

CESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

held on Monday 22 January 2007

PRESENT: Councillor P. Woodburn, Chairman

Councillor	E.L. Bamford	Councillor	D.J. Lacey
Councillor	Mrs M. Molesworth	Councillor	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
Councillor	C.H. Spruytenburg	Councillor	P.W. Yerrell

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor P.J. Murphy

Officer: Ms K.A. Graves – Policy and Projects Officer

14. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors E.L. Bamford and C.H. Spruytenburg declared a personal interest in Agenda Items 4 and 5 in view of their membership of the Allotments Group and their tenancies of allotment plots. Councillor Mrs A.M. Pirouet declared a personal interest in Agenda Items 4 and 5 in view of her membership of the Allotments Group. Councillor P.W. Yerrell declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 as a trustee of the Little Theatre by the Park. Councillor Mrs M. Molesworth declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

15. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Review Committee held on 13 November 2006 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

16. **ALLOTMENTS BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW**

The Policy and Projects Officer provided an update on the most recent aspects of the review. The Committee held a brief discussion on the value of visiting allotments sites that are run under substantially different circumstances to those of Chesham's allotments. The merits of specific, potential improvements to the allotments were considered. The high level of satisfaction with the overall allotments service and the rental charges as recorded in the results of the Allotments Users' Survey was noted.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

17. **THIRD QUARTER REPORT ON PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS**

The Committee commented that some of the performance indicator data had been provided too late to enable adequate analysis of the data, although the Committee appreciated that this was due to circumstances beyond the officers' control.

In respect of the Allotments performance indicator "Income to the Council per hectare of workable allotment land", the Committee queried why the income to date is substantially below the annual target when the rents were due for payment in October. The Policy and Projects Officer opined that the figure to date is comparable with the third quarter figure for 2005/06, wherein the final figure for that year exceeded the target. The Policy and Projects Officer also stated that there are only a small number of tenants who have not yet paid their rent.

[Additional Information: Whilst the annual rent is collected in a single lump sum, in financial terms a quarter of the annual rent is allocated to each of the four quarters of the allotments year. The Council year runs from April to March and the allotments year runs from October to September. The rent paid in October 2006 covers the period from October 2006 to September 2007. Therefore, not all of the rent paid in October 2006 is applicable to the Council year which runs from April 2006 to March 2007. The income of £477.45 per hectare given as of 31 December 2006 consists of half the monies paid in October 2005 (covering April to September 2006) and a quarter of the monies paid in October 2006 (covering October to December 2006).]

The Committee also queried why the income is calculated per workable hectare, when the rent is charged per pole.

[Additional information: The income is calculated per hectare for historical reasons. It would be possible to calculate the income in pounds per pole in the future. However, as all previous years' figures have been calculated per hectare this would mean it would no longer be possible to compare any future data with historical data at a glance. As the main purpose of the data is to compare performance year-on-year, changing the units used is not recommended by officers.]

In respect of the Elgiva, a Member queried why the development of an online booking system had not been added to the key targets when the issue had been raised at the previous Performance Review Committee meeting held on 13 November 2006. The Policy and Projects Officer explained that the development of an online booking system is a longer-term objective and therefore was not originally included in the 2006/07 key targets. Key targets are set annually in the Best Value Performance Plan and cannot be altered during the course of the year since it is received and approved by Auditors appointed by central government.

A Member expressed the view that the construction of a conservatory at the Elgiva, which is referred to in a key target, would have the detrimental effect of preventing cool air flowing into the foyer from the patio in hot weather. The Member stated that it would be desirable to investigate alternative options, such as the construction of a mezzanine. It was noted that there is also a key target to investigate the addition of air-conditioning to the Elgiva.

The Committee noted that the “Cost to the Council per Elector” for the Town Hall had exceeded the 2006/07 target. The Policy and Projects Officer explained that the cost will decrease in the final quarter, as the income from bookings between January and March will exceed the associated expenditure. It was noted that the cost for the third quarter of 2005/06 had exceeded its target, but that the figure had fallen below the target by the end of the year.

In respect of Sports Pavilions and Playing Fields, the Committee requested that the key target “Support the bid by local community association to manage the building and bid for external funding to rebuild Marston Pavilion” be amended, as the community association was no longer bidding for management of the facility. The Policy and Projects Officer stated that key targets cannot be altered during the course of the year, but that the update information for the third quarter referred to the decision by the Council to keep the facility “in-house”.

In consideration of CVSLA, a Member queried how the current figure for the “Cost to the Council per Elector” compared with the third quarter of 2005-06. The Policy and Projects Officer agreed to report back with this information.

[Additional Information: The actual to date “Cost to the Council per Elector” for the third quarter 2006-07 is £1.64, compared with £1.52 in the third quarter of 2005-06.]

The Committee recommended that the key target to “Seek formal national QUEST accreditation at swimming pool and gymnasium to prove high quality provision” be included in the key targets for CVSLA for 2007-08.

When considering the Cemetery and Closed Churchyard, the Committee requested that officers ensure that the public, particularly relatives of people buried in the affected plots, is fully apprised of the permanent make-safe procedure taking place and the legal obligations of the Council to conduct this work. The Policy and Projects Officer stated that she would check the system in place with the Administration Manager.

Under Democratic Services and Corporate Management, a Member asked for a progress report on the key target to “Increase consultation with ‘hard to reach’ groups, particularly the minority ethnic community”. The Policy and Projects Officer reported that it is planned to develop a policy on consultation before progressing consultation with individual groups.

When considering the key target to “Keep Members and officers abreast of new initiatives forthcoming from the Government’s White Paper on possible local government reform”, a brief discussion was held on the future status of County and District Councils in Buckinghamshire.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

18. **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE LITTLE THEATRE BY THE PARK**

A discussion was held on the mechanism by which data would be collected for the proposed performance indicators. It was confirmed that the quarterly refurbishment updates provided by the Trustees of the Little Theatre would provide information to the same purpose as the key

target updates given for Council services. It was noted that the performance indicators would be implemented for the Council year 2007-08.

It was

RESOLVED

that the proposed Performance Indicators be approved.

19. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.13 pm.

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CHAIRMAN