

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 6 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT: Councillor N M Rose - Chairman
" A J Garth - Vice Chairman

Councillors: A K Bacon
S P Berry
J L Gladwin
C M Jones
M W Shaw
H M Wallace
C J Wertheim

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors C J Ford, M J Harrold, R J Jones, J E MacBean, D W Phillips and D M Varley

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors I A Darby and M J Stannard

25 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Resources Overview Committee meeting held on 28 July 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27 PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2015/16

The Performance Indicators for the period April to June 2015 were presented to the Committee in two appendices. The Committee discussed the priority and red items where the performance target had not been met.

Community, Health and Housing had missed several targets mostly related to housing, for example, the number of applicants with children in Bed & Breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks. It was noted that there was a considerable problem throughout the South East of England and the cost implications of this trend to the Council was discussed.

The Joint Waste target for recycling had been missed but it was noted that there had been an increase of 2% in recycling rates. It was asked whether the target had been set too high but it was generally agreed that as Chiltern historically had high recycling rates it should set challenging targets.

The number of voluntary leavers as a percentage of the workforce was high but it was expected that the next quarter figure would be lower. However, this figure and the high rate of sickness absence caused concern and the

pressures on staff were discussed. It was advised that there were always some genuine long-term sickness issues and so there was a request that in future, for the figures for short-term and long-term sickness to be split.

Licensing; the percentages of licences received and issued or renewed within statutory or policy deadlines was below target due to staff shortages. It was expected that this would be on target for the next quarter.

Participation in physical activity rates had not been achieved this quarter but it was expected that there would be a much higher take up in the next quarter which would represent the main school holidays.

Planning Appeals; it was agreed that these were unpredictable as the guidelines from the government were subject to change.

The target for the percentage of small businesses paid within 15 days was missed but it was reported that this was due to just 14 invoices and therefore related to small numbers.

There was some debate about whether the costs of housing the homeless should be further considered by the Services Overview Committee or by the Resources Overview Committee, in the past Services Overview had looked at housing matters. One Member requested an analysis and projection of housing associations “right-to-buy” changes and their implications for the Council. It was agreed that there were legitimate concerns for the cost implications of increased housing pressures and the matter was referred to Management Team to advise.

RESOLVED –

That the draft Cabinet report be noted and that the comments of the Resources Overview Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.

Note: Councillor Darby entered the meeting at 6.55 pm during this item.

28 JOINT BUSINESS PLAN

The refreshed Joint Business Plan 2015 – 2020 was presented to the Committee for approval. It was explained that the top level and second level aims remained the same in this document. The third level aims had been refreshed to keep the plan up to date. Impact assessments have now been integrated into the plan and it is linked closely to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Workforce Plan. The next review would be in Spring 2016 to re-evaluate the aims and objectives.

Members noticed that there were differences in the vision statements for Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council, although these were more differences in emphasis than in substance.

It was agreed that the document should contextualise priorities, be understandable and aspirational.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations contained in the draft Cabinet report be endorsed by the Resources Overview Committee and that the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.

29 2015/16 QUARTER 2 WRITE OFFS

A report was requested for each quarter of debts written off by the Council. This report related to quarter two in 2015/16. These were reported in the four key areas; Sundry Debts, Benefits, Council Tax and Business Rates. The background was explained to some of the larger single write offs.

The Committee discussed the example of a Charity that had paid business rates after receiving mandatory relief whilst resident in Chesham but had moved abroad before the lease expired on the building. It was noted that business rate was due for the entire period of a lease, and now as the premises were empty and therefore not eligible for mandatory relief a larger amount was due up to the end of the leases. This created notional debts that could be uncollectable or uneconomic to pursue. The Committee were reassured that provision had been made for these write-offs and that they had been at a consistent low level for the last 5 years. A request was made for monitoring of any increasing trends.

RESOLVED –

That the draft Cabinet report be noted and that the comments of the Resources Overview Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 7.21 pm

