

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
13 DECEMBER 2006**

Present: Councillors Bing (in the Chair), Cooke (from 6.10pm onwards), Sabetian, Silverson, Springthorpe, Stevens and Tucker

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following councillor declared an interest in the minutes as indicated:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Silverson	13	Personal - Employee of DWP

12. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2006 be approved as a true record.

13. QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE

Shabana Bayjou, Policy and Performance Officer presented a report on performance up to the end of Quarter Two.

Councillor Silverson felt that further improvements could be made in respect the detail and presentational style. Neil Dart said he was happy to look at this with Councillor Silverson outside of the meeting. Members agreed to this and asked that any findings or amendments be reported back to the committee.

Members discussed the targets and made comments on recruitment, the benefits section performance targets and council tax collection. Members made particular reference to the recycling overspend. Neil Dart informed the committee that the overspend was higher than the £250,000 mentioned in the report, but was not in a position to quote exact figures at the meeting.

Members asked that the Information Centre staff be formally thanked for their work in this quarter.

With regard to the capital under spend, members asked that the committee's disappointment be noted.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
13 DECEMBER 2006**

Councillor Silverson proposed an amendment to the report's recommendation, which was agreed by members of the committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. staff in the Communications and Organisational Development and Deputy Chief Executive's Directorates be thanked for their hard work; and**
- 2. the committee had been assured that action was being taken to improve any poor performance.**

14. CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET CONSULTATION

Shabana Bayjou, Policy and Performance Officer presented a report on the Corporate Plan and Budget Consultation. The report invited members to comment on the principles that would underpin development of the Council's Corporate Plan 2007-2010 and 2007-08 Budget and advised of timescales of these proposals.

Members commented on the 5 E's and expressed concerns that the public could see Hastings Borough Council as a service provider of those services not within their scope. Members advised caution on this to the Lead Member for the Deputy Chief Executive's Directorate.

Members raised concerns on the lack of clarity of the Citizens' Panel questionnaire. It was suggested that next year's process be discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Steering Group and reported to the annual meeting.

RESOLVED - that:

- 1. members' comments on the principles that will underpin development of the Council's Corporate Plan 2007-2010 and 2007-08 Budget be submitted; and**
- 2. the Overview and Scrutiny Steering Group look at the processes for next year and report to the annual meeting.**

15. BFI ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Tom Davies, Chief Auditor, presented a report to advise members on progress made with the Benefit Fraud Investigation (BFI) action plan.

Members were encouraged by the progress made in addressing the shortfalls in the action plan and commented that a great deal had been achieved since

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
13 DECEMBER 2006**

the last report. Councillor Silverson asked for an amendment to the recommendation to this effect. It was also asked that a report be brought back to the committee at the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED - that:

- 1. the committee welcomes progress made in addressing the shortfalls in the action plan; and**
- 2. the report be noted.**

16. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION

Councillor Sabetian gave a verbal update on the scrutiny review of Council Tax Collection.

Members last met on 16 November to discuss the first draft of the final report of the review team. This meeting took place with the Executive Manager, Financial Services, the General Manager of Revenues and Benefits and the Collection and Customer Services Manager.

Several amendments were made by the review team relating to clarification of financial information, clarification on the structure of the Revenues Department and the level of income in the town having a bearing on collection rates. The statistical appendices were also discussed and further clarification sought.

Officers have now taken the first draft away to include the review team's amendments and suggestions. A date for the next meeting is being sought for early in the New Year with a view to completing this review soon after.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

17. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE USE OF CONSULTANTS AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

Councillor Bing gave a verbal update on the scrutiny review of the Use of Consultants and External Advisors.

Members last met on 19 October. The Deputy Chief Executive, Lead Member for Deputy Chief Executive's Directorate and the Chair of Audit Committee were invited to this meeting for discussion. Members of the review team had drawn up a list of questions in advance of the meeting in order to structure discussion and focus debate.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
13 DECEMBER 2006**

Resulting from this meeting, a first draft of the final report has been written and circulated to members of the review team for their comments. A date for the next meeting will be sought for early in the New Year, with a view to completing the review soon after.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

18. UPDATE ON AREA CO-ORDINATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Silverson gave a verbal update on the policy development review that was currently being undertaken on Area Co-ordination.

Members had their initial meeting on 16 October and agreed the Project Initiation Document and Project Brief.

Don Katuwawala gave a brief report on the progress so far of the implementation of Area Co-ordination. The project team asked for information on Outcome 23 and the White Paper which was circulated after the meeting.

Members decided that they would like to observe a Multi Agency Tasking Team (MATT) meeting and also an Area Management Board meeting as these would be useful as information gathering exercises.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

19. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET DECISIONS

Katrina Strong, Scrutiny Officer, 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 noted.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.10pm)