

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES
8 FEBRUARY 2010**

Present: Councillors Bird, Fawthrop, Forward and Webb (in the Chair)

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Beaver, Cooke and Lock.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Corello and Soan.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Bird and Webb	13 & 14	Prejudicial – Any discussion relating to the Foreshore Trust as Trustees
Fawthrop and Webb	13 & 14	Personal – Any discussion relating to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as County Councillors
Beaver	13	Personal – Member of Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance
Cooke	14	Personal – Resident of Hughenden Road (in relation to dog-fouling discussion)
Fawthrop	14	Personal – Member of Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee at ESCC
Lock	14	Prejudicial – ESCC Lead Member for Transport & Environment (in relation the Highways Agreement discussion)

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12. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2009 be approved as a true record.

13. CONSULTATION ON REVENUE BUDGET 2009-10 REVISED AND 2010-11, CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009-10 TO 2012-2013

Members agreed to move this item up the agenda as Councillor Beaver (who arrived shortly after the meeting commenced) was due to make a short presentation regarding the Corporate Plan.

Peter Grace, Executive Manager Financial Services, gave a short presentation on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as part of the public consultation process. Members were invited to submit their comments on the budget proposals.

Members were advised that the budget had been balanced for 2009-10. Peter Grace also explained that the council would be facing more financial difficulty in 2011-12, as the current funding streams (including Area Based Grants) were predicted to be cut by central government, regardless of the administration in control after the General Election.

Members were also advised of the £1.672million VAT rebate the council had successfully claimed back. This was a one-off payment, although there was the chance that more could be claimed back in the mid to longer term. Councillor Beaver explained that the proposals put forward to utilise this money would mean investment in capital schemes in order to create a recurring income.

Members discussed the proposal to use £250,000 for projects for young and older people. Councillor Webb expressed concern that the allocation was too prescriptive and did not include other community groups. Councillor Beaver replied that young and older people would encompass the whole divide. Some members also expressed concern at the proposal to create a café by the East Hill lift, as they felt the funds would be better diverted elsewhere.

Councillor Webb suggested that a sum of money from the VAT rebate be used as a contingency in relation to adverse weather conditions, such as the town had experienced earlier in the year.

Members also discussed the proposed cut in the Staff-Side Co-ordinator post and expressed concern at this loss of post. Councillor Beaver commented

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that, although the post was being put forward for deletion, the current post-holder would revert back to their substantive position.

RESOLVED that the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme be referred to Budget Cabinet on 15 February 2010.

14. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2010/11 – 2012/13

Mark Horan, Policy and Partnerships Officer gave a brief introduction of the draft Corporate Plan which set out the proposed priority areas of activity and investment for 2010/11 to 2012/13. Members were invited to comment on the draft Plan and related budget proposals.

Members discussed the draft Corporate Priorities in some detail, making particular reference to dog fouling (under Priority 2 for the Environmental Services Directorate), Community Safety and Public Realm issues.

The committee raised concerns regarding ESCC's proposal to terminate the Highways Agreement with Hastings Borough Council. Members felt that, certainly with regard to traffic management issues, local knowledge and expertise should be retained at borough level.

With regard to Priority 10 of the Environmental Services Directorate, Richard Homewood, Corporate Direct Environmental Services, asked members to consider amending the wording of the priority as the current wording was open-ended.

Some members of the committee also raised concerns regarding the Equalities Officer post. They asked that it be formally noted as to the importance of Equalities and Cohesion within the council.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. the committee formally express the desire to retain the Highways Agreement with East Sussex County Council (2 votes for and 2 abstentions);**

(Councillor Lock, having declared a prejudicial interest in this item, withdrew from the Chamber while the matter was discussed)

- 2. Priority 10 of the Environmental Services Directorate be amended to read, 'Work with East Sussex County Council and other partners to ensure Hastings is as well prepared as**

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***reasonably practical* for the demands of winter weather'
(unanimous);**

- 3. the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council's draft Corporate Plan for 2010/11 - 2012/13 be referred to Budget Cabinet on 15 February 2010.**

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.10pm)