

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
6 JUNE 2011

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

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Birch and Kramer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clark and Westley.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following councillors declared an interest in the minutes as follows:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Pragnell	3	Personal – DWP employee (where discussed)

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 3 and 22 February be approved as a true record.

3. FINAL REPORT ON THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF PAYMENT OF HOUSING BENEFIT

Councillor Hodges introduced the report to members of the committee, as Chair of the review. He walked members through the findings of the review, together with recommended actions to enhance the existing service. The unknown quantity, however, was the introduction of Universal Credit. It was yet to be decided when this would be introduced, what system it would run on and who would administer it.

The committee thanked everyone involved in the review for their comprehensive findings and detailed report. Members were pleased to see that the original backlog of cases had been cleared, owing in part, to the commitment of the Housing Benefit team.

Councillor Birch, as Lead Member for Finance, congratulated the review team on what he called a 'model of scrutiny' and highlighted that the review had played a significant role analysing initial concerns.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
6 JUNE 2011**

RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to approve the report and key improvements outlined in the action plan.

**4. CORPORATE PLAN PART III – YEAR END PERFORMANCE
INFORMATION AND TARGET SETTING 2011/12**

Jane Hartnell, Head of Policy and Performance, presented the Corporate Plan Part III.

The report detailed year-end actual performance by the staff in the Corporate Resources Directorate against the targets and milestones set out in Part II of the Corporate Plan for 2010/11. It noted the areas of shortfall and the actions that will be taken to improve performance during 2011/12.

Members discussed Revenues and Benefits call waiting times, internal audit performance and sickness absence levels.

The committee paid particular attention to 'Total Place and the 'Place Survey'. Members asked how these linked to the Big Conversation held last year. Councillor Birch replied that 'Total Place' was about external stakeholders pooling resources and using those to address challenging areas within the town. The 'Place Survey' was a national based survey, centred on people's perception of Hastings. This differed to the Big Conversation, which aimed to flush out important quality of life issues to residents of the town. Consideration was currently being given on how to build on and sustain the engagement created by the Big Conversation with fewer resources and, importantly, to feedback to local people on how the Council had responded to what they had told us.

Members also questioned the corporate risk register and sought assurance that, although the target was amber, risks were being monitored. Peter Grace, Head of Financial Services, assured the committee that this was the case and that he had frequent sight of corporate risks, addressing any concerns as they arose.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 the information that will form Part III of the Corporate Plan be noted;**
- 2. the committee's comments on the proposed performance indicator targets for 2011/12 be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 13 June 2011; and**
- 3. staff be thanked for their hard work in achieving the targets set out in the Corporate Plan.**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
6 JUNE 2011**

5. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET DECISIONS

Katrina Silverson, Scrutiny and Electoral Services Officer, submitted 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 8.05pm)