

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

held in the Council Chamber
Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough

22nd November 2012 (adjourned)
26th November 2012 (reconvened)

commencing at 6.30p.m.

Present::
Councillor Dr. Bremner (Chairman)

Councillors: Bannister, Beaty, Beesley-Reynolds, Birch, Dunton, Evans, Everett, Galton, Graves, Hallam, Dr. S. Hill, King, Liquorish, Mrs. Page, Pain, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Simpson, Spendlove-Mason, Tomlin and Mrs. Wood.

Portfolio Holders: Councillors Mrs. Ackerley, Dann, Golding, Holyoak, Rook and Spendlove-Mason.

Officers: A. Graves, B. Jolly and E. O'Neill.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Mrs. Burrell, Callis, Johnson, Knowles, Smith and Mrs. Tooley.

322 MINUTES

RESOLVED that: the Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held on 4th July 2012 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

323 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None received.

324 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

RESOLVED that: the report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

325 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' HALF-YEAR REPORTS

At its Meeting on 4th July 2012 the Scrutiny Commission resolved that it would receive future portfolio activity reports. In previous years Scrutiny Panels have received these reports.

The Portfolio Holders' reports contained the following categories: Key Achievements, Key Challenges, Key Areas of Work in Progress and Key Performance Indicators.

A summary of the discussions on each Portfolio is outlined below:

Finance, Efficiency and Assets Portfolio (Councillor Spendlove-Mason)

| Question/ Comment | Response |
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| The Council received a 'sound' rating for the 2011/12 year. This is to be applauded. | N/A |
| What is LPI532 concerned with? (this is mentioned on page 6 on the Meeting Papers) | This is a Local Performance Indicator concerned with the rate of interest that the Council receives on savings. |

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| LPI530 is concerned with Sundry Debtor Arrears. What is the main source of these arrears. | The main source of these arrears is Council Tax debt. The Portfolio Holder agreed to provide further details to Members after the Meeting. |
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Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio (Councillor Dann)

| Question/ Comment | Response |
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| What steps are being taken to monitor the moving of the Council's call centre to Charnwood Borough Council? | A Customer Focus Board has been created. A Member Oversight Board has also been created. |
| How successful is the Council at making sure that as many residents as possible are included in the District's Register of Electors? | B. Jolly, Head of Corporate and Development Services, agreed to provide information on the Register of Electors to Members. |
| The report stated that there had been a reduction in staff sickness at the Council. Are figures available for this? | Councillor Dann agreed to provide a written response to the Commission. |
| What is meant by "LPI705(i) Top 5% women – Below target"? (referred to on page 9 of the report) | This refers to a national target for half of the top 5% of earners in an organisation to be women. The Council does not currently meet this target. |
| The report refers to a 'Customer Focus Board'. What is this and what is its function? | This is a group chaired by the Chief Executive. Its function is to ensure that the Council's services are focused on customers. The thoughts of the group are reported to the Executive. |
| The report mentions the need for Councillors to complete and return a Register of Interests form. What is this and why is it mentioned? | It is a requirement under Section 29 of the Localism Act for Councillors to complete a form disclosing their interests. All Members were reminded that it was their own responsibility to complete this form. |

Health and Community Portfolio (Councillor Holyoak)

| Question/ Comment | Response |
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| Given that Harborough Museum will close for a time while the Symingtons buildings in Market Harborough are refurbished, will the performance indicators for the museum be amended? | This will need to be agreed upon by Leicestershire County Council, Harborough District Council and Harborough Historical Society. |
| At present the Grants Panel meets only once per year. Is this sufficiently regular to enable communities to access funds? | The Council has recently appointed a Parish Liaison Officer who is currently reviewing this matter. |
| Are efforts being made to extend the number of youth champions to new areas, for example? | Yes, the Leisure Services Team is currently working on this. |
| The report refers to Olympic Legacy work. | The Council owns these banners. It has been |

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| Who owns the street banners that were present during the Olympic Torch relay? | suggested that one of the banners be donated to Harborough Museum for posterity. |
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Regulatory and Safety Portfolio (Councillor Golding)

| Question/ Comment | Response |
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| Monitoring of Enforcement cases has improved. On average 30 new cases are received by the Council each month and on average the Council closes 31 cases. How is this so? | The Enforcement Team is working to close historic cases as well as new cases. |
| The 'Joint Action Group' (JAG) is currently under review. Will Members see the results of this review? | Yes, Members will see a copy of this document when it is complete. As part of the review, the Police are attempting to create a county-wide approach to JAG. |
| It is rumoured that new legislation regarding the trading of scrap metals is proposed. Is any information available on this? | Not at the moment. The Portfolio Holder stated that he would advise Members if any information becomes available. |
| When will ne Dog Control provisions come into force? | These provisions will come into force some time after another public consultation is carried out. |
| What is the target handling time between the receipt and closure of a Planning Enforcement case? | Ten days. |

Planning, Environment and Conservation Portfolio (Councillor Mrs .Ackerley)

| Question/ Comment | Response |
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| How is the implementation of the new waste collection service progressing? | The implementation of the new waste collection service has been a success. Some teething problems occurred but were swiftly corrected. It is disappointing that the V-tech system is not functioning as it should. The use of 'bring sites' is still welcome. The public are encouraged to find alternative uses for their brown food bins. |
| If residents have insufficient room in their recycling bin for paper can they leave 'side waste' beside their bins? | Yes. |
| Harborough District has made significant progress in the provision of a five-year housing supply. This is to be applauded. | - |

Business Growth Portfolio (Councillor Rook)

| Question/ Comment | Response |
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| In previous documents, it was stated that the Council was not happy with the signage for the Harborough Innovation Centre (HIC). What has been done about this? | The signage has been removed. |
| HIC indicator 003 (Surplus/ profit): is showing surplus profit. Why is this? | The answer was not known at the time of the Meeting. The Chief Executive agreed to provide an answer for Members following the Meeting. |
| HIC indicator 007 (No. of jobs created or safeguarded) is reported as zero. Why is this? | The answer was not known at the time of the Meeting. The Chief Executive agreed to provide an answer for Members following the Meeting. |
| Re. Broadband Provision: will the advent of 4G have an impact on the provision of broadband within Harborough District? | This may be so; the County Council is handling the provision of Broadband. |

326 THE SCRUTINY WORK-PLAN

Following debate, the Scrutiny Work-plan for January to June 2013 agreed upon by the Scrutiny Commission. The Scrutiny Work-plan for January to June 2013 is attached at Appendix A to these Minutes.

327 MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY

None reported.

The Meeting ended at 9.30p.m on 26th November 2012