

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES

19 September 2012

Present:

Councillor Baldwin (Chair)

Councillors Ruffle, Bowkett, Bull, Crow, D J Henson, Pearson and Spackman

Apologies:

Councillors Branston, Brock, Crew, Macdonald and Robson

Also present:

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (MP), Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Housing and Contracts, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Contract Development Manager and Member Services Officer (SJS)

37 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2012 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

38 Declarations of Interest

A Member declared the following personal interest:-

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Councillor Crow	(worked on the Green Accord when employed by the Council)

39 Annual Audit Fee Letter 2012/13

The Assistant Director Finance presented the Annual Audit Fee letter 2012/13.

In response to Members, the Assistant Director Finance clarified that the certification of claims and returns fee for 2011/12 was an estimate as the work was on-going and that the Council was working with the financial system software providers to implement an automated service to improve the efficiency of the payment of accountancy journals.

The Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the Annual Audit Fee Letter 2012/13.

(Report circulated)

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

40 AIM Property Maintenance Progress 2012/13

The joint report of the Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Economy and Assistant Director Housing and Contracts was submitted.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the first quarter financial position of the £7.9 m programme of reactive and planned property maintenance and refurbishment for 2012/13.

(Report circulated)

41 Budget Monitoring Report to 30 June 2012

The joint report of the Strategic Director (MP) and Assistant Director Finance was submitted.

The Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the report.

(Report circulated)

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE

42 Capital Monitoring Statement to 30 June 2012

The Assistant Director Finance presented the report advising of the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme and of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years.

The Assistant Director Housing and Contracts advised that the savings in the Laings budget were due to a different approach to the management of the properties therefore the budget was no longer required and the reduction in the wheelchair homes in the RNSD Depot budget was as a result of re-negotiations of the Section 106 Agreement.

The Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the current position in respect of the revised annual Capital Programme and recommended approval by Council of the revised annual Capital Programme.

(Report circulated)

43 Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2012/13

The Assistant Director Finance presented the report advising Members of the overall projected financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budget and Housing Revenue Account after three months, for the 2012/13 financial year.

He advised that the Service Committee budgets showed a forecast overspend of £35,430 against a revised Service Committee Net Expenditure budget of £13,718,210 and an overall overspend of £41,594 against General Fund Expenditure. He outlined to Members the individual budgets in respect of each of the Scrutiny Committees, the outstanding sundry debt, debt write-offs and creditor payments performance.

In response to Members, the Assistant Director Finance clarified that the Museums Service budget was overspent due to higher than expected utilities bills and the

higher than anticipated estimate for the Non Domestic Rate bill. The Council was appealing against this and was hopeful that some reduction in the bill would be made. The Council was aware of the potential risks regarding the changes in welfare reform and the pressures that this could cause with the collection of housing rent and council tax benefit, work was being undertaken in conjunction with the Citizens Advice Bureau on measures that could help with money management for residents with difficulties.

The Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the report and requested that Council approve the:-

- 1) General Fund forecast financial position for the 2012/13 financial year;
- 2) HRA forecast financial position for 2012/13 financial year;
- 3) outstanding Sundry Debt position as at June 2012; and
- 4) creditors' payments performance.

(Report circulated)

44 **Annual Sustainable Procurement & Commissioning Report**

The Assistant Director Housing and Contracts presented the report on progress made against the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan and to outline the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan for 2012/13.

The Contract Development Manager outlined to Members the changes in procurement which would be implemented to assist small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in tendering for council contracts. This would include a commitment to sign up to the Council's health and safety policy, instead of having to go to the expense of having their own policy, and attending Council run asbestos awareness training at a reduced cost.

The Scrutiny Committee - Resources supported the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan for 2012/13 and recommended to the Executive that:-

- 1) it approves the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan for 2012/13; and
- 2) notes the actions taken to reflect the new national requirements identified in section 4 of the circulated report.

(Report circulated)

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES

45 **The Green Accord Scheme**

Councillor Crow declared a personal interest as she had worked on the Green Accord scheme when employed by the Council.

The Assistant Director Housing and Contracts presented the report to update Members on the Council's Green Accord scheme. The uptake of the scheme had been slower than anticipated, resulting in the original Business Plan income forecast

not being achieved. However, with minimal investment the scheme could be further developed so that it would, as a minimum, break even.

The Contract Development Manager advised Members of the progress to date and that further work was being undertaken with Exeter University to widen its client base who were signed up to the scheme.

Members noted that the scheme was expected to break even this year. They felt that the original business plan had been rather ambitious and that the financial position of the scheme should continue to be monitored.

The Scrutiny Committee - Resources noted the progress on and the development of the Green Accord Scheme and requested that the Committee be updated annually on the progress of the scheme.

(Report circulated)

46 **Guildhall Marriages and Civil Partnership Ceremonies - update**

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support presented the report to update Members on the first 18 months' operation of The Guildhall being licensed to hold marriages and civil partnership ceremonies. Members were also informed of other collaborative arrangements entered into between Exeter City Council and the Devon Registration Service.

The Committee thanked all those Council staff who had been working hard to take this project forward.

The Scrutiny Committee - Resources:-

- 1) noted the use of The Guildhall and Civic Centre for marriages and civil partnership ceremonies;
- 2) welcomed the collaborative arrangements entered into between Exeter City Council and The Devon Registration Service; and
- 3) noted the extended hours offered for the use of both The Guildhall and Committee Rooms at the Civic Centre for marriages and civil partnership ceremonies, once the necessary legislative changes have been implemented.

(Report circulated)

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.25 pm

Chair