

## KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held in the Council Chamber, Browfort, Devizes on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2006 at 2.15 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor C.P.G. Hoddinott - Chairman

Councillor B.G. Ashley	Councillor Mrs. N.G. Rawlins
Councillor N.D. Carter	Councillor P.N. Veasey
Councillor Mrs. J.K. Coombe	Councillor Mrs. P.M. Winchcombe
Councillor R.T. Parsons	Councillor A.S. Wood
Councillor J.D. Pearcey-Caldwell	

#### 31. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2006, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 32. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were none.

#### 33. CORPORATE FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Board received and considered the minutes of the Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2006.

Members asked whether the Council was considering any energy conservation methods in addition to seeking the best value for energy supplies, and were informed that officers were seeking grant funding to assist with the installation of solar panels on the south facing roofs at Browfort. Members suggested that officers used the experience of the twin towns of Mayenne and Waiblingen, which had attracted match funding through the EU for energy conservation projects.

#### RESOLVED

##### THAT

1. That the minutes of the Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, be noted.
2. That a review of the Pest Control function of the Council and the fee structure for the services it provides be included on the draft Overview and Scrutiny work plan to be considered in February.

### **34. USE OF RESOURCES TASK GROUP**

Members of the Task Group introduced the report to the Board and explained that while the report contained final recommendations on all of its original Terms of Reference, there would need to be one further report to deal with the additional issue of sickness monitoring.

Members debated the impact of the Kennet and Avon Canal across the District, not only in terms of its tourism potential but also the negative impact of car parking and waste generated by the apparently large numbers of boaters now resident on the canal.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

**THAT** the Council adopt the Municipal Work Plan in February each year, to enable Overview and Scrutiny to plan their work programme earlier and in particular to enable them to identify items to scrutinise during the municipal year.

#### **RESOLVED**

##### **THAT**

1. The Board's response to the consultation on the draft Corporate Strategy attached at Appendix A be approved.
2. Two pieces of work for the 2007/2008 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be approved:
  - i. to investigate the Council's investment policy
  - ii. to examine the impact on the Kennet and Avon Canal across the District.

### **35. CONSULTATION STRATEGY TASK GROUP**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered the report submitted by the Task Group. Members commented on the difficulty of producing a consultation strategy to fit all circumstances and expressed the opinion that it would be helpful if the resources for carrying a consultation could be identified at the start of the process.

#### **RESOLVED**

**THAT** the draft Consultation Strategy should be circulated as appropriate (either in full or as a summary leaflet) to key stakeholders to include Members, relevant officers, representatives of marginalised groups and Kennet Voice members. Following the consultation on the draft strategy, the final strategy to be forwarded to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for approval and recommendation to the Resources Executive Committee.

**36. ENGAGING MEMBERS IN FINANCE SCRUTINY**

The Chief Accountant and Auditor introduced report CAA/32/2006 and informed Members that she felt that the review recommended in the report would be best carried out by the Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee rather than a task group of the Management Board.

Members agreed with the importance of involving Members in the wider aspects of budget setting and monitoring, and also of identifying training needs, and held a brief debate on the potential impact of the Customer First initiative on the future of the Council's financial standing.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT**

1. The Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee conduct a scrutiny review of ways in which to engage Members in finance scrutiny, as outlined in the report;
2. That the Terms of Reference proposed in the report be approved subject to point 5 being amended to read "to explore ways of improving Members financial understanding".

Note:

The Terms of Reference and work plan for the review are attached as appendix B to these minutes.

**37. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 1**

The Board gave consideration to key indicators that were detailed within the report. Members debated whether a local performance target should be set to monitor the effectiveness of decriminalised parking. Members also noted that the increased collection of recyclable materials from the doorstep was having an adverse impact on the total weight of waste collected per head of population.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the Board continue to monitor the key performance targets contained in the report, and that indicators relating to decriminalised parking should be added to those key indicators.

Chairman  
5<sup>th</sup> December, 2006

Having considered the draft Corporate Strategy in some detail the Overview and Scrutiny task group would like to offer the following comments.

- 4.1 Overall the board agrees that the four priorities are still appropriate and the actions proposed are still important, however there are some key areas that Kennet should be addressing.
- 4.2 The Kennet and Avon canal is a significant feature of the Kennet landscape and the council does acknowledge the impact it has on tourism in the district. However it is felt that there is an even more important aspect of the canal which is the impact on residents lives. The strategy needs to recognise that factors such as dog fouling, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping affect many of our residents as a direct result of some canal users. Whilst recognising that Kennet cannot necessarily act directly, the strategy should recognise the community leadership role we have in influencing others.
- 4.3 The board would like to emphasise the importance of providing plastic and cardboard recycling. However we would also like the strategy to stress the importance of education to encourage people not to purchase excess packaging in the first place and lobbying national government to deal with this.
- 4.4 The board are concerned about the proposal to adopt a taxation strategy that follows government guidance and feel this should either be removed or re-written to say that “Kennet would consider government guidance when adopting its taxation strategy each year”. The strategy should also give more emphasis to local decisions based on local need rather than the adoption of national policy.
- 4.5 Overall the strategy should put more emphasis on communications in service delivery throughout the strategy and in particular this should be emphasised in the risk management section.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKPLAN FOR “ENGAGING MEMBERS IN FINANCE SCRUTINY” REVIEW**

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To explore how members can become more involved in the financial scrutiny of the Council;
2. To examine ways in which members can become more engaged in the budget monitoring arrangements of the Council;
3. To explore ways in which members can become more involved in the budget setting process of the Council;
4. To explore ways of improving financial reporting to members;
5. To explore ways of improving financial understanding for members;
6. To explore ways in which to increase member involvement in Risk Management and Internal Control.

### **Outline Workplan for “Engaging Members in Finance Scrutiny” Review**

1. Analyse and review existing arrangements;
2. Collate evidence from other authorities (a number of other authorities have conducted similar reviews);
3. Interview keys officers and members (the following are suggested):
  - a. Chief Executive
  - b. Director of Resources
  - c. Strategic Directors
  - d. Financial Services Manager
  - e. Cllr Richardson – as Member Champion for Improving Services
4. Conduct Member Survey
5. Collate Results
6. Prepare report and recommendations and report back to Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee in January 2007 and the Management Board in February 2007.