

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

held at the Sports Pavilion and Community Centre,  
Recreation Ground, Coventry Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

14<sup>th</sup> March 2013

commencing at 6.30p.m.

Present:

Councillor Bannister (Chairman).

Councillors: Dr. Bremner (Ex Officio), Dewes, Evans, Graves, Hall, Dr. S. Hill,

Johnson, Smith and Mrs. Wood.

Councillor Dann, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services.

Officers: E. O'Neill, R. Felts and J. Ward-Langman.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Galton and Knowles.

512 MINUTES

RESOLVED that: the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resource and Performance Scrutiny Panel held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2013 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

513 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTION

Councillor Dr. S. Hill substituted for Councillor Knowles.

514 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None reported.

515 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

R. Felts, Communications and Customer Services Manager, presented the Panel with draft Customer Service Standards which aimed to define the service that customers could expect, across all channels of communication, in their dealings with the Council. Following this Meeting the report would be forwarded to Council for implementation.

The following questions and comments were discussed by the Panel:

Question/Comment	Response
How well is the implementation of 'group pick-up' of telephone calls going?	R. Felts agreed to circulate data on this to Panel Members following the Meeting.
Are customer telephone calls recorded for security and/or training purposes?	No. The Data Protection Act precludes the Council from doing this.
Will the customer service standards be communicated to the public? It might be useful to include the relevant customer service standard	The customer service standards will be published on the Council's website. Paper copies of the standards will also be available at the Council's

with responses to communication. For example, Council email footers could state the standard response time.	customer services reception desk.  The possibility of including details of relevant customer service standards on outbound communications will be investigated by Officers.
Are emails and letters treated differently or are they subject to the same customer service standard?	The are subject to the same customer service standard of five days.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) the Customer Services Standards be forwarded to Council for implementation, with these Minutes attached for information.

#### 516 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA)

The Human Rights Act 1998 (which became effective on the 2nd October 2000) incorporated into UK law the European Convention on Human Rights, the effect of which was to protect an individual's rights from unnecessary interference by the 'State'.

The relevant parts of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) are: Part II which came into force on 25th September 2000 and regulates covert investigations and; Part 1 Chapter II, the acquisition and disclosure of communications data which came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2004. These provide a framework within which the 'State' (the specified public bodies) can work to ensure that law enforcement and other important functions can effectively protect society as a whole.

The Public Bodies defined in RIPA include Local Authorities and, therefore, Harborough District Council's activities are subject to the RIPA framework.

On 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011 the Council resolved that: "oversight of the RIPA Policy be referred to Scrutiny" (Council Minute 645(g) 2010/11).

The Panel RESOLVED to note that the Council had, at the time of the Meeting, had no cause to use RIPA powers.

Members requested that details of the RIPA standards be circulated to the Scrutiny panellists.

#### 517 COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

At its Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013 a Scrutiny Task Group met to discuss two draft documents: the Council Operating Model and a proposed Commissioning and Procurement Strategy. The Task Group recognised that the latter had significant implications on the Council's resources. For this reason, the Scrutiny Task Group requested that the document be referred to the Resource and Performance Scrutiny Panel for comment. The Chairman agreed to this request and the Members received an introduction to a draft Commissioning and Procurement Strategy from J. Ward-Langman, Service Manager for Commissioning.

The Panel NOTED that:

- (i) work had been done to update the Council's contract register. This was done to give a clear understanding of the contracts that the Council is engaged in. Around 80 contracts are mentioned in this register.

- (ii) the Community Right to Challenge, a provision of the Localism Act 2011, will need to form part of the new strategy. Mechanisms for local businesses to tender for work will need to form part of the strategy.
- (iii) the Commissioning and Procurement Strategy will need to take account of sustainability factors.
- (iv) the new strategy will need to make clear the extent of Member involvement in Commissioning and Procurement (for example: do financial thresholds trigger Member involvement?). Ideally a specific framework outlining Member involvement should be created.
- (v) paragraph 2.6 of the draft strategy refers to The Statement of Required Practice (SORP) for procurement. The Scrutiny Panel will need to see this before making recommendations.

The Panel RESOLVED to consider the document again, at its next Meeting, before making recommendations.

The Meeting ended at 7.40p.m.

  
..... Chairman

  
..... Date