

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

**From: County Secretary's
Department**

Ask For: Nicola Hayden

Ext: 25560

My Ref: NH/CIP021029

Your Ref:

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 OCTOBER 2002**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

N E Agar, P T J Channell, K Coleman, M D Colne, K Emsall (Vice-Chairman), J A Hobday (Chairman), D R McManus, M H O'Neill, P A Ruffles, J W A Usher

Also present:

Executive Members: D A Ashley (Community Information and Protection), G D Game (Protection and Registration)

Other Members: RJ M Ellis, D Beatty

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman congratulated both the Trading Standards department who had been provisionally awarded the Community Legal Services (CLS) Quality Mark and Andrew Butler, Cathy Inman, Gurmit Sanghera, Judith Gordon and Nicola Heide who had all recently passed various examinations.

The Chairman announced with some regret the retirement of Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer Frank Jones on 31 October 2002 after 34 years of service and thanked him for all his hard work whilst a member of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and to the Fire Service nationally.

The Chairman informed the Committee that Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service had recently been awarded Beacon Status - only one of six organisations to receive such an award and the only Fire Service.

The Chairman paid tribute to Firefighter Russell Ward who was on holiday in Bali when the terrorist attack took place and displayed the true professional and dedication of a Firefighter when he offered his assistance to the emergency services in Bali.

Membership Changes

Ken Coleman replaced Bryan Hammond for this meeting only.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 June 2002 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PUBLIC PETITIONS

None

QUESTIONS

Tanis Kent, asked the Executive Member, **Derrick Ashley**, the following question:

"Why do we ask for two proofs of residence before a person can join a library in Hertfordshire?"

Derrick Ashley replied:

"We ask for one proof of address and something with a signature for identity. This was on advice from the police (they said do not accept driving licenses as proof of address) and is consistent with what other organisations do. However, we are reviewing this in light of accessibility to the service.

Tanis Kent, asked the Executive Member, **Derrick Ashley**, the following question:

"What efforts do local libraries make to stock books that meet the need of students at local colleges?"

Derrick Ashley replied:

"Students have their college library, so we do not make any specific provision for them. However, we do provide material up to undergraduate level in Band 1's and 'A' level in Band 2 libraries to support the independent/distance learner. In addition there is quite a lot of material to support vocational interests".

Nigel Agar, asked the Executive Member, **Derrick Ashley**, the following question:

"In view of the declining quality of our increasingly dated book stocks could we be assured that the amount spent on libraries' materials fund can be brought up to the highest standards?"

Derrick Ashley replied:

"I do not think that the quality of the book stock is declining. The CPA Inspectors thought that the quality of our stock was very good, and better than our comparator authorities."

Nigel Agar asked the following supplementary question:

"What percentage of non fiction text has been published in the last five years?"

Derrick Ashley agreed to provide a written response which is set out below:

"It is not possible at the moment to extract the data on age of stock from our computer system in the form that we would need for this type of analysis. However in June 2000 we undertook an audit on the age of our stock. At that time it showed that 59.6% of the stock had been purchased in the preceding five years. We will be repeating this exercise again next year to monitor the situation but we expect the proportion of recently published stock to have increased thanks to the improved buying power that membership of the Central Buying Consortium gives us. Non-fiction text does not have as high a turnover rate as popular paperback fiction. In some subject areas the best book on a subject may not have been published that recently. Also in some subject areas the currency of information lasts a lot longer than others, so when something was published or even purchased is not necessarily a measure of quality."

PART 1 (OPEN) BUSINESS

Scrutiny Items

1 HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES (HALS) ACCOMMODATION - PROGRESS REPORT

[Officer Contact: Christine Shearman, Heritage Services Manager
Tel 01992 555100]

1.1 The Committee had requested an update report on the action taken to date to address the accommodation problems facing Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.

1.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee wished to recommend to Cabinet that Option 2 in the report was their preferred option.
- (b) The Committee gave their support to the Director and his staff in their efforts to gain lottery funding and felt that this and any other funding option should be vigorously pursued.
- (c) The Committee requested an update report at the next meeting on 14 January 2003.

