



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

B450

Cabinet

16 February 2011

Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 24 January 2011

1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Third Quarter 2010/2011

- 1.1 Members considered the third quarterly report for 2010/2011, covering the period April to December 2010. A total of 33 indicators were reported this quarter, of which 13 were green, 12 amber and 2 red. The final 6 were contextual indicators. Members discussed a number of the indicators, including the percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks and major planning applications determined within 13 weeks, time taken to process new benefit claims and change events, and the number of volunteers and volunteer hours recorded. Members were particularly pleased with this last statistic, which showed that volunteering in the Council's parks and heritage centres continued to be popular.
- 1.2 The Committee was also advised of the forthcoming abolition of National Indicators from April 2011; from this date the Council would be able to choose which indicators it wished to report and manage. The Policy Team was working to develop a list of KPIs for 2011/2012, and these would be presented to a future meeting.

2. Audit Commission: Presentation of 2009/2010 Annual Audit Letter

- 2.1 Neil Harris, District Auditor, attended the meeting and presented the Annual Audit Letter to the Committee, covering the 2009/2010 Audit. This document summarised the Audit Commission's findings from its audit of the Council's financial systems, and its assessment of the Council's arrangements to achieve value for money in its use of resources. The District Auditor also took the opportunity to update Members on the position with the future of the Audit Commission, which will be detailed in the Committee's minutes.
- 2.2 Members were pleased to see another positive report from the Audit Commission, stating that the Council had good arrangements for preparing the Council's accounts, and for achieving value for money. Some elements of the document were discussed, including the proposed audit fees and elements of the Value for Money Conclusion.

3. Budget Monitoring Report: 1 April to 31 December 2010

- 3.1 The Committee received the quarterly budget monitoring report which informed Members of the Council's financial position for the third quarter of 2010/2011, and highlighted significant variances. Overall an underspend for the period of £391,000 was being reported, and budget variances over £10,000 were explained in the report. Favourable variances included underspends on the budget including salaries increase of 1% included in estimates but not required (£118,000), refuse and cleansing operational costs underspend (£138,000) and a number of small underspends across a range of budgets. There had also been income above budget realised in areas including industrial, commercial and shops rental income (£163,000), and car parking income (£127,000).
- 3.2 Adverse variances included budget overspends of £286,000, including £90,000 relating to costs remaining after responsibility for Highways reverted to Suffolk County Council, and income below budget of £86,000, including £39,000 on underachieved investment income.
- 3.3 The capital budget monitoring report showed net expenditure of £3,554,000 compared to a full year revised capital budget of £8,594,000, partly due to the fact that many of the budgets were not profiled, and a number of the projects were due to commence later in the financial year. The capital disposals programme showed capital receipts for the period of £160,000 against a full year disposals estimate of £1,126,000.
- 3.4 A number of issues were discussed by the Committee, which also asked that from the next financial year the costs of The Apex and Athenaeum be set out separately from the Theatre and Public Entertainment section of the revenue budget monitoring report.

4. Corporate Risk Register: Quarterly Monitoring Report

- 4.1 The third quarterly risk register monitoring report for 2010/2011 had been prepared following review by Management Team and Corporate Management Team. One new risk had been added to the register in this quarter, *'Suffolk County Council New Strategic Direction'*, concerned with the potential for unexpected consequences of the change in how services were being delivered by the County Council.
- 4.2 One risk had been closed, *'Project Management'*, as it was now considered that project management was completely embedded within the Council's procedures and there was, therefore, no ongoing risk of poor project management. A number of residual risk colours had also changed, and reasons for these were given in the report.

- 4.3 The Committee discussed some of the risks in this quarter's report, including refurbishment of the Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and unsustainable workload, but did not make any suggestions for amendments to the Register on this occasion.

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