

## MINUTES

### FINANCE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

6 SEPTEMBER 2016

**Present:**

**Members:**

**Councillors:** Gbola Adeleke  
Birnie  
Howard  
Herbert Chapman (Chair)  
Clark  
E Collins  
Douris (Vice- Chairman)  
Silwal  
Taylor

**Portfolio Holders:** Elliot  
**Councillors:** Harden

<b>Officers:</b>	Chris Baker	Group Manager - Revenues, Benefits & Fraud
	Mark Brookes	Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
	Nicholas Brown	Group Manager - Commercial Assets & Property Development
	Ben Hosier	Group Manager - Commissioning, Procurement & Compliance
	David Skinner	Assistant Director - Finance & Resources
	Robert Smyth	Assistant Director - Performance, People and Innovation
	Ben Trueman	Group Manager – Technology & Digital Transformation
	Jim Doyle	Group Manager – Democratic Services
	Matt Rawdon	Group Manager - People

**Also Attendance:** Trudi Coston – Member Support Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

Councillor Douris noted that he didn't have 'Councillor' in front of his name. The Chairman said the minutes would be amended.

The minutes of the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 June 2016 were then confirmed by the Members present and signed by the Chairman.

### **38                    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Ashbourn, Fethney and Tindall.

Councillor Barnes was absent.

### **39                    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Douris declared an interest under item 9 (Quarter 1 Performance & Operational Risk Register Reports – Finance and Resources).

### **40                    PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

### **41                    CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None.

### **42                    ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Douris referred to the second line on the list and suggested it should say number of toilets instead of number of premises. D Skinner confirmed Councillor Douris was correct.

All of the action points from the previous meeting had been actioned and were agreed by the Members present.

The Chairman thanked the officers for following up all the action points within the agreed time limit.

Councillor Harden arrived at 7.35 pm.

### **43                    Q1 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2016/17**

D Skinner highlighted that the variance of the Q1 forecast was £13k over, which was consistent with previous years and nothing to worry about.

The Chairman referred to page 12 and queried if the £138k variance relating to premises was recoverable. D Skinner confirmed it was.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 4.1 and sought clarification on whether the issue was parking or if it was due to narrow roads, and if we were liaising with others to work out why there was an increased pressure all of a sudden. D Skinner explained that there were some minor parking issues but the problem was mainly with new build developments; tighter access and turning circles etc.

Councillor Douris explained that most new builds were contained within the existing footprint and road layouts shouldn't be changed to accommodate new builds. D Skinner said he would need to investigate further and come back to the committee.

Councillor Birnie explained that the planning department and committee wouldn't allow developments that restricted emergency vehicle access. The Chairman advised that the issue was with refuse vehicles as they're bigger and heavier in weight than emergency vehicles.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 4.3 relating to an unachieved income of £100k and queried the reason for this. D Skinner explained it was a combination of various reasons and additional work was being put in to discover why we are losing contracts and how we can entice business back. He said the work around this wasn't a quick fix and would take time as people are usually tied into contracts so they would be waiting for those to expire.

Councillor Adeleke referred to paragraph 4.2 and queried if there was any reserved money for unforeseen circumstances. D Skinner confirmed there were reserves in the general fund or they could also look in the budget for any additional ways to make savings.

Councillor Douris referred to paragraph 4.3 and felt surprised that we lost contracts worth £100k and was concerned that they were not more alert to this and were not matching or trying to beat the prices of others. He said he didn't know whether that was the full extent of the loss over the years and was worried that we could lose much more in years to come. D Skinner highlighted that it was the forecast for 2016/17 and that the waste team were investigating the trend and the options going forward. He said he would have to come back to the committee with a figure for the total loss. Councillor Douris said it didn't fill him with confidence as we are half way through the year and hoped the team would have been working on it before now. D Skinner highlighted that the report was as at quarter 1 and he would have more information in quarter 2 and hoped there would be a difference.

Councillor Douris referred to paragraph 7.2 and asked for assurance that the overspend in line 163 of the budget relating to the regeneration of the Town Centre was due to the issues in the power supply and nothing further. D Skinner advised that the project was coming to a close and to his knowledge the problems were resolved. He said he would have more information in the next quarter.

#### Actions:

- D Skinner to confirm details of new builds/road layouts/existing footprint in relation to access issues with refuse vehicles (paragraph 4.1)
- D Skinner to confirm figure for total loss of contracts in commercial waste services (paragraph 7.2).

#### Outcome:

1. The Committee noted the forecast outturn position.
2. The Committee noted the re-phasing of the capital programme to move slippage identified at Q1 into financial year 2017/18.

The Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services said he felt the performance and the set of figures were really positive.

M Brookes highlighted that in Q1 they held the Police and Crime Commissioner Election and shortly afterwards held the EU Referendum. He said it required a massive effort from all the team and he felt it was a big achievement.

Councillor Birnie felt that the Count didn't go well at all considering all the extra staff that was put into place. He said it took far too long to get a result. M Brookes explained there was a very high turnout and despite some delays which were simply human error, he said we achieved an accurate result which was the most important thing. He added that they were looking at ways to speed up the process.

Councillor Adeleke disagreed with Councillor Birnie and felt that the count went well considering the high turnout and commended the team for their hard work. He then asked how prepared we would be if there was a second referendum. J Doyle said he hoped that wouldn't happen, however we would be given enough notice to plan everything and felt we would be as prepared as we possibly could be. M Brookes said he felt we would be in a good position if that were to happen.

Councillor Douris congratulated them on the successful court cases. He asked if we published when people are taken to court and were successful to show others that it isn't wise to try to play the system. M Brookes advised they do work with the Communications team to promote court activity but he didn't think they published every court case.

Councillor Douris referred to S106 elements and said he hoped DBC would ensure they held on to time scales as developers can be slow at making payments and that can lead to difficulties.

Councillor Douris referred to the potential second referendum on Grovehill Neighbourhood plan and queried if there was any other method of voting. J Doyle advised that voting is set in stone unless you get agreement from the Home Office or from the Electoral Commission.

The Chairman asked if any of the cases they had taken to court were unsuccessful. M Brookes said all cases were reviewed before being taken to court and he wasn't aware of any cases that DBC had lost.

The Chairman noted the change in vehicle MOT testing and queried if officers had made the arrangements prior to this change. M Brookes advised that we charged an admin fee for the MOT's which is passed on to the testing stations but now drivers can go direct to the station for testing and provide us with a copy of the certificate.

The Chairman asked if there was a limit on the number of taxis we could have in the Borough. M Brookes advised there were no proposals to restrict the numbers.

Councillor Taylor asked if the court cases were still ongoing with regards to hand arm vibration. M Brookes confirmed it was still ongoing.

Outcome:

The committee noted the report.

**45**                      **Q1 PERFORMANCE & OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER REPORT -  
FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

Councillor Douris declared an interest in this item as one of the risk registers relating to Procurement and Purchase Orders contained a company of which he was a majority share holder in and they provide services to Dacorum Borough Council and this was logged in his Register of Interests form.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources highlighted that there was performance indicators included which fell under the remit of the Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services. D Skinner apologised for this and said he should have added Councillor Harden as another contact.

Councillor Douris referred to indicator FIN02A and queried why the target days had been reduced from 45 to 40 days. Councillor Elliot advised it was to get the cash flow working quicker and said the officers were more than capable of achieving the reduced target.

Councillor Douris highlighted that there was no assurance shown on pages 49 and 79. He also highlighted that there were random letters/symbols within the risk report on page 44. D Skinner noted these issues.

Outcome:

The committee noted the contents of the report and the performance of Finance and Resources for Q1, 2016/17.

N Brown, M Brookes, J Doyle and B Hosier left the meeting at 8.05 pm.

**46**                      **Q1 PERFORMANCE & OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER REPORT -  
PERFORMANCE, PEOPLE AND INNOVATION**

The Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services drew member's attention to the positive set of figures relating to sickness absence.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 2.8 and queried the ratio of long term and short term sickness. M Rawdon said he didn't have the exact figures to hand but suggested two thirds would be long term sickness to one third short term sickness. He agreed to email the committee with the detailed statistics. The Chairman highlighted that the Union was also pleased about the improved sickness figures.

Councillor Douris referred to page 74 and queried the risk if there was a catastrophe with the BT exchange. B Trueman explained the data could run between the two centres (Amersham and Aylesbury) like a triangle effect so if one of the centres was effected it could run via the other centre. He said the biggest risk would be if the BT exchange were to go down completely as we would lose all connection in the civic centre; this is due to there being only one path between the civic centre and the nearest BT exchange. He said they would be using a different approach with the

Forum and was partnering with Hertfordshire County Council to investigate diverse routing to ensure we're covered.

Actions:

M Rawdon to confirm sickness absence statistics.

Outcome:

The committee noted the contents of the report and the performance of the division for Q1, 2016/17.

**47                      WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

The Chairman highlighted that there were no items on the work programme for the next meeting apart from action points. He asked officers to let him know in the next three weeks if they would like to bring any items to the next meeting, and if not he suggested the meeting should be cancelled.

The Meeting ended at 8.12 pm