

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL – RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

3rd February 2011

commencing at 6.30pm

Present: Councillor Pain (Chairman)

Councillors: Evans, Hart (Ex Officio), Johnson, Knowles, Page and B. Smith.

Also Present: Councillor Spendlove-Mason (Portfolio Holder)

Officers: K. Mehta, S. Mortimer and E. O'Neill.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fuchs.

498 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Panel – Resource Development held on 9th December 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

499 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None were received.

500 PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT PLANS 2011/12

Asset Management Portfolio Plan

Councillor Spendlove-Mason, Portfolio Holder, was invited to present this Portfolio Plan to the Panel. The Panel was asked to consider the draft Portfolio Development Plan for Asset Management for 2011/12 and make comments to go to the Executive on 14th February 2011.

The Panel NOTED that:

- (i) work on the Harborough Innovation Centre was going ahead despite problems caused by the weather.
- (ii) disposal of the Lutterworth Service Shop would be put to the open market once all services had been transferred to the Lutterworth Library.
- (iii) regarding the question of the latest plans for the relocation of the Council Offices, it was explained that bids from the open market are now being received by the Council. Following this process decisions on the feasibility of the project can be made.
- (iv) costs regarding possible relocation of the Council Offices to either St. Luke's, Market Harborough, or other alternative accommodation, are not known at present.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Re. 'Value Link' columns in Portfolio Plans: rather than specifying applicable values to specific projects, it should be taken as read that all Council 'values' are relevant to **all** projects. Portfolio Holders may consider removing these columns from future Portfolio Plans. If these columns remain part of future Portfolio Plans they should contain more-detailed information to assist decision making.
- (ii) In future this Portfolio Plan should contain progress reports on current asset-related projects. This should include links to previous reports, where appropriate.

Finance Portfolio

Councillor Spendlove-Mason, Portfolio Holder, was invited to present this Portfolio Plan to the Panel. The Panel was asked to consider the draft Portfolio Development Plan for Finance for 2011/12 and make comments to go to the Executive on 14th February 2011.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) 'Leisure Centre Trust Operations and Finance' is suggested as an item for Scrutiny in a future Scrutiny Work-plan.
- (ii) An email be sent to Members for information on who is involved with the Bowden's Trust.
- (iii) The item 'Oversight of Charitable Trusts' be removed from the Portfolio Plan.

501 PROVISIONAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET ESTIMATES – BASE 2011/12

This report was presented by K. Mehta, Deputy Chief Executive. The Panel was asked to consider and comment on the Executives budget proposals for 2011/12

The following questions and comments were noted:

- (i) it would be helpful if a breakdown of the costs within the incremental increases and redundancy reserve was fed back to the Panel.
- (ii) the Council could consider vacating the site at Doddridge Road to make cost savings.
- (iii) the Panel expressed concern regarding the lack of information they had regarding the budget and that this had impeded effective Scrutiny.
- (iv) the Panel expressed concerns regarding the costs for the upkeep of the Council Offices. The Panel requested that a breakdown of these costs be provided when available.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Members be provided with further details of the Council's pay increases in 2011/12.
- (ii) Members be provided with further details of the Council's costs for on-street parking.
- (iii) the Executive consider further reductions of operational costs of statutory functions.
- (iv) the Executive consider carefully the proposed reduction in support for voluntary and community organisations.
- (v) Members be provided with a breakdown of Members' costs noted on page 31 of the report.
- (vi) Members be provided with more-detailed budget information of the Dog Warden function.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.