

**COUNCIL RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION
HELD ON 6 MARCH 2006
(FROM 5.30 PM TO 6.45 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Andrew Jones in the Chair. Councillors Broadbank, Clark, Fox, Harrison, Hawkins, Hinchcliffe, Powell and Simms.

Late Arrivals: Councillor Fox at 5.45 pm.

Early Departures: None.

81/05 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES:
Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Phillips and Theakston.

(5.37 pm)

82/05 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no such declarations.

(5.37 pm)

83/05 - MINUTES: The Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 17 January 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(Five Members voted for the motion and there were three abstentions.)

(5.38 pm)

84/05 - EXEMPT INFORMATION: There were no exempt information items.

(5.38 pm)

85/05 - PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS – QUESTIONS: There were no such questions to consider.

(5.38 pm)

MATTERS HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

86/05 - 2005/06 CORPORATE BASKET OF PI'S, QUARTER 3 REPORT: The Performance Officer submitted a written report to outline the performance in Quarter 3 of 2005/06 on those Performance Indicators (PI's) included within the Council's Corporate Basket of PI's for which the Commission was responsible. The report was designed to focus upon those PI's that were unlikely to meet their year-end performance target.

The Performance Officer referred to five Performance Indicators that had been awarded a "red traffic light" which indicated that the Performance Indicator was more than 4% off meeting its year-end target. In each case the Performance Officer referred to the reasons why these Indicators were unlikely to meet their targets and referred to CMT comments set out within the report on each of the Performance

Indicators.

The Chair invited Members' questions in relation to the report and it was **agreed** that the Commission would require an update on the performance data relating to Human Resources (BV 11 – 17) as soon as it could be provided. Members queried the increase in visitors to the Council's website which had risen considerably in the last quarter and it was **agreed** that Members would be supplied with details of those pages which had attracted the most interest.

Members also queried the seasonal fluctuations apparent from the report in relation to the collection of Council Tax discussing how such fluctuations were calculated and their relevant impact.

It was **agreed** that the report be received and the Performance Indicators go forward to Cabinet for consideration.

(5.38 pm - 5.47 pm)

87/05 - 2005/06 QUARTER 3 CORPORATE ACTION PLAN (CAP) ACTIONS: The Performance Officer submitted a written report to update the Commission on the progress made in Quarter 3 (October to December) of 2005/06 on its Corporate Action Plan actions. The report outlined the progress made on implementing the Commission's 32 CAP actions during Quarter 3 of 2005/06 and also referred to those CAP actions that would not be completed during the financial year or where little progress had been made.

The Chair invited Members' questions in relation to the report and Members queried paragraph 5.6 in relation to the reduction of the average processing times for new benefit claims. It was noted that it was unlikely to reach its 38-day target, and the target of 10 days for change of circumstances in benefit claims was also unlikely to be met. Members queried the impact as a result and it was agreed that information would be provided to Members of the Commission in that regard. It was noted that a commentary from the officer concerned was included in the report however it was **agreed** that further information would be obtained.

It was **agreed** that the Commission receive the report.

(5.47 pm - 5.55 pm)

88/05 - FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS: There were no Forward Plan Key Decisions to report to the Commission meeting.

(5.55 pm - 5.57 pm)

89/05 - CABINET AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS: The list of decisions made and currently scheduled to be made since the last meeting of the Commission had been circulated to Commission Members following the publication of the Agenda. Members queried the appointment of a Fair Trade Champion in relation to the means of reporting back by that Champion to Council that led to a more general discussion in relation to reports to Council by representatives on outside bodies. In response to Members' questions, the Executive Director, Corporate Policy and

Improvement advised that this might be an issue for consideration by the Improvement and Involvement Member Steering Group.

(5.57 – 6.00 pm)

SCRUTINY CONSULTATION

90/05 - **RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2005/08:** The Corporate Improvement Officer (Governance) submitted a written report introducing the revised Corporate Risk Management Strategy for 2005/08 and the Strategy Action Plan which had been circulated electronically for Members' consideration. It was noted that this document superseded that written and published in November 2003 having been fully revised and updated since then.

As part of the consideration of this item, the Corporate Improvement Officer provided Members of the Commission with a brief training session on the key features of risk management as an introduction to the Strategy including: -

- The definition of risk
- Identifying risk
- Analysing risk
- Risk perception
- Risk appetite
- Risk matrices and priorities

Following the presentation and training session, the Chair invited Members' questions in relation to the Council's approach to risk management and the Strategy document. Members queried the use of the Corporate and Strategic Risk Register and Departmental Risk Registers in relation to specific Council projects and it was acknowledged that the aim of the Strategy was to embed the philosophies of risk management in all Council projects through the business planning process. Members queried whether a risk assessment had been undertaken in relation to key workers within Harrogate Borough Council and the Corporate Improvement Officer advised that each Head of Service would have been required to draft a Business Continuity Plan which could be used together with the Council's existing HR Policies and Processes in the event of the loss of 1 or more key workers. It was noted that the existing Performance Management System "Covalent" would also assist Heads of Service in that process.

It was noted that references to risk assessments and risk management were now appearing in officer reports to Cabinet, Commissions and Committees, and the aim was to make this item commonplace within officer reports. The Executive Director, Corporate Policy and Improvement referred to the current customer relations management system and the process of risk assessment in relation thereto. Councillor Hawkins queried whether a reference to risk could be made in the sustainability matrix which appeared on every Council report drafted and that was noted. It was acknowledged that following the approval of the Strategy, officers would begin to develop a risk management toolkit as the next step in the risk management process.

Councillor Simms queried whether any exercise had been undertaken by Council officers to compare the perception of risk against the actual outturn, and it was noted that whilst this process had not been undertaken as yet, it had been identified by officers as a useful exercise to be carried out at a later date.

Councillor Powell queried the risk assessment process undertaken in relation to the HIC Breakout Space Projects, and officers responded in relation thereto.

It was agreed that the Commission having considered the Corporate Risk Management Strategy 2005/08 and Action Plan, agreed the Strategy as a starting point for improved risk management arrangements. The Commission also agreed to receive regular progress reports on the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan, and indeed risk management arrangements in general.

(6.00 pm - 6.39 pm)

SCRUTINY MATTERS AND REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMISSION

91/05 - REQUESTS FOR INCLUSION OF ITEMS IN FUTURE WORK

PROGRAMME: It was noted that no further requests for inclusion of items in the future work programme had been received. The Scrutiny Officer advised that it might be necessary to consider a report relating to items to be carried over by the Resources Commission for consideration following the local government elections in May. It was also noted that it was likely the Draft Audit Management Letter would be considered by the Resources Commission at its meeting to be held on 10 April 2006 where the Audit Commission would be in attendance to respond to Members' questions.

The Chair referred to the inherent difficulties experienced by Members in fulfilling their role on the Resources Commission in terms of Scrutiny and Governance, and advised that suggestions for clarifying that role and to address the Commission's governance and scrutiny roles would be considered at the next Scrutiny Co-ordinating Board meeting. The Chair invited Members comments in that regard in advance of the board meeting.

(6.39 pm – 6.45 pm)