

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
10 MARCH 2009**

Present: Councillors Barlow (from 6.05pm), Cartwright, Martin, MJ Lock, Sabetian and Stevens (in the Chair)

Apologies were received from Councillors Bing and Beaver.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors made no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

32. QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Jane Hartnell, Head of Policy, Partnerships and Sustainability, presented the Quarter Three Performance report.

The report advised members of the performance against the 2008/09 targets in Part II and Part III of the Corporate Plan, together with related budget issues within the Personnel & Organisational Development and Corporate Resources Directorate.

Members discussed the Foreshore Trust negotiations, financial borrowing costs, payment of invoices and the administration review.

Members also asked for more detail regarding a single equalities scheme. Jane Hartnell replied that a draft scheme would be in place by the end of this month. Councillor Cartwright asked for more detail regarding timescales of implementation to be circulated to the committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. staff in the Corporate Resources Directorate and Personnel and Organisational Development service be thanked for their hard work; and**
- 2. the committee noted that action is being taken to improve any shortfalls in performance and/or to address risks highlighted.**

33. FINAL REPORT ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

Prior to this report being presented, Graham Belchamber, Democratic Services Manager explained that there had been some errors contained

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within the report, mainly relating to numbering of paragraphs. He assured the committee that this would be rectified prior to being presented to Cabinet in the future.

Councillor Bird presented the final report on the scrutiny review of Sickness Absence. Councillor Bird was joined by Councillor Webb, who was also a member of the review team.

Members discussed the report in some detail, making particular reference to return to work interviews and staff members who fell under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Both Councillor Bird and Webb highlighted to the committee that they were not in agreement with action point 5 of the action plan, which recommended that staff probation period be extended to 12 months. They asked the committee to delete this action point.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. action point 5 of the action plan be deleted; and**
- 2. the report and amended action plan be forwarded to Cabinet for discussion.**

**34. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS –
ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Kevin Boorman, Head of Destination Management and Marketing, presented an update to the committee of progress made since the scrutiny review of Public Contact Arrangements was completed in March 2008.

Members discussed the length of waiting times customers were incurring; also how many calls were genuinely abandoned, rather than the customer hang up because they had received the information they required via a recorded message. Mark Bourne, Head of ICT Services, explained that he was currently working with other Council departments on definitions of genuinely abandoned calls.

Members asked for clarification on the reference to the Ashford Contact Centre in the update. Kevin Boorman confirmed that officers had visited Ashford and were impressed with the ability of the contact centre to deal with most public queries without referring the member of the public to other departments. They were now considering how this could be implemented in Hastings. Members expressed their support for this approach.

Members also asked to see another progress report within a year.

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RESOLVED that:

1. **progress made on improving public contact arrangements be noted, especially in respect of the areas highlighted as being of particular concern; and**
2. **a further report be produced within a year showing progress made against the 'Amber' and 'Red' items shown from the original action plan.**

35. FINAL REPORT ON WEBCASTING: MOTION TO COUNCIL

Councillor Sabetian presented the final report on Webcasting. He thanked all those involved in the project.

Members discussed the report in some detail, especially with regard to which meeting would be broadcast and when. They felt that Working Arrangements Group should receive the report and make further recommendations to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that:

1. **the provision of an accessible Committee Room and its associated audio-visual links from the Council Chamber be noted and welcomed; and**
2. **the report be forwarded to Working Arrangements Group for discussion and recommendations prior to being presented to Cabinet.**

36. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET DECISIONS

Katrina Silverson, 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 be noted.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.47pm)