

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

**From: County Secretary's
Department**

Ask For: David Roberts

Ext: 25562

My Ref: dr

Your Ref:

**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 OCTOBER 2003**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

N E Agar, P T J Channell, M D Colne, G D Game (Vice-Chairman),
B N W Hammond, J A Hobday (Chairman), M H O'Neill,
B Lamb (substitute for P A Ruffles), J W A Usher, P A Webb

Also present:

Executive Members: I E M Tarry (Community Services)

At the beginning of the meeting all present stood in silence in memory of F J Escott who had died on 11 October.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Nicola Hayden, Committee Administrator

The Chairman announced that Nicola had given birth to a baby boy, Owen, four weeks ago and both mother and baby were fine. The Committee asked that their congratulations be conveyed to Nicola.

David
Roberts

(b) Trading Standards Exam Successes

The Chairman congratulated Julia Beck, Jo Hayes, Jo Jenkinson and Brian Howes from Trading Standards who had all passed Part 1 of the Diploma in Consumer Affairs, and also Melanie Pierson and Gurmit Sanghera who had added passes in Consumer Credit and Product Safety law respectively, to their full Diplomas.

Ian
McLachlan

(c) Library Service - special events

The Chairman announced that the library service was celebrating Black History Month and The Festival of Cultural Diversity with a programme of special events in October and November. They include guest speakers, cookery demonstrations and musical events. Details

Glenda
Wood

were available on www.hertsdirect.org/libraries or from any library.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 June 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PUBLIC PETITIONS

None

QUESTIONS

Nigel Agar (in the absence of Elam Singam) asked Iris Tarry the following question:

“Is it still envisaged to have only one member of staff on duty in band 4 libraries and if so what are the health and safety implications?”

Iris Tarry replied:

“Yes, it is still intended to implement single staffing in appropriate service points. We may anticipate that these will be overwhelmingly the smaller and least-used libraries and hence Band 4s but that is not to say that certain Band 3s might not be appropriate. Mobile libraries will be single-staffed further to the successful pilot at Hertford and as such will follow the example of our trailer libraries which have always been single-staffed.

There is as yet no list of the libraries where it is planned to introduce single staffing. This will be produced as a result of the application of a number of criteria and further to visits now taking place (with staff and UNISON participation) to library authorities where single staffing is operated. Health and Safety issues will be an important part of these criteria and will include matters such as location, opening hours, previous history of premises, layout, levels of business etc on the basis of individual risk assessments carried out for each set of premises. Issues arising will be met by arranging training and support, specific safety procedures (i.e. phone calls to duty manager to log on and off or in case of staff illness), possible use of personal/intruder alarms etc and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

This list is not exhaustive but does I hope demonstrate that the matter will be looked at thoroughly as part of HCC's commitment to staff welfare.”

PART 1 (OPEN) BUSINESS

1 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT INTO CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIPS

[Officer Contact: Philip Winter, Head of Crime Reduction Unit
Tel: 01992 588719]

The Committee considered a report, requested by Ian Laidlaw Dickson, which sought to examine the effectiveness of the council's input to the 10 crime & disorder reduction partnerships, CDRPs, in the county.

Conclusions

The Committee agreed to establish a five Member Topic Group (3:2) to undertake scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Crime and Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships in Hertfordshire and seek clarification of the various group names used in the local partnership structure.

Philip
Winter

2 POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

[Officer Contact: Philip Winter, Head of Crime Reduction Unit
Tel: 01992 588719]

The Committee considered a report, requested at the last meeting on 10 June on how the Police Community Safety Officers, PCSOs, initiative would be evaluated so that success could be quantified and reported back, on a regular basis, to this committee, other elected members, service managers and other agencies as appropriate.

