

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY
PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 AUGUST 2007
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.40 PM

Members Present: J M Whitehouse (Chairman), G Mohindra (Vice-Chairman), R Bassett, M Colling, A Lee, R Morgan, Mrs P Richardson, Mrs P Smith and A Watts

Other members present: Mrs D Collins, A Green, Mrs M Sartin and D Stallan

Apologies for Absence: J Hart

Officers Present J Gilbert (Head of Environmental Services), T Tidey (Head of Human Resources and Performance Management), J Preston (Head of Planning and Economic Development), P Maddock (Assistant Head of Finance), P Pledger (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Property and Resources)), S Tautz (Performance Improvement Manager) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

13. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted that there were no Substitute members.

14. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

15. NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING - 6 JUNE 2007

The notes of the previous meeting, held on 19 June 2007, were agreed, subject to Councillor Mrs Smith being listed as a District and not as a Parish Councillor, Councillor J Whitehouse's declaration of interest being amended to him being the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and not the Chairman of the Working Group.

16. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

Noted that item 11 of the work programme on Value for Money in Leisure Services was discussed at the last meeting and is now completed.

17. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/07 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Panel noted the figures for the first quarter of the years KPIs. It was noted that the Cabinet had set a target of achieving at least 75% to achieve the top quartile by the end of the year.

BV183b – noted that the target had changed to reflect the new Choice Based Lettings scheme.

BV212 – noted that the actual figure for quarter 1 should be 55.00. The Panel noted that the general trend was deteriorating. Officers were in discussions with the Works Officer and were expecting significant improvement in the second quarter. The understaffing of the works unit had an impact on this indicator. The Panel asked that more detailed comments accompany this indicator when next reported.

H15a – it was reported that the first quarter figure should be 00.00. The Panel noted that by the end of the year, only about 14 units would have been built, with a possibility of 500 units to follow, but the run-in period for this would be counted in years. There were four projects currently in the pipeline.

H15b – the officer agreed to clarify how the figures were being monitored for the next quarter.

BV008 – The Panel asked for more detailed comments to accompany this indicator.

BV009 – noted that the data collected for this indicator was slightly late this year. The LPI should be back on track in the second quarter.

BV012 – noted that the Cabinet had reduced the qualifying absence period for management action from 10 to 8 days. It would take time to meet the target.

BV078a – noted that a new system had been installed and the staff were still getting a few teething problems, but performance would improve in the next quarter.

BV082a – noted that the top line was missing from the table; quarter 1 for 07/8 should have an actual figure of 3,289.

BV091a – noted now that the wheeled bin contract was in place, they would need to get the flats in the district recycling more. Officers were confident that the number would go up over the year. Part of the difficulty was that officers were unsure of how many flats there were in the district. They now know and are able to set their targets accordingly.

BV166 a & b – have now got 100%, but the indicator will be deleted at the end of the year.

BV199 a to d – it was agreed that the figures would be reported to the Panel as and when the data became available.

BV109a – noted that the targets had been raised but performance had been raised too.

BV109c – noted that performance showed a steady downward trend, caused to some extent by the departure of certain staff. Management Board were currently considering the improvement plans developed by each Head of Service to ensure the achievement of top quartile performance by the end of the year and that agreed actions would be reported at the next meeting.

BV170a – the figures do not include enquiries to the museum via the Council's website and that the Royal Gunpowder Mills were not allowed to be included in the figures for the target.

RESOLVED:

1. That the KPI performance information be noted and that detailed comments were required for BV212, BV008 and for the Planning indicators.
2. BV199 a, b, c and d – that the figures would be reported back to Panel as and when the data became available.

18. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT/COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Head of Human Resources and Performance Management introduced the performance monitoring report on the Local Area Agreement and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan. Because the targets being monitored are 'big picture' ones, it was thought that the committee should consider them on a six-monthly cycle instead of the current three-monthly one, as very little change would take place in such a short time period.

Councillor Mrs Collins added that there were also large changes coming by the Spring of 2009, which would impact on the plans under consideration.

Local Area Agreement:

It was noted that under the objective to reduce crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs and to reassure the public (LAA 10), there would be an approximate reduction of 8% during 2007/08 (at 1(b)). The Panel would like an explanation on the consequences of this.

The Panel noted that the 'Crucial Crew Scheme' was very successful and congratulated the officers.

The Panel thought that the targets for LAA 11, 'Build respect in communities and reduce anti-social behaviour', were not sufficiently precise.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan:

The Panel noted that the staff suggestion scheme had been discussed with the Leader of the Council and that it would be trialled later this year.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Panel would consider the Local Area Agreement and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan on a six monthly basis in future.
2. That the Panel receive an explanation on the consequences on the reduction in budget in LAA 10.

19. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Assistant Head of Finance took the Panel through the quarterly Financial Monitoring report. The Panel noted that:

- there were ongoing recruitment difficulties in the ICT service area. They are also currently being restructured. This should be resolved once the restructuring has taken place;
- the concessionary fares were currently being appealed, but they should still be within budget;
- a delay in the payment in grants had taken place as certain organisations had not yet agreed the required terms;
- there was a drop in the numbers of large planning applications and this resulted in a reduction in fees received;
- there was a time lag between collecting parking fines and passing it on to us, this shows up as a dip in revenue. We are investigating the reasons for this at present;
- the Cabinet are to get a updating report on the Bobbingworth Tip;
- the Council had joined the Essex Market Place and hope to achieve savings using this system;
- there was an underspend on the land cleansing budget. This work is undertaken by the Council's refuse contractor – there may be an allocation issue to be considered.

20. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To report back to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the KPI monitoring undertaken and that the Panel would look at the LAA and CPA Improvement Plan on a six-monthly basis.

21. FUTURE MEETINGS

The future meeting dates were noted.