

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on Thursday 12 November 2015 at 7.30pm at Salvation House, 2 Sterling Court, Mundells, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

PRESENT: Councillors D.Bell (Chairman)

J.Broach (substituting for C.Watson), S.Chander, J.Cragg
(substituting for N.Pace), G.Hayes, S.Markiewicz,
G.Michaelides, S.Roberts

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director (Governance) (B.Baldock)
Head of Law and Administration (M.Martinus)
Finance Manager (J.Cika)
Financial and Technical Accountant (D.Williams)
Committee Manager (S.Hulks)

ALSO PRESENT: S.Jones (Sopra Steria)

21. SUBSTITUTIONS:

The following substitutions of Committee Members had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 19-22:

Councillor J.Broach for C.Watson
Councillor J.Cragg for N.Pace

22. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.Dowler, N.Pace and C.Watson.

23. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24. ACTIONS UPDATE:

The Committee received a report which updated it on actions from the meeting held on 17 September 2015.

The response to the request for further information about adding questions to the Serco Satisfaction Survey was noted.

Members received further information on how the utility budget was reviewed and details on the new provider. It was noted that this was not a direct purchase but had been made through LASER (Local Authorities South East Region Energy Buying Group), a joint procurement system used by several authorities. Use of this system which had been extended until 2020 resulted in savings via bulk buying and the fees charged were less than the savings made.

Members asked whether, as a refund was made, too much had been paid up front. Officers replied that the payment made was based on an assessment of prices which could fluctuate and there was no cheaper way of purchasing utilities.

25. STERIA CONTRACT MONITORING:

The Committee received a report from the Director (Finance and Operations) providing an analysis of the service performance of Sopra Steria against key performance indicators and noted that targets had been met in almost all areas. The exceptions to these were national non domestic rate (NNDR) collection which had been impacted by businesses opting to pay over twelve instalments rather than ten and the percentage of visitors greeted at reception within three minutes which had been impacted by the move to Campus East and the new reception system that had been implemented.

RESOLVED:

That the report on Steria contract monitoring be noted.

26. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

Members commented that some of the performance indicators reported on in the Sopra Steria report were also shown in the performance Indicator report and asked for this to be addressed so that they were reported only once. Officers agreed to look into this.

Members asked why the target for the payment of NNDR in the report of the Director (Finance and Operations) on the second quarter of 2015/16 had not been altered to reflect the changes to payment intervals. Officers replied that the target had been changed, but it had not been possible to predict how many companies would adopt the new payment intervals. The target would be adjusted for the next quarter.

RESOLVED:

That the report on performance indicators be noted.

27. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2015 (MONTH 6):

The Committee received a report from the Director (Finance and Operations) which provided details of the current situation for the revenue, capital and

Housing Revenue Account budgets for the first two quarters of the current financial year.

Members commented that the new section of the report on risks and opportunities was very useful.

Members asked whether the cost of debt recovery was passed on to debtors. They were informed that the Council did not add interest or increase the debt in any way and that the costs of recovery were apportioned to services within the Council.

It was noted that the parking services arrears which had been owed by Hertfordshire County Council had now been paid. There were sometimes issues with the County Council agreeing the value of debts owed which resulted in occasional delays in payment.

Members asked for a robust system to be in place to ensure that the County Council was not late in payments and Officers agreed to look into Members' concerns.

Members asked how an additional £100,000 had been added to the budget for food sales at Campus West and it was noted that this would have been agreed during meetings between management, portfolio holders, heads of service and other parties.

Members congratulated Officers on the results for letting of the Weltech Centre which was at 100%.

It was noted that some of the arrears figures appeared to be high, but that this was due to timing issues as the report for the Committee was prepared before payment was actually due and made.

Members were informed that projects had been identified for the corporate projects budget and some of these would be started later in the year.

The Chairman highlighted to Members that the next meeting of the Committee would be for consideration of the budget and the papers that would be going to the Cabinet meeting on 5 January 2016 would be circulated.

RESOLVED:

That the report on budget monitoring be noted.

Meeting ended 8.10pm
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