

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
12 FEBRUARY 2007**

Present: Councillors Bing (in the Chair), Cooke, Sabetian, Silverson, Springthorpe (from 6.12pm onwards), Stevens (from 6.05pm until 7.20pm) and Tucker (left meeting at 7.30pm)

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Beaver, Springthorpe and Stevens.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Stevens	27 & 28	Personal - Anything relating to 1066 Housing Association (employee)
Tucker	28 (part of)	Prejudicial - Trustee of Foreshore Trust

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2006 be approved as a true record.

27. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2007/08 - 2009/10

Shabana Bayjou, Policy and Performance Officer, presented a draft of the Corporate Plan which set out the proposed priority areas of activity and investment for 2007/08 to 2009/10. The Committee were invited to comment on the draft Plan and related budget proposals.

Members gave much consideration to the '5 Es' (Economy, Education, Employment, Environment and Enjoyment) in the report and had particular concerns with the inclusion of 'Education' as they felt that members of the public could perceive that Hastings Borough Council had control over education in the town. Councillor Beaver replied that, whilst the Council did not have control over education, it did have influence. Also, education was not just related to schools, but to the education of life for the residents of Hastings. Some members suggested that the 5Es be deleted from the Corporate Plan as they lacked clarity. Councillor Sabetian suggested that

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES 12 FEBRUARY 2007

'Enforcement' should replace 'Education' as the issue of crime and safety was a top priority according to the Citizens Panel Survey results. Councillor Beaver assured the Committee that he would take their comments back to his Cabinet colleagues for discussion.

Members commented on the results of the Citizens Panel survey and asked if future results could be presented in a way that all the responses were reported, as this would make for a more informed decision making process.

There was general agreement regarding the three-year cycle for the Corporate Plan. Members asked if the formatting of the document could be looked at, for ease of reading by members of the public and other interested parties.

To further enhance the Scrutiny function was highlighted in the draft Corporate Plan. Councillor Stevens urged members to encourage their non-executive colleagues to become involved in the Scrutiny process.

Councillor Silverson asked whether risk management would be reported to this committee, as it was included in the draft Corporate Plan. Neil Dart, Deputy Chief Executive, replied that there could be a danger of blurring the responsibilities of Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny, but the committee could ask for updates from time to time.

Members raised a concern regarding the Foreshore Trust and its budgetary issues. It was felt that the issue should not be raised at this meeting, but should be addressed in the future. (Councillor Tucker retired from the Chamber while this matter was discussed).

RESOLVED that the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council's draft Corporate Plan for 2007/08 - 2009/10 be referred to Cabinet.

28. CONSULTATION ON REVENUE BUDGET 2006-07 REVISED AND 2007-08, CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006-07 TO 2009-2010

Neil Dart, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance presented a report on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme to the committee as part of the public consultation process. The Committee were invited to submit their comments on the budget proposals.

Councillor Bing commented that the document was rather unclear, especially with respect to highlighting externally funded projects. Neil Dart replied that the Council's share of funding was the figure highlighted in the budget sheets. Councillor Beaver also replied that the funding source was set out in the appendices.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
12 FEBRUARY 2007**

Councillor Sabetian asked for an explanation in the reduction of funding for planning enforcement officers. Councillor Beaver replied that this was a vacant post where a decision was made not to recruit.

There were concerns that the budget for affordable housing had been reduced, specifically with regard to temporary accommodation. Neil Dart replied that government funding had changed in respect of this and had also been reduced, so the initiative had to be removed.

Concerns were also raised about the removal of the budget for the evening transport service. Councillor Beaver explained that the scheme was not cost-effective as it was under-used.

To conclude, Councillor Cooke proposed that, next year, the budget proposals and Corporate Plan could be discussed as part of a joint meeting of the two Overview and Scrutiny committees. Members agreed that the appropriate place for that discussion would be at the joint annual meeting in June this year.

RESOLVED that the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme be referred to Cabinet.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.12pm)