

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the

**FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon  
at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 30 April 2014

PRESENT

Councillors: C G Dingwall (Chairman); T J Morris (Vice-Chairman); D A Cotterill;  
H G Davies; P J G Dorward; D S T Enright; H J Howard; E H James; L D Poole MBE and  
G Saul

Also Present: S J Hoare

68. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S J Good and the Chief Executive reported receipt of the following resignation and temporary appointment:-

Mr H B Eaglestone for Mrs J C Baker

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers in matters to be considered at the meeting.

71. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

No submissions were received from the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

72. MAIN POINTS FROM THE LAST MEETING AND FOLLOW UP ACTION

The report of the Chairman giving details of the main points arising from the meeting of the Committee held on 5 February 2013 was received and noted.

73. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014

The report of Frank Wilson, Strategic Director, giving details of progress with regard to the Committee's Work Programme for 2013/2014 was received and noted.

61.1 Investment with Green Deal Provider

It was noted that there were on-going delays in the scheme at national level and the current position remained unclear. It was **AGREED** that the Chief Executive of the Green Deal Together Community Interest Company be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss its operation.

## 61.2 Oxfordshire City Deal

Whilst it was acknowledged that the City Deal had little direct impact upon West Oxfordshire and did not fall directly within the remit of the Committee, Members considered that it remained a matter of interest to the Council as a whole. Mr Enright indicated that it could be beneficial for Members to receive a presentation from a representative associated with the project and the Strategic Director (Resources) suggested that Mr Nigel Tipple, the Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership could be invited to give a presentation on its work later in the year.

Mr Hoare questioned whether it would be more appropriate for such a presentation to be given to all Members at a convenient time such as at the conclusion of a scheduled Council meeting.

The Strategic Director undertook to extend such an invitation and it was **AGREED** that this item be deleted from the Work Programme.

## 74. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Chief Executive giving the opportunity for the Committee to comment on the Work Programme for the Cabinet published on 8 April 2014 was received and considered.

### 74.1 Proposal for Land Exchange in Long Hanborough

Mr Poole enquired whether the undertaking to consult with local representatives on land disposals given by Mr Hoare during the discussion surrounding the call in of the Cabinet decision regarding the disposal of land in Woodstock had been applied in this instance. The local representatives confirmed that they were aware of and content with the proposals and Mr Hoare confirmed his intention to continue to do so in future. Mr Poole questioned whether this should be formalised in some manner to ensure that it was not lost to the corporate consciousness through changes in membership. In response, Mr Hoare confirmed that it had been enshrined in operating procedures.

**RESOLVED:** That the Cabinet Work Programme published on 8 April 2014 be noted.

## 75. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE – PENSION FUND BACKFUNDING PAYMENT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of the Strategic Director (Resources) regarding the decision taken to make on off rather than monthly payments of backfunding amounts to the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund.

Members expressed their support for the action taken and Mr Poole suggested that additional savings could be made in this way in future. Mr Hoare emphasised that it was the Council's prudent financial management that had placed it in a position in which it could afford to take advantage of this opportunity when many other authorities that would have wished to do so could not.

**RESOLVED:** That the information set out in the report be noted and the recommendations therein endorsed.

## 76. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE 2013/2014

The Committee received and considered the report of the GO Shared Service Head of Finance giving details of treasury management activity and the performance of internal and external fund managers for 2013/2014.

In response to an enquiry raised earlier by Mr Poole, the GO Shared Service Head of Finance confirmed that, whilst the credit score analysis table at paragraph 3.8 did not include figures for 2013, these had always remained within the approved control parameters. Mr Poole also questioned whether the decision to put 7 new fund managers in place to manage the funds withdrawn from Investec accorded with the investment model discussed at the February meeting. In response, the Strategic Director (Resources) indicated that, whilst there had been some discussion regarding the necessity to invest in such a wide range of funds, these investments had been made in accordance with the balanced bond/equity portfolio identified as the preferred option at that time.

In response to a further question from Mr Poole, the GO Shared Service Head of Finance confirmed that the in house fund valuation of £9,610,000 shown in the table at paragraph 2.8 included the funds subsequently invested elsewhere. Mr Poole also noted that a single long term investment distorted the average life figures in that table and questioned whether an average excluding this investment should also be provided. In response, the Strategic Director (Resources) indicated that this aggregate figure reflected the impact of the decision to invest over longer terms but acknowledged that figures could be shown separately if required.

Mr Davies asked whether a timescale within which review performance of the recent investments had been established. The GO Shared Service Head of Finance advised that performance of these funds would be reported to each meeting of the Committee but that it would be some time before their performance could be meaningfully assessed. Members acknowledged the need to take a long term view of performance and the Strategic Director (Resources) undertook to discuss the timing of a more formal review with the Council's treasury management advisors, Arlingclose.

**RESOLVED:** That treasury management and performance of in-house and external fund managers' activities for 2013/2014 be noted.

## 77. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTER 3 2013/2014

The Committee received and considered the report of the Shared Head of Business Information and Change giving details of the Council's performance as at the end of Quarter 3 2013/2014.

In response to a question from Mr Enright, the Strategic Director (Resources) indicated that, although performance had improved significantly, difficulties at the start of the year meant that the target for the payment of invoices for commercial goods within 10 days could not be met. Whilst these initial difficulties had been resolved it was still unlikely that the Council would be able to make payment of 85% of invoices within 10 days.

Members went on to discuss if such a target remained appropriate or whether it should be amended or removed. It was noted that all invoices were paid as soon as possible and that some 95% were paid within 30 days. Members considered that a target of 10 days exceeded expectations and considered that this target should be deleted.

The Strategic Director (Resources) advised that this would be considered in the forthcoming review of the corporate plan.

**RESOLVED:** That the information set out in the report be noted.

78. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no questions from Members relating to the work of the Committee.

79. Mr L D (LARRY) POOLE

Members noted that Mr Poole had decided not to seek re-election and joined with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in expressing their regret and thanking him for his contribution to the work of the Committee and to the Council as a whole.

The meeting closed at 2:40pm

CHAIRMAN