



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Record of a Meeting of the **CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham at 7.00pm on **Thursday 28 July 2011**

PRESENT: Mr B W Roper – Chairman (in the Chair)
Mr W J Cross
Mr D C Hollis
Mr J Lammie
Mr J Munton
Mr D L Richardson
Mrs C L Vernon (on behalf of Mr M E Baines)
Mr N M Wainwright
Miss G Waller
Mr A S Walters

Also in Attendance: Mr T C King Portfolio Holder for Finance and Asset Management
Mr M D A Pocock Portfolio Holder for Resources
Mr R J Gale

OFFICERS Mrs J Bilby Head of Business Support – Services for People
Mrs A S Brown Democratic Services Officer
Ms S Dring Head of Business Support – Resources
Mr P Frith Accountant
Miss D Muddimer Strategic Director for Resources

APOLOGIES: Mr M E Baines

186 RECORD OF MEETING

The Record of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel held on 24 February 2011, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

187 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Regulations, Members were invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have and the nature of those interests in respect of items on the Agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Mrs Vernon declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in discussions held around Post 16 as she works within the education sector.

188 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputation or questions had been received from members of the public.

189 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received from members.

190 NOTICE OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion had been received from members.

191 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

No matter was referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

SCRUTINY

192 FORWARD PLANNING

Mr Roper explained to members that all new panels were being given the opportunity to identify any issues they wished to consider at future meetings. Discussion at Scrutiny Commission had resulted in ongoing discussion with the East Midlands Council to provide training opportunities for Rutland scrutiny members. It was hoped that the training of Scrutiny Chairs and then wider scrutiny members would be complete by the end of September 2011. Additionally, the Monitoring Officer was also progressing a visit to another council to observe another scrutiny panel in operation.

Mr Roper went on to explain that members at other panels had expressed an interest in utilising Task and Finish Groups which was supported by Scrutiny Commission. A draft Terms of Reference was circulated to members along with the draft realignment of the Scrutiny Panels with the relevant directorates.

The following points were noted during discussion:-

- i) Quarterly finance reports were initially agreed at Cabinet in respect of presentation and relevant content before being considered by Scrutiny Panels and finally signed off at Cabinet. Consideration of production of finance reports should be given when agreeing the realignment of the scrutiny meetings.
- ii) Officers agreed to provide members with an indicative annual schedule of key financial activities throughout the year.
- iii) Concern was raised regarding the information provided in the realignment document. Some members felt the remit was too wide and that the panel should focus on areas of finance. It was explained that, since the reorganisation of the Council, the Resources department delivers a wide range of resources to other departments as well as the finance element which has resulted in widening the scope of the scrutiny panel.
- iv) The Council Tax setting process had already begun and was incorporated within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which is a key document for the Council. As the budget was considered a 'living' document, it was suggested that a Task & Finish Group may address some of the issues raised.
- v) In terms of Human Resources, officers were requested to provide a report to the panel at the next meeting which included detail of the restructure and how the number of redundancies has impacted on services and service users. Additional information requested was to detail if any costs had been incurred in employing agency or consultancy staff as a result of the staff reductions.

- vi) Although the Constitution Review Working Group reports directly to Full Council, members requested discussion in regard to any reports produced by the group.
- vii) It was confirmed that notice of publication of the statement of accounts had been advertised in the local press and also on the website. Due to a change in the Audit and Accounts Regulations, the Audit & Risk Committee were no longer required to sign off the Statement of Accounts, the responsibility of which had been moved to the Strategic Director for Resources. Miss Muddimer confirmed that she did sign these on 30th June 2011.

193 Q4 2010/11 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report No. 81/2011 from the Strategic Director for Resources was received. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Asset Management, Mr King, explained the overall position of the capital programme.

The following points were noted during discussion:-

- i) Confirmation was received that Agresso was now working well and would require maintenance costs only in future.
- ii) Two typographical errors were pointed out to members. The "Latest Approved Budget" total should read (27,002) rather than (27,218) and the "Movement from Q3" total should read (2,637) rather than (2,763).
- iii) When reporting for each portfolio, some inconsistencies were highlighted. These were as a result of the report being manually produced from the Agresso system. More detail would be provided in the future but officers would ensure that they were balanced as they would be produced by the system. At present, only variances of in excess of £10k are reported.
- iv) Better information, links and meetings with other groups within the East Midlands, e.g. SPARSE, had resulted in giving notice to the LGA as it was felt that this had ceased to be value for money.
- v) Agresso had generated savings for the authority in the region of £100k per year annual savings. This was an accumulation of staffing within the finance department and also efficiency savings.
- vi) A suggestion was made that the Outturn Report should remain separate to the other financial reports as this was a legal document. It was also suggested that this report was an integral part of the Statement of Accounts. The Strategic Director for Resources explained that, although the information within the outturn report was used to prepare the Statement of Accounts, they were presented in very different formats. It was explained that Cabinet did consider and note the report in July 2011 and agreed that more work was required through the Star Chamber process and that the legal requirement was to provide the Statement of Accounts. Officers stressed that all legal requirements have been met and the reports provided for members were in a format where there was some explanation around the figures reported.

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Mr Lammie left the meeting at this point and did not return.

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- vii) Some government returns were required to be completed and submitted by 15th July 2011, which was adhered to.
- viii) Officers suggested obtaining a CIPFA guide which could be located in the Members Room. It was also suggested that the information could be stored electronically on the Members Area of the Intranet.
- ix) A finance training session was being explored which would be offered to members who were interested in the financial elements of the authority.

AGREED

To note Report No. 81/2011.

194 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No other business had been previously noted to the person presiding.

195 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 29 September 2011 at 7.00pm.

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

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