Conclusions

The Committee:

1. Noted the recently publicised similar scheme which appeared to have increased the fear of crime and recommend that the County Council's scheme should pay particular attention to the way data is collected.
2. Clarified that the two Police Community Support Officer Schemes for rural and urban areas, although funded differently, addressed similar concerns. However this Committee's responsibility was to scrutinise the County Council funded scheme.
3. Commended the introductory seminar given for Council Members but expressed concern that the separate seminars organised by the Constabulary were not available to County

Philip
Winter

Philip
Winter/
Iris Tarry

Members. The Committee asked the Executive Member to write to the Police Authority to express the Committee's disappointment.

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|---|---------------------------------|
| 4. Expressed the concern that police ward officers in areas covered by the PCSOs may have less than the full complement of staffing and, notwithstanding the assurances that have been given, that the presence of PCSOs may make it more likely that this situation will continue. | Philip Winter |
| 5. Requested officers to seek information on the number of police constables currently in the areas covered by PCSOs and any variation in those numbers in the future. | Philip Winter |
| 6. Requested that reports to the Crime reduction Panel should also be emailed to members of this Committee. | Philip Winter |
| 7. Requested that a further report be submitted to the March 2004 meeting on progress with the scheme. | Philip Winter/
David Roberts |

3 FUNDAMENTAL REVIEW OF THE CORONERS SERVICE AND THE SHIPMAN REPORT

[Officer Contact: Steve Charteris, Head of Coroners Unit
Tel: 01707 897400]

The Committee considered a report, on the main recommendations of the Fundamental Review of Coroner Services report and the Shipman Inquiry report on Death Certification and the Investigation of Deaths by Coroners, which was requested as part of the Best Value Review implementation monitoring. The report considered their effects on the Coroner Service in Hertfordshire.

Conclusions

That the report be noted.

4 FIREWORKS TOPIC GROUP - final report

[Officer Contact: Ian McLachlan, Assistant Director of Community Information
Tel: 01992 555612]

The Committee considered a report, and the final report of the Fireworks Topic Group.

The final report summarises the way the Topic Group addressed its remit, the views that it took into consideration, its key findings and eight recommendations to be considered in the light of the new Fireworks Act 2003.

Conclusions

The Committee:

1. Were impressed and concerned by the level of interest shown by the public, who were mainly opposed to the increase in fireworks use.
2. Requested a press release be prepared and issued to coincide with 5 November celebrations, with particular thanks to the Hemel Hempstead press.
3. Asked that the Topic group report be circulated to all Hertfordshire MPs, the MP who sponsored the Private Members Bill, and Hemel Hempstead libraries.
4. The report be referred to the next meeting of the County Council.

Ian
McLachlan/
Jane Vine

David
Roberts

David
Roberts

5 INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS

[Officer Contact: Ian McLachlan, Assistant Director of Community Information Tel: 01992 555612]

The Committee considered a report, requested by Jane Hobday, on the current provision of information to consumers, and possible future developments.

Conclusions

The Committee:

1. Recognised that the protection given by trade associations is very variable and that some unscrupulous traders claim membership of associations to which they do not actually belong, and also support the introduction of the Government 'Quality Mark' scheme in Hertfordshire.
2. Recommend to the Director of Community Information that the information for consumers on www.hertsdirect.org be improved and made easier to find, in order to inform and assist consumers in their dealings with traders, to prevent problems.

Ian
McLachlan

Ian
McLachlan

3. Request that a briefing on action to be taken be circulated to Members by email.

Ian
McLachlan

6 LIBRARY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS (Annual Library Plan Section 3.4.6)

[Officer Contact: Glenda Wood, Head of Libraries, Heritage and Arts
Tel: 01992 555610]

The Committee considered a report, requested by Keith Emsall, on the current provision of library services for visually impaired people. The report provided details of other service providers, benchmarked provision with 18 comparator authorities and concluded with a number of suggestions for improvement within current resources.

Conclusions

That the report be noted.

7 ENJOY! - A Cultural Strategy for Hertfordshire

[Officer Contact: Annie Hawkins, County Cultural Officer
Tel: 01992 556231]

The Committee considered a report, on the background to the development and implementation of Enjoy! a cultural strategy for Hertfordshire including progress made to date.

