

FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 8 May 2013 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Barrott (Interim Chair): Councillors MacKay, Rhead, Mrs Sawdon, Mrs Syson, Wilkinson and Williams.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Knight.

171. SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Wilkinson substituted for Councillor Mrs Knight.

172. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

173. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2013 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

174. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1ST OCTOBER 2012 TO 31ST MARCH 2013

The Committee received a report from Finance which detailed the Council's Treasury Management performance for the period 1st October 2012 to 31st March 2013.

The Principal Accountant attended the meeting to present the report.

The Council's 2012/13 Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices (TMP's) required the performance of the Treasury Management function to be reported to Members on a half yearly basis.

The report informed Members of past performance, hence the Committee was just asked to note the information contained within it.

The Principal Accountant drew attention to paragraph 5.1 in the report which demonstrated that the Council had managed to achieve its investment interest target for the year. It was considered to be a reasonable performance given the interest rate environment and difficult financial climate.

The officer also drew attention to a decision to move out of the building society sector and to invest in stronger rated counterparties. This had resulted in the Council's credit risk decreasing significantly in the second half of the year, to a point where it was amongst the lowest within a benchmarking group of which the Council was a part.

FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Continued)

The Committee agreed that going along with Sector advice seemed to be the best approach in the current financial climate. The Principal Accountant responded to Members' questions and was thanked by the Committee for Treasury Management's excellent performance. The Committee's thanks were also extended to the Assistant Accountant who had put the report together.

The Committee noted that the Treasury Management Annual Report was due to be presented to its August meeting.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

175. COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

A report from Civic and Committee Services summarised the Executive's response to comments which the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee gave on reports submitted to the Executive on 17 April 2013.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

176. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services informing it of the current Forward Plan, attached as an appendix to the report.

One of the five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Executive decisions. If the Committee had an interest in a future decision to be made by the Executive it was within the Committee's remit to feed into the process.

The Forward Plan detailed the future work programme for the Executive. If a non-Executive Member highlighted a decision which was to be taken by the Executive which they would like to be involved in, Members could then provide useful background to the Committee when the report was submitted to the Executive and they were passing comment on it.

Concerned that a number of items due to be considered by the Executive since November 2012 seemed to have slipped considerably, Members asked officers to investigate. Particular attention was drawn to Pre Application Charging, the Review of Locality Working and the Review of Community Development Working. It was also pointed out that Councillor Mrs Grainger was listed as Portfolio Holder against a number of items which should have referenced Councillor Cross.

A member suggested that a new policy for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs) needed to be included in the local plan.

RESOLVED that, at present, there were no forthcoming Executive decisions which Members wished to have an input into before the Executive make their decision.

(Councillor Williams joined the meeting during the course of this item.)

FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Continued)

177. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

A report from Civic and Committee Services detailed the Committee's work programme for 2013/14.

Members felt there was a need to review the financial implications of the local plan as it became a more cohesive document. They were keen to establish what financial analysis would be included alongside the local plan proposals, both in terms of the cost of drawing up the local plan and in terms of funding for the District in relation to Business Rates Retention, the New Homes Bonus, the Community Infrastructure Levy and so on.

The Committee discussed whether to revisit the Local Plan Risk Register again and agreed to request that the latest Risk Register be circulated prior to Members taking a decision on whether or not a formal agenda item was required.

The Committee requested that the Work Programme be amended to specify which risk register presentations would be made to each meeting where a presentation was due to take place.

RESOLVED that the work programme for 2013/14 be noted.

178. END OF TERM REPORT

The Committee received a report from Civic and Committee Services which summarised the work the Committee had undertaken during the 2012/13 municipal year.

Under Article 6 of the Council's constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Committees were required to provide an end of term report to the Council on work they had undertaken during the year. Members noted that the report was due to be presented to the Council in June.

The Committee extended its thanks to Councillor Mrs Knight for all her hard work during her time as Chair of the Committee and wished her well with her recovery from ill health.

RESOLVED that the list of matters considered by this Committee during the municipal year 2012/13, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

179. PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items, by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Continued)

180. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2013 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

181. COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE – APPENDIX 2

A report from Civic and Committee Services summarised the Executive's response to comments which the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee gave on reports submitted to the Executive on 17 April 2013.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 6.40 pm)