

Wednesday 6 June 2011
at 6.00pm

Scrutiny Committee

MEMBERSHIP:-

Councillor BELSEY (Chairman) Councillors SHUTTLEWORTH (Deputy Chairman)
Councillors MURRAY, TAYLOR and WARNER.

(Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Coles and Ungar)

1 Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2012 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

2 Declarations of Interest.

None were received.

3 Corporate Performance Year end 2011/12.

Members considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer updating the Members of the Council's performance against Corporate Plan Priority actions, indicators and milestones for 2011/12.

Members considered Appendix 1 containing information regarding the 2011/12 outturns of the performance indicators listed within the Corporate Plan. The report showed the latest available outturns for the national and local performance indicators featured in the 2010/15 Corporate Plan broken down into the 4 theme chapters. A summary table at the beginning of each chapter's data showed the number of indicators on and off target.

The Head of Corporate Development advised Members that overall full year performance across the plan showed that 92% of all milestones and targets had been met. Only Prosperous Economy achieved less than 90% largely due to delays in the Sovereign Harbour Project. In relation to Sovereign Harbour the Council had developed a Supplementary Planning Document seen as beneficial to the Council. Members were also advised that a Planning application for the Town Centre Arndale regeneration had been received and would be presented to Planning committee in due course. The Chair requested a special planning meeting be held for this application.

Quality Environment - There had been a reduction in waste to landfill (now below 1%) so this PI would be removed in future. The Joint Waste contract was also on course to deliver savings and service improvements. Finally Eastbourne had received a Green Flag award at Princes Park, the first to be awarded.

Prosperous Economy - Members noted that the Tethered Balloon would not be going ahead due to lack of sponsorship. Yellowwave were also still supported by the Council, however they were still trying to secure sponsorship. The location of the new signage of attractions along the seafront had been agreed and would be installed later in June.

Members noted that whilst online hotel bookings had showed a reduction and Visit Eastbourne number were down, numbers of bookings at hotels were up, demonstrating success in directing business to the hotels. Redoubt visitor numbers continued to be low, due to low footfall in the area and a lack of disabled access. The Council were in discussion with English Heritage regarding improved access and activities held at the site. Catering would be added to the offer this summer.

Sustainable Performance – The Council had now purchased a full site licence for Covalent which would be rolled out in the current year.

Devolved Budgets – members noted that 59 projects were delivered in 2011/12, with good community evidence of need and feedback. Cobb PR were providing assistance in promoting completed projects.

Members noted the provisional financial outturn for the year ended 31 March 2012 and covering the general fund revenue account, housing revenue account and the capital programme. Although the service accounts had now been closed, the balance sheet and some control accounts had yet to be finalised, so it was possible that there could be further adjustments that may marginally affect the figures detailed within the report.

The final outturn would form part of the statement of accounts that would be reported to the Audit Committee at the end of June and Cabinet in July.

General Fund Revenue Account – the committee were advised that there had been a net under spend of £126,000 for the year. This provisional outturn showed a reduction of £33,000 compared to December monitoring of £58,000. This was due to a number of variances mainly relating to year end adjustments:

- Additional provision for bad debts £62,000
- Reversal of 10/11 control account adjustment £63,000
- Final outturn from Housing Subsidy and Benefits overpayment recovery £89,000
- An accounting provision for the value of undertaken staff annual leave at the end of the financial year as required by accounting regulations £101,000
- Additional provision for repairs and maintenance of £50,000

The General Fund Summary figures included transfers to and from reserves, in many cases reflecting transfers previously agreed or in the very least where the principle of the transfer had been previously established.

General Revenue Reserves - The effect of the under spend in the outturn has resulted in the following balances on non-earmarked usable revenue reserves:

Reserve	as at 31 March 2012 £'000
Strategic change reserve	542
Capital Programme Reserve	667
Earmarked General Reserve	551
General fund	4,888

Details of other reserves would be reported to Audit Committee and Cabinet.

The housing revenue account performance for 2011/12 showed a surplus of £146,909 (as detailed in appendix 4 to the report) representing a variance of £113,419 against a revised budget of £260,000. The principal reasons for the variance were:

- Additional rental income of £74,000 as a result of voids being lower than anticipated
- Increase in Subsidy Limitation payable to the General Fund of £132,000 for rents above the benefits guidelines
- Repayments to tenants of £45,000 from overcharged service for heating and water in prior years.

The Housing Revenue Account balance as at 31 March 2012 was £1.9million.

Capital Programme – A summary of capital expenditure for the year was shown in appendix 5 of the report. The revised capital programme for 2011/12 was £14.5m and the outturn £14.4m represented a general fund variance of 2% and Housing variance of (-6%) giving an overall variance of (-1%). The variance on Housing was due for the following three reasons:

- The next phase of the decent homes contract – non traditional properties was required to be re-tendered and successfully won by Apollo over Mears improving the Value for Money on the scheme. This delayed the start by about 3 months to November 2011.
- The remodelling of Roxburgh Court (using the Cumbria Court template) was re-tendered and Apollo was reappointed. Fees for the project incurred were halved. The project started 2 months late in December.
- There had been a higher number of tenants that continued to refuse internal decent homes works moving the cost out of this year to an unknown time in the future – most likely to be done when the property became void.

The capital programme for 2012/13 had been updated to reflect the re-profiling changes required as a result of the 2011/12 outturn and the addition of three new schemes identified since the budget report in February.

NOTED.

4 Scrutiny Annual Programme 2012/13.

The Committee considered the Annual Scrutiny programme for 2012/13. members noted that the two Scrutiny reviews for this year had not been included in the programme and would be added at a later date.

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Members discussed having a greater input in the Corporate Plan refresh process and it was suggested that a seminar be held to enable their input. This would be arranged for January / February 2013.

Members approved the attached draft Annual Scrutiny Programme and agreed the removal of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 15 April 2013. The final programme was due to be approved by Council on 18 July 2012.

The Head of Corporate Development advised Members that Eastbourne Borough Council would be taking part in a Peer Challenge Review in July and a number of Group sessions would be held with Cabinet, the Chair and Deputy Chair of Scrutiny and all Councillors. Members would be contacted in due course.

RESOLVED: That the draft Annual Programme of routine work be agreed.

The meeting closed at 7.03p.m.

Councillor Belsey
Chairman