

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

**From: County Secretary's
Department**

Ask For: Nikki Patient

Ext: 25560

My Ref: np

Your Ref:

**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 JANUARY 2004**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

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

Also present:

Executive Members: I E M Tarry (Community Services)
R J M Ellis (Leader)

Other Members: R Mays

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Roy Wilsher, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

The Chairman welcomed Deputy Chief Fire Officer Roy Wilsher who had taken up his post with Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on 1 January 2004. Roy joined the Fire Service in November 1981 and came to Hertfordshire from the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority where he had been carrying out the duties of Assistant Commissioner for Community Fire Safety since May 2002.

(b) Change to date of March Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman announced that after consultation with the group spokesmen, it has been agreed that the date of the Scrutiny Committee in March should be rearranged to allow Members an opportunity to attend the Committee and the HESMIC seminar, both previously scheduled for 16 March. The meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee would now be held at 10.00a.m. on Monday, 22 March in Committee Room B.

All to note

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 October 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PUBLIC PETITIONS

None

QUESTIONS

None

PART 1 (OPEN) BUSINESS**1 HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES AND LOCAL STUDIES (HALS)
ACCOMMODATION – PROGRESS REPORT**

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

The Committee received a report updating them on action taken to address the HALS' accommodation problem since the last meeting in October 2003. It was noted that a bid for capital funding to construct the new accommodation had been submitted as part of the 2004/05 budget process.

Conclusions

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| <p>1. The Committee expressed satisfaction that a bid for capital funding, which met the Committee's long-held concern that HALS maintain its status as a place of deposit, was included in Cabinet's budget proposals. The Committee considered this a high-priority development and requested that their views were passed to Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet as part of their comments on the budget proposals (see also Minute 5).</p> | <p>Adrian
Service/
Dave
Roberts</p> |
| <p>2. The Committee requested that a report be submitted to its next meeting detailing the outcome of the capital funding bid and the next steps to be taken towards construction. It was further requested that pictorial impressions and plans of the proposed development be displayed at the meeting. The Committee agreed that thereafter it would not be necessary to review this item at every meeting.</p> | <p>Andrew
Robertson/
Nikki
Patient</p> |

2 SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TOPIC GROUP

[Officer Contact: Steve Seaber, Chief Fire Officer
Tel: 01992 507500]

The Committee considered a report detailing the work and conclusions of the Sprinkler Systems Topic Group established by Committee in June 2002.

2.2 Conclusions

1. The Committee welcomed the Topic Group's report and commended the progress made. In particular the Committee:
 - (a) Welcomed the revised policy of providing sprinkler systems in new schools and other county council buildings.
 - (b) Expressed concern that buildings such as residential homes are still being built without sprinkler systems.
 - (c) Encouraged continued work by the Fire and Rescue Service to promote the use of sprinklers in buildings used by those groups most at risk from fire.
 - (d) Commended the ongoing work to build relationships with building control officers.
2. The Committee recommended that the Chief Fire Officer made links with care services to encourage future use of sprinkler systems. It was recognised that this was ongoing work due to continued developments in sprinkler technology.
3. The Committee recommended that the Chief Fire Officer contact the housing associations working locally and encourage the installation of sprinkler systems.

Steve
Seaber

Steve
Seaber

3 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

[Officer Contact: Dave Connor, Senior Divisional Officer
Tel: 01992 507504]

The Committee considered a report as part of the consultation on the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The County Council is required to produce the IRMP as part of the agenda to reform and modernise the Fire and Rescue Service, announced by the Deputy Prime Minister in the white paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service".

Conclusions

1. The Committee welcomed the Topic Group's report.

2. Concern was expressed at the disappointing response to consultation on the plan to date.
3. The Committee agreed to establish a Topic Group to consider issues involved in and arising from the Integrated Risk Management Plan.
 - (a) The following items would be considered by the Topic Group and, due to timing, report directly to Cabinet on 15 March:
 - Automatic fire alarm response policy
 - Staffing arrangements for retained fire stations
 - Building risk profiles
 - Home risk assessments
 - (b) The Topic Group would then consider the items listed below and report the findings to the Scrutiny Committee:
 - Review the IRMP consultation
 - Encouragement of young people and the community to engage in fire safety initiatives
4. The Committee further agreed to a future scrutiny item to look at new community fire safety initiatives, including 'friends' group initiatives, being tried by other authorities.

Roy
Wilsher /
Nikki
Patient

Steve
Seaber /
Nikki
Patient

4 BUDGET MONITOR TO 31 OCTOBER 2004

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

The Committee considered the budget monitor to enable Members to identify if there were any issues that they wished to scrutinise.

Conclusions

The Committee agreed in principle that it wished to scrutinise the Schools Library Service in conjunction with the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee, subject to checks being made on Traded Service status and the current position of the Best Value Review.

Clare Kaye

5 COMMUNITY SERVICES PROPOSED RESOURCE BUDGET 2004/05 – 2007/08

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

Committee considered a report detailing the proposals made by Cabinet on 15

December 2003 for the revenue budget and capital programme for Community Services.

Conclusions

The Committee:

Adrian
Service

1. Urged the speedy completion of the lease arrangements for the Gatehouse to improve the registrar service in St Albans.
2. Welcomed the inclusion in the proposals of a bid for capital funding for HALS' accommodation development.
3. Urged speed on the completion of the relocation of St Albans and Watford Fire Stations in order to avoid spiralling costs.
4. Supported the increase in the budget for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and urged careful consideration of the most effective disposition of these around the county. The Committee wished to stress that PCSOs were not substitutes for Police Officers.
5. Welcomed the pilot of Sunday opening for libraries.
6. Expressed concern about the adequacy of transitional funding available for the reform and modernisation of the Fire and Rescue Service.

6 UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2003/04

[Officer Contact: Nikki Patient, Committee Administrator
Tel: 01992 555560]

The Committee received a report which updated Members on recommendations made at the last meeting, informed them of the current status of scrutiny items and gave Members an opportunity to add new items to the work programme.

Conclusions

The Committee:

1. Asked that any changes to the powers of Police Community Support Officers be reported to the next meeting. Particular concern was raised that the roles of PCSOs should not be diverted into traffic management.
2. Requested a briefing on the issues surrounding the decriminalisation of parking, current enforcement arrangements and the role of PCSOs.

Phillip
Winter /
Nikki
Patient

Phillip
Winter

- | | |
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| 3. Agreed that an item on the reorganisation of tourism strategy be added to the Scrutiny Committee work programme for June 2004 in light of the closure of the Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton Tourism Partnership and the increasing role of the East of England Tourist Board. The scrutiny should involve stakeholders such as District Councils and economic partners. | Annie
Hawkins /
Nikki
Patient |
| 4. Agreed that an item on community fire safety initiatives be added to the scrutiny work programme. (See also Minute 3.) | Steve
Seaber /
Nikki
Patient |

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

The Opposition chose agenda item 2, Sprinkler Systems Topic Group, to be reported to Council on 12 February 2004.

(See also Minute 2.)

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary