

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

Held in the Cromwell Suite, Three Swans Hotel, High Street, Market Harborough

16th January 2014

commencing at 6.30p.m.

Present: Councillor Bannister, Chairman.

Councillors (panellists): Mrs. Ackerley (Ex Officio), Dewes, Evans (substituting for Councillor McHugo), Galton, Holyoak, Knowles, Rook and Mrs. Wood.

Councillors (guests): Dr. Bremner (Portfolio Holder), Beaty, Brodrick,

Holyoak, Johnson, Spendlove-Mason

Officers: M. Bradford, K. Cowell, A. Graves, A. M. Hawkins,

B. Jolly, R. Marriott, E. O'Neill, N. Proudfoot, S. Riley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Golding, Graves, Liquorish, McHugo (substitute provided), Pain and Tomlin.

412 MINUTES

RESOLVED that: the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resource and Performance Scrutiny Panel held on 5th December 2013 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

413 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None received.

414 CORPORATE PLAN AND CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN

A. M. Hawkins, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships, presented the Panel with a draft version of the Council's Corporate Plan for the 2013-2015 period. Following this meeting, the document was due to be considered by the Executive on 10th February 2014.

The Panel NOTED that:

- (i) the Corporate Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan outline the Council's vision, priorities, Critical Outcomes and the Key Activities to deliver them. Both documents are underpinned by the Council's vision, which is: 'Working with communities in a vibrant, safe and prosperous district and bringing the best opportunities to all.'
- (ii) the Council will retain its four existing priorities during 2014/15, with some slight amendments to the wording. Both the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Plan are structured around the delivery of these four priorities:
 - Working with communities to develop places in which to live and be happy.
 - Provide the right public services to the right standard and deliver value for money.
 - Encourage a vibrant and sustainable business community intent on prosperity and employment opportunities.

- Support the vulnerable in our society at the heart of the communities where they live.
- (iii) the Corporate Plan 2013-2015 is the overarching public document which sets out the Council's vision for the district, its ambitions and priorities and how it will work with its partners and the community to ensure that living in, working in, and visiting the district is the best possible experience. It is based on information about the area and customer feedback and identifies how the Council will achieve its long-term vision. Although this is a two-year document, it is subject to annual 'light-touch' refresh as part of the Business Planning process to ensure that it remains up to date.
- (iv) the Corporate Delivery Plan 2014-15 is the Council's annual high-level plan that sets out how it will deliver its vision and priorities through Critical Outcomes and Key Activities during the forthcoming financial year. There should be a clear 'golden thread' that links these two documents.
- (v) one of the main changes to the Corporate Delivery Plan is a shift in focus from Critical Activities to Critical Outcomes. The 12 Critical Outcomes in the 2014/15 Corporate Delivery Plan have been developed from the original 24 Critical Activities set out in 2013/14. This has been achieved by merging the original Critical Activities where they were too specific and changing the language to be more outcome-focused.
- (vi) the Corporate Delivery Plan also identifies high level Expected Outcomes of the Key Activities, which will add depth to what the Critical Outcomes will mean for our communities. It also contains the headline Performance Indicators and Risks connected to these Key Activities.
- (vii) the number of Key Activities proposed in the 2014/15 Corporate Delivery Plan is currently around 75 – this is approximately 40% fewer than in the current 2013/14 Corporate Delivery Plan.
- (viii) the Corporate Delivery Plan is a dynamic document and the development of the Key Activities, performance indicators and risks is an iterative process. For this reason, elements of the Corporate Delivery Plan will continue to be developed, and may change as a result of further review and target challenge sessions. In particular the targets and expected outcomes remain work in progress, prior to the Executive meeting on the 10th February. During the 2014/15 financial year, any proposed changes to the content of the Corporate Delivery Plan, including revisions to targets, will be reported back to the relevant portfolio holder and the Executive as appropriate.
- (ix) reporting mechanisms for the Corporate Delivery Plan will remain the same during 2014/15. The Strategic Performance Dashboard will continue to be produced on a monthly basis, and monthly scrutiny of performance will take place through the internal Performance Improvement Board. Performance Reports will be submitted to the Executive on a quarterly basis and to the Scrutiny Commission bi-annually.

The following questions and comments were recorded:

Question/ Comment	Response
Has the Council's Transformation Programme resulted in savings?	Yes. At the time of the Meeting, £3.2 million of savings had been made. It was expected that £600 – 700K of recurring savings would be made each year, in perpetuity.
How will the Council implement its Open for Business Strategy?	The Council is hoping to create a Business Manager post which will work with businesses and partners directly.
The Council should do as much as possible to make the public aware of the Magna Park distribution centre.	The Council is hoping to maximise its advertising of the Magna Park facility. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership is working with the Council to achieve this.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that the report be forwarded to the Council Executive with these Minutes attached, for information.

