

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

Present: Councillors Cartwright (as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Sabetian), Corello, Dowling (as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Clark), Hodges, MJ Lock and Pragnell (in the Chair)

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Birch and Kramer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clark, Sabetian and Westley.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 6 and 14 June be approved as a true record.

8. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS BY OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Cartwright, as Chair of the review, gave a spoken update on progress.

The review team had met twice and its purpose was to investigate whether current practices could be improved. Councillor Cartwright stated that the title of the review had been changed, to reflect a better understanding of the work being undertaken. The new title was, 'Influencing and appraising decisions of third parties'.

Councillor Cartwright indicated that the review team would undertake a series of interviews with external organisations, in order to gain information on current procedures.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9. QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

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

The report detailed performance by the staff in Policy and Performance and the Corporate Resources Directorate against the 2011/12 targets and performance indicators set out in Part II of the Corporate Plan.

Members discussed the Investors in People accreditation, corporate risk management and the Council's Environmental Action Plan.

The committee asked for further information relating to a proposed scheme to invest £1 million to act as guarantor in mortgage deposits for first time buyers who otherwise could not raise the sum needed. There were concerns as to what level of risk the Council might expose itself to if the scheme was agreed. Peter Grace, Head of Financial Services, explained that while there was a risk associated with the scheme, primarily in terms of any defaults on a home loan, the Council would receive interest on the monies lodged with the lender which should mitigate the costs of this based on current national levels of defaults.

Members discussed the Council's procurement arrangements and asked what savings had been achieved through collaborative working. Roy Mawford, Chief Executive, replied that although he did not have accurate figures with him at the meeting, he would be happy to circulate these to the committee.

Councillor Hodges raised a query regarding the Charity Committee and Coastal Users Group, as the report was unclear as to the level of consultation undertaken with the Group. Councillor Kramer commented that she would ask for clarity around the procedures regarding consultation and respond to Councillor Hodges outside of the meeting.

Members also asked for more information on the Council's flexible working policy. Verna Connolly, Head of People and Organisational Development, replied that flexible working methods had become increasingly popular over the last five years. These included flexible working hours, home working and mobile working. Councillor Kramer commented that flexible working methods could benefit both the Council and the individual, so should be encouraged where possible.

The committee also acknowledged the work undertaken by staff in the People and Organisational Development Services to reduce the number of days' sickness absence taken throughout the organisation.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. the Committee's comments on Quarter 1 performance be addressed by the relevant Lead Member(s) with appropriate action and report back; and**

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- 2. staff in Policy and Performance and the Corporate Resources Directorate be thanked for their hard work and achievements in this quarter.**

10. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI)

Councillor Hodges, as Chair of the review, gave a spoken update on progress.

The review team had agreed their terms of reference and had spent much time perusing background research documents to gain further knowledge of the subject. There was a 'training session' scheduled for the review team at the end of September to enhance their knowledge.

Councillor Hodges commented that the review could help establish whether this would be a useful tool for Hastings Borough Council in terms of evaluating the social return element of any project undertaken.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11. 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 7.32pm)