

RECOMMENDATION I

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

26 FEBRUARY 2013

Chairman:	* Councillor Jerry Miles	
Councillors:	* Sue Anderson * Ann Gate * Susan Hall (4) * Zarina Khalid	* Barry Macleod-Cullinane * Paul Osborn * Sasi Suresh (4) * Stephen Wright
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) † Mrs J Rammelt Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors) † Mrs A Khan
Non-voting Co-opted:	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
In attendance: (Councillors)	Keith Ferry Thaya Idaikkadar Sachin Shah	Minute 359 Minute 356, 360, 361 Minute 362

- * Denotes Member present
- (4), (4) Denote category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

356. Corporate Plan

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which formed part of an integrated series of papers, including the budget papers, which had been considered by Cabinet on 14 February and were due to be considered by Council on 28 February 2013.

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council and the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning to the meeting. The Leader, in introducing the report, stated that the Corporate Plan set out the Council's strategic direction, vision and priorities for the next two years. In addition, for the first time, a balanced budget for next two years was proposed.

Some Members expressed concern that there appeared to be no base lines in terms of performance management. It was unclear what the indicators meant and what the measures were. A Member expressed the view that clearly defined measurable outcomes were required. The Divisional Director, whilst acknowledging the comments, responded that the Plan aimed to set out the core outcomes which aimed to articulate in greater detail the corporate priorities. As the Council moved more towards the measurement of outcomes, the Plan set out what these measures could be, and more work was ongoing to agree these with targets for the Corporate Scorecard. The Plan itself included more specific actions than previous plans as to what was being set out to be achieved, and progress against these would be measured. The Corporate Scorecard could be made available for a future meeting of the Committee, or the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

In considering the Corporate Plan, Members made comments and asked questions including the following:

- The Safety Deposit Scheme did not appear to be included in the Plan and the Member requested that he be provided with details of the work on the scheme to date. The Leader advised that it had not been included as a detailed study to identify potential usage was being progressed.
- A commitment to introduce the Harrow Card was included in the Plan and it was questioned how this could be done without the completion of a feasibility study. The Leader advised that it right that the Plan included the aspirations of the Administration and it was right that this was included.
- Concern was expressed in relation to the Environment department and the Leader was questioned as to how he could reconcile the proposed £3m savings with the corporate priority of keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe. The Member went on to state that not locking parks and cemeteries at night would result in a rise in crime. The Leader responded that a higher grant from Government would have enabled to Council to deal with issues in a different way but that the reality of the situation was that alternatives had to be found. He advised that, for example, on the spot fines for dropping litter may act as a deterrent.

- Referring to the grant the Council had received from Government a Member stated that Merton Council received less than Harrow per head but had, unlike Harrow, frozen its Council Tax. The Leader stated that to his knowledge Merton had significant financial difficulties but that he would look at their budget papers.
- In terms of the priority 'Supporting and Protecting people who are most in need', a Member stated that a representative of Mencap had recently advised that the most vulnerable tended to receive proper care and it was in fact those who were vulnerable, but not so drastically, that required the most support.
- Referring to the aspiration that contractors offer the London Living Wage, a Member questioned how this was costed, the timescale, how this could be measured and what the indicators were to show that this was on track. The Leader responded that whilst all directly employed staff received the London Living Wage, it was an aspiration to extend this to contractors.
- Following a Member's concern that a proposal in his ward would increase the risk of flooding, which appeared to contradict the aspiration in the Corporate Plan, the Divisional Director undertook to look at whether an indicator in relation to flooding could be developed.
- A Member expressed the view that the outcomes listed under each corporate priority heading in the plan did not seem to match the delivery of outcomes. For example, in terms of mental health it was unclear how the outcomes would be delivered from the projects mentioned. Similarly, the stated desired outcome of reducing fear of crime did not appear to be addressed by the projects listed, but instead the reduction of crime. She stated that it would be helpful to include mention of measures such as the dispersal zone and types of street lighting in the Plan to enable Members to see the success or otherwise in terms of delivery.
- Referring to the corporate priority 'Supporting our town centre, our local shopping centres and businesses', a Member questioned how key projects would be delivered given the proposed savings in the Planning department. The Leader stated that it was expected that £2m development would be attracted to the town centre as a result of the projects/initiatives.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council and the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning for their attendance and responses.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Committee's comments be considered.