415 COUNCIL BUDGET 2014/15

Members considered draft Budget proposals for the 2014/15 year. S. Riley, Section 151 Officer, outlined the main aspects of the revenue and budget funding proposals for the 2014/15 year. The Chairman invited questions and comments from those present, to be presented to the Executive at its Meeting on 10th February 2014. The following questions and comments were recorded:

Question/ Comment	Response
The Meeting papers did not contain detailed Treasury Management information to show where funds were invested. Will this information be available at the Council Meeting when the budget is presented for decision?	Yes.
The Meeting papers did not contain detailed information on the performance of the Harborough Innovation Centre (HIC). Is an update available?	The HIC is now making a contribution to the Council's income. More-detailed information is available from Officers on request.
The Meeting papers make reference to £80, 000 being spent on the Customer Contact Centre (in the Growth and Savings section of the report at Appendix A). What are these funds proposed to be spent on?	These funds are proposed to be spent on appointing additional staff and associated costs.
When will the Strategic Planning Review referred to in Appendix A of the report be available for Councillors to see?	A report is timetabled for March 2014.
If the recommendations from the Strategic Planning Review are not supported where will the £90, 000 proposed to be allocated for this go?	The funds could be placed into a contingency fund.
£22, 000 is proposed to be allocated to 'Website Development'. What is the reason for this?	The intention is to create a website capable of processing increased volumes of customer transactions. This may create the possibility of additional staff savings.
Will the Council continue to be a part of the Welland Internal Audit Consortium in the coming year?	Yes.
Will the Council (a) continue to be a part of the Welland Procurement Partnership in the future? (b) be subject to a penalty for leaving this partnership?	(a) Probably not. (b) This information will be shared with Councillors outside of the meeting (for reasons of commercial sensitivity).
Appendix A of the report mentions that £17, 000 is proposed to be allocated to "Bulky Waste". What is "Bulky Waste"?	The Council will collect up to seven large items from households for a fee. These large items are referred to as Bulky Waste.
The Council's waste contract was revised recently. Has an increase in fly-tipping been noted?	A small increase in instances of fly-tipping has been observed. This is being monitored closely.
Are there any proposals to allow for the disposal	This has been proposed. A means of achieving

of paint within the District's recycling facilities?	this has not yet been arrived at.
Changes have been proposed to street cleansing arrangements in Zone 7 (rural roads) areas. Does Zone 7 include roads in villages?	No. Zone 7 refers to cleansing outside of villages.
Does the proposed budget include proposals to decrease the number and/or frequency of grass-cutting?	No, but Officers are exploring alternative ways of realising efficiencies.
The Trade Waste Service is much improved. Those involved are to be congratulated.	-
Are changes to car-parking charges included in the proposed budget?	No. Car-parking fees are expected to be on the agenda in a year's time following work to create an up-to-date model of the District's car-parking usage.
An underspend of £340, 000 is forecast for the 2013/14 year. What is the effect of this?	The underspend reduces the Council's call on reserves.
In Appendix B to the report a figure of zero is recorded against the VAT shelter. Why is this?	No assumptions are made when setting the budget because the income from the VAT Shelter depends on work undertaken by Seven Locks Housing. Income received during the year will be included as part of the revised budget (presented to Council in February 2014).
How is central government encouraging the growth of Business Rates?	Central government is encouraging growth in Business Rates as a means of helping councils to balance their budgets. From 1 st April 2013 councils can retain a share of Business Rates income, not all of it is returned to central government.
Appendix B to the report refers to "Challenge New Burdens Grant." Where does this terminology come from and what does it mean?	This is the name given to one of the grants that the Department for Communities and Local Government provide to the Council each year. This grant arises as a result of the Localism Act and the associated community Right to Bid/ Right to Challenge.
Is an update available on the status of Business Rates Pooling?	The volatility of the Business Rates Pool is now thought to be too great. Each of the Leicestershire Districts, including Harborough District Council, has decided to withdraw from the Business Rates Pool.
Cuts in County Council services may have an impact on the District Council. For example, services such as grass-cutting, recycling and street-lighting may be reduced. There may be an expectation that parish councils and district councils should provide services that the County Council is no longer providing. To what extent might the District Council be affected by this?	The Section 151 Officer commented that the cost to the District Council may be in excess of £500, 000.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) it be provided with more-detailed background information about the proposed improvements to the Council's website.
- (ii) the Executive not proceed with the proposal to create Political Assistant posts (referred to at Appendix A of the report 'Growth and Savings Proposals').
- (iii) a report be presented to the Panel, at a future date, on the potential impact of County Council cuts on the Council's budget.

The Panel remarked that it was disappointed to not have the opportunity to discuss the budget proposals with all of the Executive Members; the Panel expressed hope that it would be able to do this at future budget meetings.

416 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

A. M. Hawkins, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships provided Members with an introduction to this report. The document presented was a revised version of the original Performance Management framework which was implemented on 1st April 2013. The Performance Management Framework is subject to annual review.

The Panel NOTED that only minor amendments had been made to this version of the Performance Management Framework.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that the Performance Management Framework be forwarded to the Executive, as set out in the Meeting papers, for implementation.

417 PARTNERSHIP REGISTER AND PARTNERSHIP POLICY

A. M. Hawkins, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships explained the origin of this report: as part of the Council's Transformation Programme, work was undertaken to gain a full understanding of the Council's working arrangements with its partners. It was hoped that this would create a means of effectively determining whether or not the Council was obtaining value for money through working with its partners. The result of this work was the creation of a Partnership Register and a Partnership Policy.

The Chairman invited questions and comments on the report. The following questions and comments were noted:

Question/ Comment	Response
This is a valuable piece of work. Those involved should be congratulated. The register and policy will enable the Council to determine when it needs to increase or decrease its involvement in partnerships.	-
Will future reports come to Scrutiny to monitor the status of the Partnership Register?	No reports are programmed at the moment but could be brought as and when necessary.
The Partnership Register includes the Stepping Stones Project. This is a valuable partnership and Members should support its continuation.	-

The Panel RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) the register be updated following future potential changes to Seven Locks Housing governance arrangements.

- (ii) The Partnership Register and Partnership Policy be forwarded to the Executive, as set out in the Meeting papers, for implementation.

418 MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY

None reported.

The Meeting ended at 8.50p.m.