Andrew
Robertson

2 CIVIL NAMING

[Officer Contact: Tom Hawkyard, Head of Statutory Services
Tel: 01992 555499]

2.1 Following the decision to include Civil Naming on the scrutiny work programme at the meeting on 4 July 2001, the Committee considered an update report reviewing the progress of the service to date and noted feedback from customers.

2.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee congratulated staff on the successful pilot and recommended that Civil Naming ceremonies should be offered as part of the Hertfordshire suite of services.
- (b) The Committee agreed that whilst no further scrutiny of this item was required, they would like to see an update report on Civil Naming at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in October 2003.

Tom
Hawkyard

3 RE-AFFIRMATION OF VOWS

[Officer Contact: Tom Hawkyard, Head of Statutory Services
Tel: 01992 555499]

3.1 Following the decision to include Re-Affirmation of Vows on the scrutiny work programme at the meeting on 4 July 2001, the Committee considered an update report reviewing the progress of the service to date and noted feedback from customers.

3.2 Conclusion

- (a) The Committee congratulated staff on the successful pilot and recommended that Re-Affirmation of Vows ceremonies should be offered as part of the Hertfordshire suite of services.
- (b) The Committee agreed that whilst no further scrutiny of this item was required, they would like to see an update report on Civil Naming at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in October 2003.

Tom
Hawkyard

4 CIVIL FUNERALS

[Officer Contact: Tom Hawkyard, Head of Statutory Services
Tel: 01992 555499]

4.1 Following the decision to include Civil Funerals on the scrutiny work programme at the meeting on 12 March 2002, the Committee considered an update report reviewing the progress of the service to date and noted feedback from customers.

4.2 Conclusions

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| (a) The Committee agreed to the continuation of the trial for a further six months and requested an update report at the meeting on 12 March 2003 detailing the progress of the trial in Hertfordshire and other counties. | Tom
Hawkyard |
| (b) The Committee requested that staff renew their efforts to encourage Funeral Directors to promote the service. | Tom
Hawkyard |
| (c) The Committee felt that the level of charging should be kept under review and at the end of the trial they requested a report which would include the extent to which true costs are covered. | Tom
Hawkyard |

5 PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES

[Officer Contact: Tom Hawkyard, Head of Statutory Services
Tel: 01992 555499]

5.1 Following the decision to include Partnership Ceremonies on the scrutiny committee work programme at the meeting on 15 January 2002, the Committee received a report reviewing developments in the service nationally.

5.2 Conclusions

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| (a) The Committee agreed to defer this item until such time as there is a sufficient body of information available including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income generated in the four trial areas• Breakdown of the number of same sex and different sex ceremonies | |
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**6 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) - OPERATIONAL
UNIFORM**

[Officer Contact: SDO Roger Day
Tel: 01992 507510]

6.1 In response to the Committee's request to scrutinise how the alternative funding stream for uniforms worked as an example of innovative funding arrangements, consideration was given to a progress report detailing how the PPE contract had been introduced and was working in practice.

6.2 Conclusions

- (a) The Committee thanked the Chief Fire Officer for the report.
- (b) The Committee noted the contract revision highlighted in the report.

**7 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS FOR THE
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF WOMEN AND PEOPLE FROM
ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND A PROFILE OF THE NON-
UNIFORMED WORKFORCE**

[Officer Contact: Jane Brown, Equal Opportunities Advisor
Tel: 01992 507511]

7.1 Following on from the last report in March 2002, the Committee received an update on the progress the Fire Service has made against the recruitment targets set by the Fire Service Inspectorate for women and people from ethnic minority communities.

7.2 Conclusion

- (a) The Committee recognised the work that has been done and welcomed the improvement in performance against targets for firefighters from ethnic minorities.
- (b) The Committee expressed concern over the externally imposed standards and felt they needed to be revisited to remain useful in achieving the greater diversity all have recognised as desirable. Steve Seaber
- (c) The Committee recommended that the Chief Fire Officer pursue the possibility of a link up with local colleges to offer an introductory course which may encourage women (in particular) to enter the service. Steve Seaber
- (d) The Committee requested an update on progress in 12 months time. Steve Seaber

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

None

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary