

**RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL****25 October 2006****Attendance:**

## Councillors:

Macmillan (Chairman) (P)

Anthony (P)  
Clohosey (P)  
Cooper (P)  
de Peyer (P)  
Goodall  
Hiscock (P)Learney (P)  
Maynard  
Ruffell (P)  
Worrall (P)  
Wright (P)**Deputy Members:**

Councillor Chamberlain (Standing Deputy for Councillor Goodall)

**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillor Allgood (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources)

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**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Goodall.

**2. MINUTES**

## RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Panel held on 20 July 2006 be approved and adopted.

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

**4. CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY 2007-2012**

(Report RE32 refers)

The Chief Executive explained that Cabinet had considered the draft Corporate Strategy 2007-2012 (Report CAB1334 refers) on 11 October 2006. The Scrutiny Panel was asked to consider the aspects of the Strategy relating to "An Efficient and Effective Organisation" and "Our Values".

The following points were raised for consideration by Cabinet in preparing the next draft of the Corporate Strategy:

- references in the previous Strategy which had been deleted from this version should be reinstated as follows:  
“increasing the skills of the workforce, setting challenging targets for performance management, and being creative and innovative”
- as well as identifying the Council’s priorities, the Strategy should also identify areas which were not priorities
- joint working with other authorities should be specifically mentioned.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Portfolio Holder explained that an outline of resources available for 2007/08 would be included in the Budget report to the Scrutiny Panel meeting in December. He continued that a comprehensive list of priorities would be drawn up, which would have regard to the Corporate Strategy, and that he would welcome any comments. He added that it would be necessary to reduce funding in some areas, but that this decision would be made in consultation with the Scrutiny Panels and the wider community.

Cllr Allgood confirmed that there would be continued discussions on developing joint working with other local authorities. It had not been specifically included in the draft Corporate Strategy at this stage, as it was unlikely that there would be any significant progress in the immediate future.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be asked to consider the issues raised above when the updated Corporate Strategy is prepared.

5. **FINANCE AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO (ESTATES) – SECOND QUARTER 2006/07 PERFORMANCE MONITORING**  
(Report RE33 refers)

The Chief Estates Officer brought to the Panel’s attention the £154,084 variance in the April to August 2006/07 financial monitoring, explaining that the majority of this related to the insurance claim made following the accident at City Offices, involving a car hitting the side of the building. He continued that this was due to be resolved shortly and that the Estates Division outturn should be within budget at the end of the year.

Responding to questions from the Panel, the Chief Estates Officer confirmed that detailed costings were being prepared with regard to the pending office moves to the Guildhall West Wing and a report would be submitted to Cabinet on 15 November 2006.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring information contained in the Report be noted.

6. **FINANCE AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO – SECOND QUARTER 2006/07  
PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE FINANCE DIRECTORATE**  
(Report RE31 refers)

Cllr Allgood explained that there was a very comprehensive IT programme in place, but that there was a considerable underspend in the 2005/06 financial year due to several projects not starting on time. He continued that the majority of this money had been carried forward into the 2006/07 financial year to enable that work to commence in the future. He added that the E-Government Informal Scrutiny Group had begun to investigate the processes involved and would report back to the Panel in due course.

It was noted that the E-Government programme contained projects that were linked to the Council achieving efficiency savings included in budget projections. Any delays could impact on whether those savings could be achieved. The Director of Finance indicated that a report would be brought to the next committee cycle on half-year progress on Gershon efficiency targets.

The Panel asked that the Revenues staff be congratulated on the improvements achieved on the key performance indicators.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Chief Executive confirmed that the role of the Procurement Officer was a corporate role and that he was looking at all areas of spend, in order to maximise value for money. The Chief Executive continued that information on spending throughout the Council was being analysed and that the Procurement Officer was also pursuing any arising opportunities, to ensure continued efficiencies and savings.

Cllr Allgood explained that the low percentage of work completed on time in the Design and Print Section related to there being long term staff sickness and increased levels of workload. He continued that due to the staff absence, the Section had to employ some agency staff and this had resulted in a large agency bill. He added that this situation would continue to be closely monitored.

The Director of Finance reported that there was still a vacancy in the Customer Service Centre due to staff turnover. She explained that more staff had been recruited, but they were still in the process of being trained. She added that the second team leader was now in post and that an improvement in call handling times had already been seen.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the monitoring information contained in the Report be noted.
2. That the percentage of telephone calls answered in 20 seconds by the Customer Service Centre and the Switchboard be included in future monitoring reports.
3. That the Procurement Officer be invited to the next meeting of the Panel to outline the corporate work being undertaken on procurement.

7. **FINANCE AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - SECOND QUARTER 2006/07 PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR'S DIRECTORATE**  
(Report RE30 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor reported that the Abbey House works had now been completed and that other works would be undertaken in approximately two years' time. He continued that significant work had been done on the implementation of the Gambling Act 2005 and the policy was due to go to Council on 1 November 2006 for approval.

The City Secretary and Solicitor responded to questions from Members, explaining that the increased income in Land Charges was due to the current state of the housing market. He stated that new legislation being brought in by the Government in the future would limit the amount the Council would be allowed to charge for these services.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring information contained in the Report be noted.

8. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Report PS246 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme, as set out on the reverse of the agenda and as extracted from Report PS246, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7.30pm.

Chairman