



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 16th June, 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Mr A Walters	Mr O Bird
Mr K Bool	Mr B Callaghan
Mr J Lammie	Mrs D MacDuff
Mr A Stewart	Miss G Waller
Mr O Hemsley	

APOLOGIES:

Mr G Conde	Mr W Cross
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OFFICERS PRESENT:

Mrs Debbie Mogg	Director for Resources
Mr D Brown	Director for Places
Mr S Della Rocca	Assistant Director for Finance
Mrs D Baker	Head of Corporate Governance
Mr J Morley	Head of Adult Social Care
Mr C Miles	Lawyer, Peterborough Legal Services
Miss S Croad	Corporate Support Officer

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr T C King	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Development
Mr O Hemsley	Portfolio Holder for Resources (excluding Finance), Culture, Sport and Recreation, Tourism and Housing

48 RECORD OF MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Panel held on 21 April 2016, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

50 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions were received from members of the public.

51 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions were received from Members.

52 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion were received from Members.

53 CONSIDERATIONS 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.

54 REVIEW OF LEGAL SERVICES

Report No. 108/2016 from the Director of Resources was received the purpose of which was to provide the Resources Scrutiny Panel with an update on the current shared service arrangement with Peterborough Legal Services. The report would also provide information regarding possible alternatives to the existing arrangement with Peterborough City Council.

The Chairman invited the Director for Resources, Mrs Mogg to introduce the report.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. There were concerns regarding the delays in legal advice supplied from Peterborough Legal to Oakham Enterprise Park and it was felt that there was a lack of support. Mr King explained that there were difficulties but that this was due to certain clients being of a specialist nature;
- ii. The panel enquired as to whether Rutland County Council staff had been invited to attend any training at Peterborough Legal. The Director for Resources informed the panel that the Governance team had attended training on routine updates such as the constitution and found this very useful. Mrs Baker would provide the panel with a training schedule of the last year;
- iii. The panel asked why staff had not been upskilled as this had been previously mentioned. Mrs Mogg explained that this was partly due to staff turnover but that this was still an objective and was being considered as part of the SLAs;
- iv. It was confirmed that the People Directorate were the highest spending department. The Head of Adult Social Care informed the panel that this was due to more specialist cases being undertaken within the People Directorate such as court proceedings. Mr Morley stressed that all legal requests go through senior managers to ensure they are correctly instructing legal for representation. Not only does this ensure correct legal involvement but also has the effect of upskilling staff through the senior manager filtering process.
- v. Some services would always require legal advice and for some procedures legal representation is essential, but there was a need to identify the areas in which staff could be upskilled;
- vi. Mrs Mogg informed the panel that one option would be to have an in house member of staff who would provide the Council with legal advice. This could be a secondment from Peterborough Legal either for 6 or 12 months. This could benefit the Council as there would be a member of staff on hand for more urgent queries but also to provide advice rather than contacting Peterborough Legal. Mrs Mogg explained to the panel that the budget would be reduced to incorporate the in house member of staff;

- vii. The lawyer from Peterborough Legal explained that it would be Rutland County Council's decision as to what level of experience and knowledge the in house member of staff would need and have;
- viii. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Development stated that an in house member of staff would reduce response times. Oakham Enterprise Park would be a prime example of the need for speed as the turnaround for legal advice was slow;
- ix. The Assistant Director for Finance informed the panel that he himself felt he had been upskilled in some areas and this meant that sometimes legal advice was not required and other times specific questions could be asked which led to a quicker response;
- x. The members congratulated Peterborough Legal Services for their good service and savings that had been made in some areas; and
- xi. The panel had concerns that there had been no reduction in the overall budget in the last couple of years, it was stated that this was due to one off legal costs. Mrs Mogg explained that although total spend had not reduced, the costs had remained stable, which in a time where demand has increased, is an achievement.

AGREED:

- i. The panel **NOTED** the contents of Report 108/2016.

55 QUARTER 4 FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT AND DRAFT OUTTURN 2015/16

Report No. 109/2016 from the Director for Resources was received the purpose of which was to report on the draft outturn figures for the financial year 2015/16 and provide an update on the status of the 2016/17 budget.

The Chairman invited the Director for Resources, Mrs Mogg to introduce the report.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. The panel asked if items only specifically relating to the Resources Directorate were to be discussed. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Development informed the panel that emails on other points could be sent to himself or members of the Senior Management Team;
- ii. The carry forward of £533,000 had not impacted on service levels. The underspends were due in the main to commitments already made but not delivered and projects still in progress;
- iii. Underspends within the IT department were partly due to the timing of the implementation of the Agresso and Website projects. A Project Manager had been recruited and they would be working on the Agresso and Website projects once the Liquidlogic project is complete;
- iv. 8 schools had not completed their maintenance works during 2015/16. Mr King stated that Uppingham C of E no longer needed their extra classroom and also that most works undertaken within the schools would be done through the school holiday period;
- v. The panel were concerned with the Senior Management Team pay review as they had previously requested that a process and plan for the reduction of interim staffing was implemented. Mr King informed the panel that the Chief

Executive was monitoring the interim situation and analysis work had been done on every single interim position;

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EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

At this point in the meeting the Chair proposed that the public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information and information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the authority)).

RESOLVED

The Panel **AGREED** to move into exempt session

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After debate the meeting returned to public session

AGREED:

- i. The panel **NOTED** the contents of Report 109/2016.

56 REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

57 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

- i. Mrs Mogg delivered an IT questionnaire to all Members. The questionnaire asked what hardware was being used and whether Members were content with what they were using.

Mrs Mogg informed the panel that this would be sent out via email once the emails problems had been resolved.

- ii. An action point had arisen from the previous meeting. A Member from the Resources Scrutiny Panel was required to sit on the Review of Administration Project Board. Councillor Lammie and Councillor Waller expressed their interest and Members took a vote.

RESOLVED

Councillor Lammie would take the place on the Review of Administration Project Board

58 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

11th August 2016

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

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