

To: All Members of the County Council
All Chief Officers

From: COUNTY SECRETARY'S
DEPARTMENT
Ask for: Adrian Service
Ext: 25563

**RESOURCES, PROSPERITY, PARTNERSHIP AND
CONSULTATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2003
MINUTES**

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

M V Bayes, D Clayton, G M Cook, I H Laidlaw-Dickson, F J Escott, P V Goggins
R Mays (Chairman), H M Saunders, A M R Searing, W A Storey (Vice-Chairman).

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

D A Ashley (Community Information and Development), D Beatty (Resources),
R J M Ellis (Leader), R I N Gordon (Children, Schools & Families)
M H T Janes (Regeneration, the Region and Europe), D B Lloyd (Best Value).

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

M V Bayes had replaced S Quilty as a Member of this Committee for this meeting only.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman,.

PUBLIC PETITIONS

None

QUESTIONS

None

PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS**1 SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT**

[Officer contact: Adrian Service, Committee Administrator
Tel: 01992 555564]

- 1.1 An updated report was circulated at the meeting.
- 1.2 More detailed information should be given on the effects of scrutinising the Best Value Performance Plan.
- 1.3 It was noted that the scrutinising of the overview of European issues, and the Promises concerning 'Giving local communities a better voice'; 'Promoting equality & improve access to our services, employment & buildings' and 'Work with business to increase prosperity, protect jobs & improve standards of living for local people' had been performed at the meeting when the report was presented and were now finished.
- 1.4 It was suggested that a Topic Group be established now, in readiness of the Government 's publication of guidance on planning obligations.

Jan Kinsman
Anne Fisher
Clare Kaye
Adrian Service

1.5 Conclusion:

- The Committee noted the report.

2 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF EDUCATION TRADED SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION

[Officer contact: Claire Cook, Head of School Resources, CSF
Tel: 01992 555736]

- 2.1 The Committee considered a report on the implementation of recommendations contained within a Best Value Review of Education Traded Services.
- 2.2 **Conclusions:**
- The Committee noted the report and recognised that this early review and procedures have since improved. The Committee agreed that the way forward suggested in the report should be adopted.
 - The Committee recommended to the Director of Children, Schools and Families developments in brokerage arrangements involving County Supplies should be pursued.
 - The Committee requested that a report be submitted back to this Committee, when brokerage arrangements have been further progressed.

John Evans
Claire Cook

John Evans
Claire Cook
Adrian Service

3 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN

[Officer contact: Geoff Brown, Change Consultant
Tel: 01992 555370]

- 3.1 The Committee were advised that H M Government guidance on the preparation of the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) had been received last week and the main changes were that the plan should be regarded as a tool for reporting improvements across all services and that its principal audiences are likely to be central Government, staff, members and other interested organisations rather than the public. The Plan does however, still need to be made available to the public on the website and in libraries. The guidance also required local authorities to publish targets for 3 years rather than 1 year as at present.

It was noted that the draft Best Value Performance Plan would now be submitted to the Cabinet for approval at its meeting on 28 April 2003 prior to being scrutinised by the BVPP Topic Group at its next meeting in May 2003.

Geoff Brown
Judith Shaples
David Roberts

3.2 Conclusion:

The Committee are concerned to ensure the link between the Best Value Performance Plan and the budget is maintained and strengthened.

4 COUNTY COUNCIL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITOR

[Officer contact: Andrew Nightingale
Tel: 01992 555331]

- 4.1 The Committee noted :
- the increased expenditure on Childcare Litigation Cases [through more cases being pursued]
 - the increased requirement for maternity cover for staff in the Children, Schools and Families Department.
 - the unexpected downturn in waste collected resulting in an underspend of £700,000 currently and probably amounting to £900,000 by the end of the financial year and welcomed this as a positive development.
- 4.2 The Committee noted a report detailing the projected revenue and capital outturn position as at 31 December 2002 and welcomed the improved position.

5 SIMPLY DONE EFFICIENCIES PROGRAMME

[Officer contact: Ian Bailey, Strategy and Consultancy
Tel: 01992 558382]

- 5.1 It was noted that once the Officer Senior Management Board had signed off the 3 year programme in April 2003, a report would be submitted to the Cabinet in May 2003.

Ian Bailey
Caroline Tapster
David Roberts

5.2 Conclusions:

The Committee noted a report on the proposed Simply Done Efficiencies Programme, welcoming the comprehensive approach to finding efficiencies in the Council. The Committee are concerned to ensure there is an effective member challenge process and therefore request a report to the next meeting including a proposed programme.

Ian Bailey
Caroline
Tapster

6 SCRUTINY OF MONEY ADVICE UNIT

[Officer contact: Gary Vaux, Head of Money Advice Unit
Tel: 01992 556370]

- 6.1 The Committee noted this very helpful and informative report.

6.2 Conclusions:

The Committee considered the need to improve the awareness of our staff and service users concerning the changes in tax credits which benefits relatively wealthy people.

Gary Vaux

The Committee requested a further report analysing the possible balance between costs and benefits to the Council and the people of Hertfordshire of increasing the work of the Money Advice Unit.

Gary Vaux
Adrian Service

7 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2003/04

[Officer contact: Adrian Service, Committee Administrator
Tel: 01992 555564]

- 7.1 The Committee considered a report timetabling items for scrutiny by the Committee.

- 7.2 It was noted that changes to the portfolios of Cabinet and the possible amendments to the constitution of Scrutiny Committees would transfer items of scrutiny relating to the Rural Mobile Neighbourhood Warden Scheme and Crime Reduction Partnerships to the proposed Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

7.3 Conclusions:

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| 1) | The Committee agreed the timetable for the work programme as set out in the report. | Clare Kaye
Adrian Service |
| 2) | It was agreed that a report on the efficiencies programme be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in June 2003. | Ian Bailey
Clare Kaye
Adrian Service |
| 3) | It was agreed that a report analysing the possible benefits and costs of increasing the work of the Money Advice Unit be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in June 2003. | Gary Vaux
Andrew
Nightingale
Adrian Service |
| 4) | It was agreed that a Best Value Traffic Lights Report be submitted to each meeting of this Scrutiny Committee. | Geoff Brown
Adrian Service |
| 5) | It was agreed that the item arising from CPA concerning the level of disabled persons employed by HCC should be re titled 'Employment of people with disabilities by HCC' and this should be considered at the next meeting in June 2003. | Alan Warner
Clare Kaye
Adrian Service |

8. ITEM REFERRED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Simply Done Efficiencies Programme was referred to be reported to the County Council at its next meeting

Ron Coxall
Adrian Service

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary