

Minutes



Meeting CORPORATE STRATEGY AND CO-ORDINATION SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 14th February 2005 (commencing at 10.30 am)

membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

D E Pulk (Chair)
Tom Pettengell (Vice-Chair)

	Colin Bromfield	A	K L O'Toole
	G Gilfoyle		Mrs Sheila Place
	Richard Jackson		Ray Poynter
	B Laughton		Maureen Tewson
A	Ellie Lodziak		Y Woodhead
	J T A Napier		

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor M Brandon-Bravo

MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 20th December 2004, having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Ellie Lodziak.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

With the consent of the Select Committee it was agreed that Item 5 Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Consultation on Proposed changes be taken as the first item of business on the agenda.

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES

Andrew Muter, Assistant Chief Executive, introduced the report which set out the Audit Commission's proposals for revising the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) from next year and sought the Select Committee's views for inclusion with Executive comments to be sent back to the Commission.

He said that many of the aspects of the new proposals remain the same. He pointed out that the main proposed changes would see service blocks being revised to bring together Children's and Young People's services into a single block. The Use of Resources Block would be substantially changed to include an explicit judgement of Value for Money to show efficiency savings through the Annual Efficiency Statement. The Corporate Assessment would be modified to include judgements on community and leadership and leadership of partnerships, the promotion of user focus and diversity, management of resources and value for money and the achievement of shared priorities and of national and local government. He added that the overall assessment which brings all of the elements together would use rules rather than the scoring system and include a direction of travel statement.

Councillor Poynter felt that the proposed comments to the Audit Commission should be strengthened. He felt that the Council should be evaluated on what the public could not assess. Concern was also expressed at the limited number of performance indicators available in both the Environment and Culture blocks and at how well they would reflect the overall assessment.

In terms of the implications for the County Council, Mr Muter pointed out that the rules as currently proposed would mean that the Authority would have to raise its score for Adult Social Care from 2 to 3 in order to retain the Council's overall excellent score.

With regard to the new Use of Resources block, Mr Muter said that it represented a shift from assessing financial probity to assessing how well Councils use their resources. Along with other County Councils, Nottinghamshire had scored 4 for Resources. It was felt that the requirements of the new assessment around value for money would present a challenge for Councils to maintain a score of 4. It would require change to many Council procedures and to resources to achieve this.

The Select Committee wondered where the local discretion lay and noted the tension between plans and benchmarks and the local community.

The Select Committee was concerned by the competing government agendas and lack of joined up thinking in the proposals. However, the Committee believed the emphasis on improving performance and benchmarking against other authorities were positive aspects of CPA. The Committee queried the cost of CPA and its relevance to the electorate and the extent to which CPA promoted local accountability. Members were especially concerned that if an

“excellent” council were to be demoted to “good” as a result of the changing criteria, there would be a risk of confusion for the public.

It was agreed to convey the Select Committees comments to the Cabinet Member for Resources for inclusion in the response to the consultation.

BUDGET PROPOSALS 2005/2006 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Peter Hurford, Assistant County Treasurer, introduced the report on the budget proposals for 2005/06 and the consultation process.

He explained that it had been recognised that the preparation of the budget for 2005/06 would be different and that an early start had been made in April 2004 on gathering information on which budget decisions would be taken.

He referred to public consultation on Council Tax issues through road shows held throughout the county and the Labour Group’s participation in an interactive seminar at which various options were considered. There had been a limited response so far to the proposals that had been publicised. He explained the reason behind the proposed council tax increase of 3.9% rather than 4.5%.

Mr Hurford answered Member’s questions in relation to the consultation and budget setting processes. Councillor Poynter suggested consulting in more detail on particular blocks of service. In reply to Councillor Pettengell, Mr Hurford agreed to provide information on the numbers attending road shows.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am.

CHAIR

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