

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL SERVICES POLICY AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD ON
21 DECEMBER 2009**

Membership

Councillors

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| * Barry Aspinell | * Stephen Mayzes |
| * Susan Barker (Chairman) | * Gerard McEwen |
| John Dornan | * Linda Mead (Vice-Chairman) |
| Eddie Johnson | Mavis Webster |
| * John Knapman | Anne Turrell (Vice-Chairman) |
| * Michael Lager | |
| * Present | |

52. Apologies and Substitute Notices

Apologies were received from Councillors John Dornan, Johnson, Webster and Turrell.

53. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Susan Barker declared a personal interest with item 11 on the agenda as her son has recently been employed through the Capita system.

54. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record subject to an amendment recording Councillor Mayzes apologies.

55. Performance Indicator on Overall Satisfaction

The Committee considered report CS/21/09 and received a presentation from Duncan Wood, Head of Public Engagement.

Duncan advised the Committee that the Council was obliged to survey its residents by post in relation to their satisfaction levels with the Authority.

A postal survey showed satisfaction at 46.5 %, a face to face survey showed satisfaction at 63 % and an online survey showed 58 percent of residents were satisfied.

Duncan confirmed that Essex County Council services are identified in the survey, with county results correlating with those of district and borough council satisfaction levels. This suggested that respondents have a general view of councils and do not always distinguish between services provided by different tier authorities. Research conducted by MORI suggests that results can be predictable by the demographic and socio-economic content of an area, with national overall satisfaction survey methodology and seasonal variations all having a role in the results produced. .

Surveys to measure satisfaction conducted by MORI, and in conjunction with the Place Survey also produced differing results, 51% and 48% respectively.

Members cited the 18 % of residents who were dissatisfied and highlighted the need to identify the reasons behind their answers and how many of these residents have contact with County Council services. Duncan explained that work is being done to determine the interests of respondents as evidence shows this improves results. Members asked if there was space on the Tracker Survey questionnaire to record why they were dissatisfied and were advised that this could be considered for the future.

Members highlighted the need to monitor satisfaction and identify issues that related to partner organisations and suggested that there should be time bound action plans assigned to specific officers. Duncan advised that survey results are shared with partner organisations and that Richard Puleston had tasked Giles Roca and his team with the production of action plans to improve the statistics. Members requested that Richard Puleston attend the February meeting of this Committee to discuss action plans. Members would also like to consider copies of the Tracker and Place Surveys.

56. Performance Indicator on Asset Management

The Committee considered report CS/22/09 and received a short verbal presentation from Roger Moore, Head of Estates, Valuation and Property Strategy; the following key points were noted.

Roger advised that this report is underpinned by the national property market and economic climate. Essex County Council will only dispose of properties where the return is good or is led by a strategic policy. Roger noted a pipeline of sites outlined for development over the next five years. The Committee were advised that the book value of ECC's property portfolio is £2.4 billion and that the market value is closer to 50 percent of this total; with 90 percent of the property portfolio tied up in schools of which we have no overall control.

Members were advised that all properties are sold through the open market and that ECC work with consultants Smith Lambert Hampton. Members were advised that in 2003 the capital receipts target was £90 million of which £65 million was achieved. In 2005 the target was set at 10 percent of the asset value or £20 million over five years.

57. Citizenship Fees

The Committee noted report CS/23/09. Members asked for further information to clarify the revenue received against the cost of running citizenship ceremonies; the Committee asked for the pricing structure of individual ceremonies to be justified.

58. Forward Look

The Committee noted report CS24/09 and were advised that the January meeting would focus on the Essex Strategy Refresh.

59. Dates for Future Meetings

Members noted the dates of future meetings.

60. Urgent Business

There being no urgent business the public meeting closed at 12:20pm

61. Exclusion of the Public

To consider whether the public (including the press) should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Resolved:

That the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

(Paragraph 3 relating to financial or business affairs)

(Business taken in private)**62. Capita Resourcing**

The Committee considered report CS/25/09 and received a short verbal presentation from Keir Lynch, Director of Human Resources and Customer Excellence.

Members agreed to reconvene the Task and Finish group to take further evidence from witnesses on 15 January 2010.

There being no urgent business the public meeting closed at 13:20pm.

Chairman
25 January 2010