

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

BEST VALUE SUB-COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Best Value Sub-Committee was held at the Commemoration Hall, High Street, Huntingdon on Thursday 24th June 2010.

Present: Councillors B J Luckham & C Osborn

Absent: Councillors A J MacKender Lawrence & T D Sanderson

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED that Cllr B J Luckham be elected Chairman of the Best Value Sub-Committee for the ensuing local government year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED that Cllr C Osborn be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Best Value Sub-Committee for the ensuing local government year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D A Adams, C G Doyle & L Kadic.

4. MINUTES

Copies of the minutes of the Best Value Sub Committee meeting held on 20th April 2010 (M5) had been circulated. Members

RESOLVED that these were a correct record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

5. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE 2009/10

A draft copy of the 2010/11 Plan had been circulated in advance of the meeting, which contained the results of performance against targets in the previous year. These were reviewed by Members and it was

RESOLVED to note these and to carry forward actions that remained outstanding to the following year.

6. **BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2010/11**

Members were asked to consider targets for each of the Council's services during the coming year and the following were proposed, in addition to those carried forward:

Democratic Services and Corporate Management
To ensure that Polling Cards are provided by District Council for local residents, should the need for a by-election arise.
To ensure that formal arrangements for maintenance of the newly constructed access from Mayfield Road to the Huntingdon Olympic Gym Club are concluded.
Allotments
To resolve the future use of the former Sallowbush 1 allotment site
To conduct a review of allotments provision in surrounding parishes
To undertake consultation on the viability of self-management of the allotments in Huntingdon
Play & Recreation Areas
Prior to preparation of the Council's budget plans for 2011-12, to consult with the community in Kent and Surrey Roads to establish play area requirements for under fives.
To engage with stakeholders to ensure continued shared responsibility and decision making in connection with the Skatepark at Stukeley Meadows.
To work with the District Council to provide a Multi Use Games Area at Sallowbush Road.
Sports Facilities
To review and undertake, if necessary, any maintenance to buildings recommended in the five year improvement plan
To conclude an agreement with Hunts FA on the lease of land and maintenance of the car park at Jubilee Sports Fields.
To support the Huntingdon Indoor Bowls Club's desire to improve facilities by installing new lighting.
To ensure in any way possible that Huntingdon's proximity to London is promoted in a way that increases visitor numbers to the town in the year of the Olympics in 2012.
Community Facilities
To revisit the potential for use of the Town Hall as a Registry Office for weddings, now that the Town Council has responsibility for the whole of the building.
To replace the Boiler for the heating system at the Medway Centre.
To prepare costed proposals for refurbishment of the toilets at the Medway

Centre in time for preparation of the Council's budget of expenditure for 2011-12.
To implement necessary repairs and prepare the first floor for relocation of the Council's Offices at the expiry of the lease for 1 Trinity Place in February 2012
Research and present proposals for Council's consideration in connection with a possible annual St George's Day celebration in Huntingdon.
Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards
To arrange for inspection of walls and fences at St Mary's, St John's and Hartford to ensure that future maintenance requirements can be planned and resourced.
International Twinning
To participate in any specific Twinning Events planned by the Huntingdon & Godmanchester Twinning Association and in particular the Anniversary of the Twinning Agreement with Wertheim am Main.

It was therefore

RESOLVED to recommend that these targets be included as stated aims of the Council in the 2010-11 Plan.

Members then turned their attention to strategic review of services, in particular Parks Gardens & Amenity Areas; International Twinning; Community Facilities; and Highways, Footpaths and Lighting. Updated position statements for some of these had been circulated in advance of the meeting and further information was available to assist review for some.

Parks, Gardens & Amenity Areas

A position statement for this service presented was complete in most respects and provided details of the service structure, cost, staffing, resourcing, financial controls, etc. Some strengths and weaknesses had been identified, though there was little evidence of feedback from users to consider. An inventory of the areas maintained by the Council had now been completed with area dimensions.

There was no comparative information available from other Town & Parish Councils and Members commented that the information before them might prove useful in tendering for work with other Councils locally.

Reviewing the service in general, Members expressed the view that the Parks and Gardens for which the Council was responsible were a credit to the town and that in order to maintain existing standards, it was imperative that existing staffing levels and financial resources were maintained. Members also expressed the view that the Council evidenced extremely good value with existing resources, when the extent of the provision was fully realised.

It was suggested that the time allocated to maintaining Victoria Square Gardens be further reviewed as this appeared to be inexplicably high for such a small area of open space.

In conclusion, therefore, it was

RESOLVED to recommend no change to the service, other than to develop means by which comparison with other Council's might be possible and costs quantified to enable tendering for work with other Council's locally.

Community Facilities:

Members considered position statements for the four areas of this service as follows:

Community Events

A report identified the range of events organised by the Council and provided details of the cost of provision. Detail on staffing arrangements, financial controls, use of IT and local partners was provided, as well as a list of other community groups locally organising events.

It was noted that the report contained little evidence of feedback from users of the service and no Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities or Threats had been identified.

Information was presented to Members which compared the activities and performance of other Town & Parish Councils, available for review and comparison with Huntingdon.

Grants & Donations

A similar report set out the system under which the Council awards grants to local community groups. This also lacked feedback from users and a full SWOT Analysis.

Information was presented to Members which compared the activities and performance of other Town & Parish Councils, available for review and comparison with Huntingdon.

Community Halls

The position statement for Halls set out details available in the statements for other services. A comprehensive SWOT analysis had been conducted by the Medway Centre Manager in respect of that facility for review by Members and the results of feedback from 150 users of the Centre were presented in the form of charts for Councillors' information.

Information was presented to Members which compared the activities and performance of other Town & Parish Councils, available for review and comparison with Huntingdon.

Artistic Programme

The position statement gave details of the service structure, costs, staffing arrangements, resourcing, financial controls, partners, etc.

There was no evidence of feedback from users contained in the report. A brief SWOT Analysis was included.

Reviewing this aspect of the service, Members considered that some action should be taken to mitigate apparent financial losses and to ensure that the Council's aim of maximising visitors to the Huntingdon Commemoration Hall was met. Councillors considered that it would be beneficial to conduct some research into the types of entertainment local people would prefer at the Hall.

It was therefore

RESOLVED to note the position statements as presented; to look forward to reviewing the results of further consultation; and to recommend that the leisure & community services committee undertakes an appraisal of the artistic programme and sets improvement targets to be achieved during the next six months.

Highways, Footpaths & Lighting & International Twinning

Position Statements for these services were not presented and it was

RESOLVED to consider these at a future meeting.

7. **DATE & AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed.

CHAIRMAN