

## **RESOURCES COMMISSION MINUTE OF 10 APRIL 2006**

98/05 - **USE OF RESOURCES, AUDIT SCORE FEEDBACK 2004/05:** The Chair invited Julie Talbot to provide Members of the Commission with an introduction to the report. It was noted that Harrogate Borough Council had taken the initiative to undertake a self-assessment exercise in this regard which whilst not mandatory had proved useful for the assessment work undertaken between the Commission. It was anticipated that the results of the assessment would highlight actions that would lead to improvements in the Council's "Use of Resources". Page 5 of the report set out a summary of the scores awarded in relation financial reporting, financial management, financial standing, internal control and value for money. In response to a question from Councillor Harrison the Executive Director (Corporate Policy and Improvement) advised that the Council had sought local users views and believed that at the present time there was not sufficient local user need for the Annual Report to be produced in other formats. In future years the Council would be able to provide evidence that this was indeed the case and, therefore, avoid being marked down for this activity.

Members queried the overall scores allocated to the Council in relation to value for money and it was acknowledged that local factors did affect services provided both in the urban and rural areas and that those services expected to extend over both urban and rural areas may cost more to provide but could still represent good value for money. The ratings awarded to the Council reflected the way in which the Council managed value for money issues across a range of services and actually referred to judgements and decisions made in relation to savings and value for money.

The Audit Manager (Harrogate Borough Council) commented upon the findings set out in the report and the Director of Resources added that in terms of internal control it was his understanding that elected members would be expected to take a more proactive role in the future and demonstrate a greater level of leadership. It was generally recognised that this report was an accurate assessment of the Authority's current standing and that it would be critical to obtain evidence in the future to justify the way in which the Council made the decisions it did. It was acknowledged that the Council did need to improve the way in which it approached "Value For Money" issues and that there was a possible role for Scrutiny in that regard.

(5.57 pm – 6.28 pm)