



Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny
Committee

31 October 2016

10.00 am

**MINUTES OF THE ENTERPRISE AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 7 JULY 2016
10.00 - 10.15 AM**

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

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Present

Councillor Steve Davenport (Chairman)

Councillors Andrew Bannerman, Hannah Fraser, John Hurst-Knight, Jean Jones,
Nic Laurens and William Parr

13 Apologies for Absence and Substitutes

13.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Charlotte Barnes and Pauline Dee

13.2 Councillor Hannah Fraser substituted for Councillor Barnes

14 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

14.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary interest made.

15 Minutes

15.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2016 had been circulated.

15.2 The Committee Officer informed Members that there were 2 amendments to the minutes: -

- The Chairman of the Business Board had been incorrectly referred to as Amanda Thorne and should have been referred to as Mandy Thorn
- The second line on page 4 should be amended to read "The report going to Cabinet would identify the budget going forward " rather than savings.

15.3 RESOLVED:-

That subject to the above the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman

16 Public Question Time

16.1 There were no questions from Members of the Public.

17 Member Question Time

17.1 The following question had been received from Councillor Roger Evans and the response tabled.

In the Revenue Outrun Report recently received by Cabinet there is an amount of money allocated for Planning. Can the reason for this money being in the reserves be explained please? When it is to be used and for how long it has been there.

Response:

The principle of a planning reserve was established before the planning service was seconded to IP&E and has been retained following its return to the Council.

The main purpose of the reserve is to match resource to fluctuations in demand, which can change significantly. The basic principle is that planning fees are received in advance for work yet to be carried out and at year end there will always be fees received for work to be undertaken that is not yet complete. To this end, a reserve was established at the end of 2014/15, following an unprecedented level of planning applications received within that financial year. The level of the reserve was predominantly based on an estimate of the work in hand at the time. The reserve has been used to procure consultancy support and relevant specialists (including landscape and ecology and enforcement) to support the planning service to improve from a position where the establishment was unable to meet the demands. Consultants were used because this resource is flexible. Attempts to recruit suitably experienced planning professionals had not been successful. The reserve will continue to be used in the short term for the purpose outlined above, as well as for any redesign of the planning service as necessary.

17.2 A member commented that had had recently had a meeting with the Planning Services Manager and had been surprised at the fluctuations in income generated and stated that the reserve was very necessary to cover this.

17.3 A Member expressed concern over the difficulties in recruiting experienced planning officers. The Chair commented that this was a topic that the proposed Task and Finish Group may wish to look at.

18 Planning Task and Finish Group

18.1 Members received a report setting out proposed terms of reference for the Planning Task and Finish Group

18.2 The Chairman commented that the Members of the Task and Finish Group could extend the scope of the group if they so wished.

18.3 **RESOLVED:**

That the Planning Task and Finish Group be set up and the Terms of Reference be approved

Signed (Chairman)

Date: