

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 5 APRIL 2011

Present:

Councillor Ms P.A. Broom (Chairman)

Councillors:

Miss M.M. Bain Mrs C.E. Nichols Mrs M.W. Rough

A.P. Hirst L.E. Nichols G. F. Trussler

Mrs I. Napper

Apologies: Councillor S. J. Rough (Vice Chairman) and Councillors Mrs E.M. Bell, S.E.W. Budd, K. Chouhan, H. R. Jaffer, D.L. McShane, and Jack D. Pinkerton

89/11 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

None reported.

90/11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 February 2011 were approved as a correct record.

91/11 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

At the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 November 2010 consideration was given to the review being undertaken by the County Safer, Stronger Board on community safety services across the county. The findings of the review had taken longer than anticipated and had been submitted to the Committee at this stage for information.

RESOLVED that the matter be added to the work programme for future consideration.

92/11 CALL IN OF CABINET DECISIONS

No decisions had been called in.

93/11 ICT FEEDBACK REPORT

The Committee noted that the report from the ICT Manager providing an update on the improvements to the Council's ICT Services had been included on the agenda for information only. The Chairman reminded the Committee that members had the opportunity to submit specific questions direct to the Lead Officer for scrutiny.

RESOLVED the report of the ICT Manager be received.

94/11 ALLOTMENTS

The Chairman of the Committee invited Sabena Sims, the Parks Strategy Officer to give a short presentation. The presentation provided details on the effectiveness and the implementation of the council's allotment service.

A Copy of the presentation is **attached**.

The Committee discussed how the officers engaged with the allotment holders via representatives from each site and that a future aim was to look into the feasibility of introducing self management of the allotment sites.

The Committee felt that it would be beneficial if a councillor was involved with the work of the Allotment Liaison Group.

The Chairman advised that as this was the last meeting prior to the borough elections that perhaps the way forward would be to ask the new Administration to include the matter in the scrutiny Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received and the matter be considered for inclusion in the work programme.

95/11 PROCUREMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer providing an update on progress being made with the delivery of cashable savings and on progress with implementing sustainable procurement arrangements.

During the general discussion the Committee was pleased to note that considerable savings had been achieved under the new procurement process including the Council's new insurance cover which would deliver ongoing annual savings of £180k per annum.

The Committee noted that under the spend analysis the Surrey Procurement Group had identified that the following areas could provide potential savings of £1m to local authorities in Surrey.

- Commercial Print
- Postage
- Catering /Food (day centres and schools)
- Cleaning

RESOLVED that the report of the Chief Finance Officer be received and progress made with the delivery of cashable savings be noted.

96/11 UPDATES ON PARTNERSHIPS

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Chief Executive on progress being made with partnership arrangements, which included sharing resources, people and buildings all with a general aim of reducing costs and improving efficiency.

A copy of the presentation is **attached**.

The Committee in the general discussion noted that a number of successful partnerships had been developed both with other local authorities and the private sector.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received and the progress being made with partnership arrangements be noted.

97/11 REVENUE BUDGET CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS

The Committee discussed with Adrian Flynn, Senior Accountant, the Revenue monitoring report outlining the current spend and income figures for month 11, which revealed that £11.501m, had been spent against the full year budget of £13,501m.

The Committee went on to consider the list of carry forward requests from the Officers and noted that the total value of the requests was £370.5k and that the Chief Finance Officer had recommended that only £175k be carried forward.

During the general discussion on the list of carry forwards attached to the report the Senior Accountant agreed to amend the list to show which requests were statutory and which were discretionary and re circulate to all members of the Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the current Revenue spend and projected outturn position be noted;
- (2) The Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources that the carry forward items as identified in the report of the Chief Finance Officer be approved; and
- (3) That a reserve be set up to manage the change in legislation from 2015, which will adversely affect the Housing Benefit budget, and this be set up from increased benefit overpayments currently being recovered in 2010/2011 and future years.

Councillor L.E. Nichols requested that it be noted that he did not support part 2 of the above resolution.

98/11 CAPITAL CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS

The Committee discussed with Adrian Flynn, the Senior Accountant, the Capital monitoring report outlining spend to date at month 11 which showed that £1.653m had been spent against the full year budget of £2.767m

During the discussion the officers responded to numerous questions raised by members of the Committee and agreed to provide additional information in relation to the Decent Home Grants.

The Committee went on to consider the list of carry forward requests from the officers and noted that the total value of the requests was £226K.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the Capital monitoring position be noted; and
- (2) The Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources that the carry forward items as identified in the report and being supported by the Chief Finance Officer be approved.

99/11 WORK PROGRAMME

During the course of the meeting various topics were identified and it was felt that it would be beneficial following the borough elections that the new Administration considered including the following matters in the work programme.

- Outcome of the review undertaken by the County Safer, Stronger Board on community safety services across the County
- Allotments services and how allotments are managed
- Procurement as a high priority
- Facilities in parks for disabled Children.

The Chairman reported on a request received from a member of the Committee to invite representatives from Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to attend a future meeting. The request was initially to enable representatives from the Trust to respond to the concerns that had been raised in an article reported in The Guardian newspaper concerning job reductions.

The Chairman had agreed that the request together with an initial response from Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust be circulated at the meeting for information.

The Chairman further advised the meeting that this was a very important matter and for continuity purposes would best be dealt with by the new Council following the Borough Election taking place on 5 May 2011.

RESOLVED that the work programme be received and the action being taken by the Chairman be noted.

100/11 THANK YOU

As this was the last meeting of this Committee in the current Administration, the Chairman, placed on record her thanks and appreciation to the Committee members and officers for their support and contributions to the work of the Committee. The Chairman went on to wish those members of the Committee who were not standing for re election all the very best for the future.