



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the on
Thursday, 27th April, 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:	Miss R Burkitt Mr J Lammie Mr O Hemsley	Mr B Callaghan Miss G Waller
ABSENT:	Mr O Bird Mr G Conde Mrs D MacDuff	Mr K Bool Mr W Cross
OFFICERS PRESENT:	Mrs D Mogg Mr S Della Rocca Mr A Nix Mrs S Ramsay	Director for Resources Assistant Director – Finance Head of IT and Customer Services Corporate Support Officer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr O Hemsley	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Growth, Trading Services and Resources (except Finance)

787 RECORD OF MEETING

The Record of the Meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Panel held on 16 February 2017, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

788 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

789 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

790 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice had been received from Members.

791 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion had been received from Members.

792 CONSIDERATIONS OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

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

793 POVERTY IN RUTLAND - GREEN PAPER

Report No. 91/2017 was received from the Scrutiny Commission.

Mr Della Rocca provided members with a view of key issues officers had taken from the previous meetings where Resources Scrutiny Panel had considered the project.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) Officers to look further at the Financial Crisis Fund in regard to its management. It is currently monitored within the Revenue's and Benefits function of the Council. It may be that an external provision could be more suited to providing more holistic support to those in financial difficulty. There may also be other funding, either internally or externally, that could be made available and this would be looked into.
- b) Mr Walters had provided feedback from a schools visit regarding financial skills education; this would be shared with relevant officers within the education department.
- c) The authority had looked at ways in which debt recovery could be done more empathetically. Staff had received training in this area and the standard letters issues were being revised. Mr Della Rocca advised that there was now a full time officer covering this area.
- d) Officers were looking at ways to articulate the general financial support offered across all departments within the council, for example; Council Tax Discretionary Support, Crisis Loans and warm home initiative. This was proving more challenging than anticipated and the feedback from the project had been helpful in this area.
- e) Miss Waller asked that a clear definition around poverty in Rutland be incorporated into the White Paper. The report mentioned Community Agents within the consultation, members asked how many of these were still active, Mr Lammie confirmed that he knew of one in his ward area. Mr Hemsley advised that he would feed back on the numbers once confirmed.
- f) That some parishes and communities within the county had trusts that could provide funds to those in need, for example education funding or a property letting trust. Members suggested that an information gathering exercise be carried out specifically to identify such funds. It was noted that this could well take a significant amount of time as historic funds may be missed if they had not been used in recent times.
- g) That the timeframe for completion of the project had been affected by the announcement of a Parliamentary Election in June. Scrutiny Commission would confirm to panel members in due course.
- h) That thought be given to the use of excessive terminology before publication of the White Paper. It was also requested that National data be excluded as the Green Paper stated Rutland was different but did not focus wholly on the county.

AGREED

That the Panel **NOTED** the content of the report and that the following be considered for inclusion in the White Paper:

- a) Formation of a body to collate information from across the county in regard to potential funding available from sources such as trust funds or other such funds as noted in f) above.
- b) That a standard paragraph be included in all Council reports to indicate any foreseen financial impact on either individuals or industry as a result of the recommended outcome.
- c) That a clear definition of poverty in Rutland be incorporated into the White Paper.

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19.25 Mr Della Rocca left the meeting and did not return

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794 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY

Report No. 90/2017 was received from the Director for Resources.

Mr Nix, Head of IT and Customer Services introduced the report advising that members were being asked for feedback on the renewal of the existing Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) Policy. Mr Nix highlighted that clarification around the legal position in respect of charging was being sought and would be resolved before the final presentation of the policy to Cabinet.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) That the Council had a statutory duty to approve road names and house numbers.
- b) Members discussed the new proposals to charge for discretionary street naming as detailed in Appendix C to the report, the logistics of application and collection of such charges was debated, it was noted that members did not want this to result in an adverse cost impact on the Council.
- c) Members agreed the concept of charging in principal and asked that officers develop a method of doing so outside of the meeting.
- d) That the proposed Policy would ensure that future developments would not be allocated a street name where that name already existed elsewhere in the County.
- e) Members advised officers of a typographical error in the policy. Mr Nix would ensure this was amended before the final policy was published.

AGREED:

That the Panel **NOTED** the content of the report.

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19.35 Mr Nix left the meeting and did not return

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795 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT

Report No. 79/2017 was received from the Director for Resources.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) The overall performance indicator for responses within the statutory timescale was 99% with Quarters 2, 3 and 4 being 100%. This rate was continuing into Quarter 1 of the New Year.
- b) Mrs Mogg advised members that she was very pleased with the performance for the past year particularly as the number of requests had increased over previous years.
- c) The responses to requests were published on the Council website; members requested that a link to this be provided to them rather than the current email. Mrs Mogg agreed that officers would look into this and confirm the frequency of the updates. If the website was updated at the same time each week then an email alert advising this may not be necessary and a one off link to the website would be provided to members.
- d) Mr Lammie noted that it was encouraging to see such good performance in regard to Freedom of Information. Mrs Mogg advised that the Corporate Support Team worked hard to achieve this rate with the continued support of those who responded to the requests within the authority.

AGREED

That the Panel **NOTED** the content of the report.

796 REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

The following items on the published Forward Plan were to be suggested to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at future meetings:

Oakham Enterprise Park – Phase 2 Development
Discretionary Revaluation Rate Relief Policy

797 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

798 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Meeting date to be agreed at Annual Council.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.46 pm.

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