Conclusions

The Committee:

1. Welcomed the report, particularly the achievement of raising the profile and understanding of the range of cultural activities in Hertfordshire and showing that the County can be fun.
2. Commended the work of officers in the Partnership on this strategy.
3. Suggested a tour of key cultural sites be arranged for Members in Spring 2004.
4. Recommended that all Members involved in twinning activities use the opportunity to promote 'Enjoy – Hertfordshire'.

Annie
Hawkins

All County
Councillors

5. Requested that an annual report be made to the Committee on the achievements of the strategy.

Annie
Hawkins/
David
Roberts

8 HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES (HALS) ACCOMMODATION – PROGRESS REPORT

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

The Committee considered a report, on action taken to address the issue of Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies (HALS)' accommodation since the meeting in June 2003.

It was reported that Mace had carried out a review of the options available to provide HALS with an archive store for its public records, which would meet the national standard (BS5454:2000) and provide reasonable document retrieval times for the public. It is expected that this action would enable HALS to retain its status as Place of Deposit for public records in Hertfordshire.

Mace's report concludes that the most cost-effective option would be to construct an archive store beneath the rear car park at County Hall. This option would provide sufficient space for the volume of public records held, together with modest expansion space, and would enable staff to continue to offer document retrieval times at the current level of service.

Conclusions

1. The Committee were pleased to see that the Council has identified a suitable option for maintaining 'place of deposit' status.
2. The Executive Member be recommended to press her Cabinet colleagues to give high priority to this scheme amongst bids for capital monies.
3. The Director of Community Information be requested to provide a briefing for Members detailing the facilities that the proposed project would offer.

Andrew
Robertson /
Iris Tarry

Andrew
Robertson

9 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]

The Committee considered a report, on progress made by the Fire Service against the recruitment targets for women and people from ethnic minority communities set by the Fire Service Inspectorate since the last report in October 2002.

The report provided a profile of applicants and recruits from under-represented groups to the uniformed service and positive action initiatives undertaken by the service. In addition the report provided a profile of the non-uniformed workforce by gender, ethnicity and disability.

Conclusions

The Committee commended the achievements to date and agreed they were now happy to leave monitoring of these issues to the Fire Service Panel and Equalities Panel.

Jane
Brown

10 BUDGET MONITOR

[Officer Contact: Andrew Nightingale, Assistant Finance Director
Tel: 01992 555331]

The Committee considered the budget monitor to enable Members to identify if there are any issues arising from the budget monitor that they wish to scrutinise.

Conclusions

The Budget Monitor was noted.

11 TRAFFIC LIGHT MONITOR

[Officer Contact: Geoff Brown, Head of Performance Improvement
Tel: 01992 555370]

The Committee considered a report, and the Traffic Light Monitor which had been circulated to all Members of the Council.

The report included the latest data for the promises monitor 2003-4 to enable Members of the Committee to raise issues for scrutiny.

Conclusions

The Traffic Light Monitor was noted.

12 UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME REPORT 2003/2004

[Officer Contact: David Roberts, Head of Committee Services
Tel: 01992 555562]

The Committee received a report that updated them on recommendations made at the last meeting, informed them of progress made on previous scrutiny items and confirmed the work programme for forthcoming meetings.

Conclusions

The Committee noted:

1. The oral update given by the Chief Fire Officer on the cost of a proposed Women's Access Course at North Herts College (£3,000) which would provide a taster of the job of a Firefighter and help women to prepare for the physical tests entailed.
2. There would be a report to the March 2004 meeting of the Committee on the Police Community Support Officers Scheme. (Minute 2 above refers)

Note: The Flooding Topic Group (set up by the Environment Scrutiny Committee) would be meeting on the following dates:

10.00 a.m. Thursday 20 November 2003
10.00 a.m. Thursday 8 January 2004

All Members of this Committee were invited to attend if interested.

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

The Opposition chose agenda item 2, Police Community Support Officers, to be reported to Council on 25 November 2003.

See also Minute 4.

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary