

## PART 1 - MINUTE

The Executive Director (Corporate Policy and Improvement) introduced this item which the Chair had agreed to take as urgent, and commented that the arrangements for consultation had now been changed in order to allow the Scrutiny Commissions to consider the draft documents prior to Cabinet giving them final consideration. The draft Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered by Cabinet in July and the draft Strategic Plan in August. The recommendations from those meetings were highlighted in boxes in his report. Appendix 1 to the report attempted to focus Members' attention by inviting responses on specific statements and the Commission addressed this in some detail.

Members also considered appendix 3 to the report and gave their views as to where any additional expenditure, which might become available in 2006-2007, should be spent.

It was **AGREED** that the Commission's views, be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration. In summary these were:

- (1) The Commission considered that the long term vision of Harrogate Borough Council should be expanded to include reference to '...delivering first class public services in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations and encouraging.. '
- (2) The Commission considered that the statement regarding the delivery of the six Corporate Priorities should be changed to read '...improve the organisation so that we can put customers first ..' and **AGREED** with the Council's ambition to improve as an organisation.
- (3) The Commission identified and ranked the top three Corporate Priorities, these were:

Rank 1	Caring for the Environment
Rank 2	Affordable Housing
Rank 3=	Keeping our District Safe
Rank 3=	First Class Public Services
- (4) The Commission did not comment on the 12 Strategic Priority Actions
- (5) The Commission **AGREED** that If there was additional expenditure available in 2006/2007 the most important are for additional expenditure would be Recycling and Waste with the least important area being memorial safety

- (6) The Commission did not feel that it could express any meaningful views about balancing the budget without additional information. A view was expressed that this may require a combination of the methods listed in the Appendix

## **PART 2 - REVIEW**

The Executive Director (Corporate Policy and Improvement) introduced this item which the Chair had agreed to take as urgent, and commented that the arrangements for consultation had now been changed in order to allow the Scrutiny Commissions to consider the draft documents prior to Cabinet giving them final consideration. The draft Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered by Cabinet in July and the draft Strategic Plan in August. The recommendations from those meetings were highlighted in boxes in his report. Appendix 1 to the report attempted to focus Members' attention by inviting responses on specific statements and the Commission addressed this in some detail.

Members also considered appendix 3 to the report and gave their views as to where any additional expenditure, which might become available in 2006-2007, should be spent.

Concerning the Borough Council Vision, as set out in paragraph 1 of the appendix, the Chair felt that this statement should be expanded to include reference to "... delivering first class public services in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations..." however the Director expressed the view that this referred more to the actual methodology underpinning the vision. Nevertheless, upon a vote being taken on a proposal to include the extra wording seven Members were in favour, with one against and one abstaining. The proposal was therefore **AGREED**.

It was also **AGREED** to recommend that the wording in paragraph 2 of the appendix should be changed by deleting the words "by putting" and substituting the words "so that we can put" in their place.

Members then considered each of the six corporate priorities in turn and the Chair asked them to indicate which they would consider to be their top three priorities. Upon votes being taken it emerged that Caring for the Environment was the top priority, Affordable Housing the next highest, with Keeping Our District Safe and First Class Public Service both in third place. The reasons for placing Caring for the Environment at the top included the fact that it gave people a pride in the place in which they lived, with visible results, from which people could derive enjoyment. It was also pointed out that recycling would have to be a major priority over the next few years if Government targets were to be achieved. The Director pointed out that affording this the top ranking was in line with the wider community view. The reasons for ranking Affordable Housing second included the view that the provision of housing opportunities for all related to a basic human need for shelter. This was also very important in view of the fact that the Authority was presently accommodating people in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in

places as far as Leeds, which was very costly. Keeping Our District Safe was considered important because of the problems that had been experienced with anti-social behaviour. It was also felt that new licensing laws were likely to further exacerbate these problems. A First Class Public Service was considered to be of equal importance because it was felt that everything else would flow from this and that the Council ought to be concentrating upon its statutory duties.

The Commission did not comment on the 12 Strategic Priority Actions.

The Executive Director (Corporate Policy and Improvement) summarised the views from the session that had been held with Members earlier on balancing the budget. Members had opted for increasing fees where possible, with no additional expenditure and no reductions in services. The Chair commented that she would like to see more outsourcing of services where possible, especially where it would reduce costs, in order to help maximise use of the Council's funds. It was also suggested that the Council should make increasing use of sponsorship, such as that currently obtained for roundabouts, by extending this to include other items of street furniture.

The Commission then commented upon any additional expenditure items which they might wish to see, should extra monies become available in 2006/07. Members favoured recycling and waste because they felt that greater value for money could be obtained through use of better technology. The Chair commented that she would also like to see more green-waste being recycled. Concerning customer services, it was commented that some Council services were not centrally placed, such as Revenues and Planning. The Commission was strongly of the view that there should be no more money spent on memorial safety, other than that which had already been budgeted. No comment was made in relation to the HR Strategy, but among the other items suggested were the provision and emptying of additional poop-scoops and litter bins, the extension of CCTV coverage, additional housing units for young people, keeping Council tax increases to a minimum, enforcement of the regulations relating to dog waste and diversionary activities for young people.

The Commission did not feel that it could express any meaningful views about balancing the budget without additional information. A view was expressed that this may require a combination of the methods listed in the Appendix.

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organisation so that we can put customers first.....' and **AGREED** with the Council's ambition to improve as an organisation.

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- (6) The Commission did not feel that it could express any meaningful views about balancing the budget without additional information. A view was expressed that this may require a combination of the methods listed in the Appendix