement system was anticipated later this year and, as all other fire authorities were in the same position, the Inspector should not judge Hertfordshire any differently from them);	
(g) suggestion that new members in May should be appraised of the issues around the replacement radio system (Steve Seaber agreed this would be included in the induction package);	S Seaber
(h) a query as to if and when chefs were likely to be licensed (Ian McLachlan, Head of Trading Standards, agreed to provide a written response to select committee members);	I McLachlan
(i) the hope that civil naming ceremonies and re-confirmation of vows would bring additional revenue to the Registration Service;	
(j) concern at the predicted sharp rise in business rates in the coming years shown in the Community Information revenue budget;	
3.4 <u>Response to Cabinet</u>	D Roberts
3.4.1 That the budget proposals for Community Information be approved, with the following comments:-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the select committee supported the additional resources being made available to libraries;</li> </ul>	A Nightingale to note
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the additional £250,000 to be spent solely on the materials fund;</li> </ul>	A Robertson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Director of Community Information to investigate extending the reservation system to materials other than books;</li> </ul>	A Robertson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the initiative to make all libraries fully accessible to all members of the community be continued;</li> </ul>	A Robertson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the committee requested clarification on the business rates increase.</li> </ul>	A Nightingale
3.4.2 That the budget proposals for Protection be approved, with the following comments:-	

- a letter be sent to the Home Office (and copied to the LGA) from the select committee spokesmen and executive members raising concerns about the replacement radio communication system;
- a press release be issued registering support for the registration service and congratulating them on increasing income.

S Seaber

T Hawkyard/Press office

#### 4 SCRUTINY OF SERVICE PROPERTY STRATEGIES

[Officer contact: Roger Fairholm Tel: 01992 555229]

- 4.1 The select committee established a short life Service Property Strategy Panel of 5 members (3:2) to scrutinise the following service property strategies and report back to the relevant chief officer:-

R Fairholm to note

- Fire & Rescue
- Community Information
- Registration Service

- 4.2 The names of members (and two substitutes) to be appointed by the County Secretary following notification by spokesmen.

J Blake

#### 5 RELOCATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF FIRE STATIONS

[Officer contact: Steve Seaber Tel: 01992 507500]

- 5.1 The select committee discussed whether this issue should be a matter for scrutiny and considered a number of points, including the following:-
- 5.2 The Service Property Strategy for the fire service approved in July 2000 included the following strategic goals relating to the relocation and redevelopment of fire station sites.
- (i) To site fire stations in locations that ensure Home Office minimum standards of fire cover are met;
  - (ii) To encourage commercial interest in redeveloping existing fire station sites and providing new fire stations at no cost to the county;
  - (iii) To develop or replace those fire stations where it is no longer cost effective to carry out major works.
- 5.3 Reviews of fire cover in 1993 and 1997 identified that new sites were required for fire stations to the south of St Albans (particularly London Colney) and South Oxhey to enable attendance times to be met.
- 5.3 To date, for reasons relating to lack of suitable sites, planning difficulties and objections from local communities and representative bodies, it had not been possible to relocate stations.
- 5.4 It was agreed that the newly formed Service Property Strategy Panel (item 4) be asked to look at this in detail including the reasons for the delay, land problems, issues with Property Department, and how the new sites should be developed.

R Fairholm  
J Blake  
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**REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL**

No items were reported to the County Council.

**Andrew Laycock  
County Secretary**