

TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 12th June, 2012

Present:- Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Shenton – in the Chair

Councillors Eastwood, Hambleton, Howells, Lawton, Mrs Peers, Stringer and Waring

6. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Hambleton and Councillor Mrs Heames.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2012 be agreed as a correct record

9. BUDGET PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT PERIOD 201/12 FOURTH QUARTER

A report was submitted providing the Committee with the Financial and Performance Review for the 2011/12 Fourth Quarter. The Council's Head of Performance and Transformation confirmed that the report was definitely for Quarter 4.

A report had been presented at the Committee's previous meeting. The review was ongoing and would be reported to Cabinet at its 18th July meeting, after which it would return to the Committee in order to be scrutinised. The majority of items within the Cabinet Performance Monitoring Report were on track. Officers stated that performance monitoring would focus less on organisational activity and move to a more outcome based approach that would consider quality of life issues such as health and the economy. The new version of the Finance and Performance Review would hopefully go to Cabinet in September.

It was felt by Members that an agreement from Cabinet detailing their budgetary plans was required from the outset of overview and scrutiny, which should include income generation, reserve plans, planned savings etc. The portfolio holder for Communications, Transformation and Partnerships confirmed that Officers had already been consulted with the aim to make the budget setting process as open as possible, and to open the process up to scrutiny by councillors and the public. When developments were available to share then these would be communicated. The Chair made clear that there was always the option of more meetings of the Committee if this was required.

Members questioned what the figures were for planning applications in comparison to previous years. Officers confirmed that the figures were substantially down

compared to previous high figures, but they were starting to improve. Specific figures could be provided if required.

Members questioned what the income over target figures were for J2. The Council's Head of Finance confirmed that the figures could be established and brought to the Committee. Members requested that this information be provided for all future meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the information be received
- b) That income over target figures for J2 be provided for future meetings of the Committee

10. WORK PLAN

The work plan was considered by the Committee and items suggested for the forthcoming municipal year.

It was felt by members that the Committee needed to see planned numbers of efficiency savings such as reserves and borrowing plans in order for them to be scrutinised. This would go hand in hand with budget scrutiny and therefore a scrutiny brief would be required for the next Committee meeting.

The Chair proposed that training on the budget be conducted at the next meeting of the Committee for the benefit of Members. Members emphasised that learning about the content of the budget rather than the process would be most beneficial. The Council's Head of Revenues and Benefits would liaise with the Chair of the Committee to discuss this.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Transformation and Partnerships informed the Committee that a report of budget options was being considered and if implemented would come to this Committee for consideration. This report would provide options for picking the budget and would show what the consequences would be if a certain option was chosen. Preferences could be given by committees and fed back to the Cabinet. The public could also get involved with the budget options.

The Kidsgrove 'One Stop Shop' was raised by Members, in particular criticism of its customer service. The Police were scheduled to move into the 'One Stop Shop' and members questioned how this would be approached. The public had fears and concerns regarding these issues which needed allaying. There could be issues with Customer Services that go beyond the problems with the Kidsgrove 'One Stop Shop'. A scrutiny brief for Customer Service was requested for the next meeting.

The Committee had undertaken a review of the constitution in the previous municipal year through a working group and the constitution had been adopted for a short time. As part of the review the Chair had written to all Members of the Council as they had felt they had not had enough time to consider the changes. Only one piece of feedback was received as a result of the Chair's communication. Officers confirmed that the Constitution would hopefully be adopted by Full Council at its 11th July meeting. It was felt that the constitutional review should be an ongoing topic for the Committee through the Working Group. It was a living document that should be kept under review, especially as large areas of the constitution had not been looked at yet. Officers informed the Committee that there would be work on the indexing side of the document with the aim of creating an interactive, electronic Constitution. Members

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noted that a search facility would be beneficial for finding specific areas of the Constitution if there was an electronic version. It was also felt it should be one whole document, not split into many documents.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) That a scrutiny brief for the budget be provided at the next meeting
 - (b) That that training on the budget be provided at the next meeting of the Committee
 - (c) That a scrutiny brief for Customer Service be brought to the next meeting
 - (d) That the Committee continue to review the Constitution through the working group set up in the last municipal year

11. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business considered.

COUNCILLOR MRS ELIZABETH SHENTON
Chair