

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
27 MAY 2010**

Present: Councillors Clark, Corello, Hodges, Lock (in the Chair),
MJ Lock, Sabetian and Westley

Lead Members in Attendance: Councillors Birch and Kramer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following councillor made a declaration as follows:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Lock	3	Personal – Governor of William Parker School

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes meeting held on 11 March 2010 be approved as a true record.

3. QUARTER FOUR PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Jane Hartnell, Head of Policy, Partnerships and Sustainability, presented the year-end performance report.

The report advised members of the performance against the targets and milestones set out in Part II of the Corporate Plan for 2009/10, together with related budget issues within the Personnel & Organisational Development and Corporate Resources Directorate.

Members discussed the Council's Asset Management Plan, Audit Plan, Sustainable Community Strategy, Participation Strategy, joint procurement policies, People Strategy, and Equalities issues.

Members also discussed council tax and business rates collection and were pleased to acknowledge the improved rate of council tax collection despite the current recession and increased economic uncertainty.

The performance of Revenues and Benefits was discussed, with Councillor Clark asking how the Council compared in this respect with neighbouring authorities. Neil Dart, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate

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Resources, confirmed that Hastings compared favourably with other local authorities, and invited Committee Members to meet with Jean Saxby, Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, to discuss performance since the last report.

Members discussed work to encourage young people to vote when they reached 18 years old. Graham Belchamber, Scrutiny and Democratic Services Manager, noted that a partnership project had been initiated with East Sussex County Council to visit schools and colleges across the Borough to promote democratic participation amongst young people.

Following a number of questions from Members on the Foreshore Trust, Neil Dart recommended that the Borough Solicitor provide a Members Briefing on the issue; the committee agreed that this would be useful.

Members discussed Local Area Agreement targets to reduce CO2 emissions, and requested an update on what work was being undertaken. Jane Hartnell agreed to report back to the committee on progress to reduce CO2 emissions in our area.

In response to questions from the committee, Verna Connolly, Head of People and Organisational Development, confirmed that a formal succession plan was being worked on, in particular working with managers to identify individual skillsets, as part of the People Strategy. This was to take account of the difficult resource challenges facing the Council during a period of increased economic uncertainty.

Members also asked for the response rate for the recent Staff Survey, and what measures were being considered to improve that rate. Verna Connolly confirmed that 46% of staff responded, and managers were being encouraged to discuss the Staff Survey at team meetings, and to promote active engagement. Members suggested using social media as a tool, and Verna Connolly confirmed that these suggestions would be welcomed.

Staff sickness and absence rates were also discussed, and Verna Connolly confirmed that there had been a significant improvement since the last report, following a pro-active approach by People & Organisational Development and officers working directly with managers to deal with, at times, difficult situations. Members welcomed the reduction in sickness absence rates, and commented favourably on the good work being undertaken by People & Organisational Development.

In response to a question by Councillor Clark on provision of multi-faith rooms on council premises, Verna Connolly confirmed that all staff had access to rest rooms, although we did not provide specific multi-faith rooms.

RESOLVED that:

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- 1. the information that will form Part III of the Corporate Plan be noted;**
- 2. the committee's comments be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 14 June 2010; and**
- 3. staff be thanked for their hard work in achieving the targets set out in the Corporate Plan.**

4. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF FACTORY UNITS

Graham Belchamber, Scrutiny and Democratic Services Manager, updated the committee on the progress of this scrutiny review.

The review was almost at its conclusion and members of the review team were currently in the process of signing off the final report. It was anticipated that the report would be presented to the committee at its next meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET DECISIONS

Graham Belchamber, Scrutiny and Democratic Services Manager, presented a report on the recent Cabinet Decisions made since the last formal meeting, highlighting areas that fell within the Committee's remit.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.14pm)