

**TITLE OF REPORT: ITEM REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 23 JULY 2013 – PRIORITIES FOR THE DISTRICT 2014/15 ONWARDS**

*The following is an extract from the Draft Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 July 2013.*

**30. PRIORITIES FOR THE DISTRICT 2014/15 ONWARDS**

The Performance and Risk Manager presented the report of the Strategic Director of Finance, policy and Governance regarding Priorities for the District 2014/15 onwards.

She advised that the report due to be presented to Cabinet on 30 July 2013 had been amended as follows:

Paragraph 8.2 to read "Feedback from staff, and from the last Investors in People (IIP) assessment, highlights the importance of ensuring individual and service objectives are clearly aligned to delivering the corporate priorities. Care will therefore be required to ensure that the priorities and accompanying narrative, once determined, are expressed in a way which will allow this."

Paragraph 8.3 to read "Similarly, communicating the priorities more generally is a key element in developing public understanding of the Council's work and satisfaction with it. Communications will therefore need to highlight how the priorities will effect individuals, their families and communities more generally."

The word "promote" in 8.6 had also been changed to "encourage".

She drew attention to Appendix A which contained the timetable for Corporate Business Planning 2014/15 and Priorities for the District and suggested that rather than having a workshop for Members in November 2013 to consider both efficiency and savings options and target setting for 2014/15, these should be considered separately with the target setting being considered prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in December 2013.

Councillor David Levett, Portfolio Holder for Policy and Green Issues, informed Members that these priorities were high level and long term, to be in place approximately 5 years and that Promoting Sustainable Growth was the first priority with the other two leading on from this.

The proposed priorities are:

Promoting Sustainable Growth

Sustainable growth included employment, leisure and infrastructure as well as housing. It was important as the population of North Hertfordshire had grown from 116,908 in 2001 to 128,000 in 2012 and was expected to rise to 140,800 by 2021. Growth was inevitable, however it was important to manage it so that the character of the District was maintained.

Working With Our Communities

The Council needed to listen more to what people want through the District Wide Survey and other consultations that the Council undertakes.

Living Within Our Means

It was important to do more than deliver cost effective services, but must consider how to use what is already available more effectively. This would mean that the Council will have to consider what services will and will not be provided in the future.

Some Members were concerned that each political party should have the opportunity for separate target setting workshops and following a vote agreed that the current timetable should not be altered and that the Performance and Risk Manager be requested to bring alternative solutions to the next meeting of this Committee. There was some discussion about the wording of Paragraph 8.6 and Members generally felt that it was important to promote an environment in which businesses could flourish.

Members discussed that Working with Our Communities was an extremely important aspect of the work of this Council and this should be acknowledged by more detail being included under this heading at paragraph 8.9 of the report which would include some examples of how the Council did this and ways in which Communities could engage with the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the Performance and Risk Manager be requested to bring alternative solutions regarding the consideration of target setting for 2014/15 to the next meeting of this Committee.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

- (1) That the Corporate Business Planning Timetable should remain as per the report, with efficiency and investment opportunities being considered at the same time as target setting for 2014/15;
- (2) That more detail should be included under the Working With Our Communities priority, which would include examples of how the Council did this and ways in which communities could engage with the Council.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is able to comment on the Priorities for the District 2014/15 Onwards prior to consideration by Cabinet on 30 July 2013.

**[Note: The report to which this referral relates is Item 12 on this agenda]**