

RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 14 JUNE 2012 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Watson (Chairman) Councillors Betton, Bowditch, Bowman S, Craig, McDevitt, Mrs Parsons and Whalen

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Dr Tickner – Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder

ROSP.34/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

ROSP.35/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Betton declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item A.3(a) Provisional General Fund Revenue Outturn 2011/12. His interest related to the fact that he was a tenant at the Carlisle Enterprise Centre.

ROSP.36/12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 16 February 2012 and 29 March 2012 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman

ROSP.37/12 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

ROSP.38/12 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) presented report OS.15/12 which provided an overview of matters that related to the work of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel's work.

Mrs Edwards reported:

- The Forward Plan of Executive Key Decisions, covering the period 1 June to 3 September 2012 had been published on 18 May 2012 and there were four issues which fell within the remit of the Panel:
KD.005/12 – Provisional Outturn Reports - to be considered at this meeting

KD.012/12 – Vehicle and Plant Replacement Provision 2012/13 – The decision would be taken by the Executive on 2 July 2012 and would release capital budget in accordance with the agreed Budget at Council.
KD.015/12 – Medium Term Financial Plan and the Capital Strategy - available for the Panel to consider at its meeting on 30 August 2012
KD.016/12 – Asset Management Plan - available for the Panel to consider at its meeting on 30 August 2012

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That Forward Plan items:

KD.012/12 – Vehicle and Plant Replacement Provision 2012/13 – Would not be considered by the Panel
KD.015/12 – Medium Term Financial Plan and the Capital Strategy – would be considered by the Panel at its meeting on 30 August 2012
KD.016/12 – Asset Management Plan - would be considered by the Panel at its meeting on 30 August 2012

ROSP.39/12 PROVISIONAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE OUTTURN 2011/12

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder submitted report RD.11/12 concerning the outturn for the 2011/12 General Fund Revenue Budget. He informed Members that the outturn position showed that the net underspend for Council services as at 31 March 2012, once committed expenditure totalling £357,500 was taken into account, was £261,459.

The table at Section 2.1 of the report showed that the Council's revised budget for 2011/12 was a total of £15,601,700. A summary of the expenditure for individual Directorates and an explanation of the major variances in those budgets were provided. Also itemised were the budget headings which had achieved savings and provided increased income.

Turning to the key issues, the Portfolio Holder set out details of a request to transfer £250,000 to the Transformation Reserve to part fund ongoing redundancy costs which, if approved, would result in a final underspend to the Council in 2011/12 of £11,459. He further recommended (subject to Council approval) the establishment of a Cremator Reserve, as set out in the Charges Report 2011/12 (CS.28/10) and detailed at paragraph 4.2 of the current report, adding that approximately £70,000 would be transferred to the reserve as part of the year end process.

The recession continued to cause significant income shortfalls in Bereavement Services, Development and Building Control, Parking and The Lanes. In addition, inflation and other factors had led to higher fuel and energy prices. In anticipation of those pressures some budgets had again been adjusted during 2011/12 to reflect revised spending and income trends (Report RD.70/11 referred). The Council's bad debt provision had been

increased in respect of housing benefit overpayments and penalty charge notices, but reduced for sundry debtors, and that had been allocated directly to the services.

He also circulated details of the carry forward requests which had been submitted by Directorates adding that, if Members were minded to approve the carry forward requests, a recommendation would need to be submitted to the City Council.

The Portfolio Holder advised that, due to the level of underspend identified within the report after all carry forward requests were approved, approximately £11,500 would be returned to the Projects Reserve. That would replenish the usable revenue balances by 31 March 2017 to the minimum required, however there would still be a projected shortfall against that minimum reserve from 2012/13 to 2016/17.

In accordance with revised Capital Finance Regulations, costs associated with asset disposal totalling £17,221 which were included in the revenue outturn, could be funded from the capital receipt generated. That would result in an increase to revenue balances at 31 March 2012.

The Portfolio Holder further pointed out that the information contained within the report was provisional and subject to the formal audit process.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 1 June 2012 (EX.058/12).

It was resolved:

“That the Executive:

- (i) Noted the net underspend as at 31 March 2012 of £261,459 after committed carry forwards.
- (ii) Noted the committed expenditure totalling £357,500 in 2012/13, which had been approved by the Director of Resources under delegated powers, and the release of £357,500 from the General Fund Reserve in 2012/13, for recommendation to Council.
- (iii) Recommended that the City Council approve the transfer of £250,000 to the Transformation Reserve to part fund ongoing redundancy costs, as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of Report RD.11/12, reducing the year end underspend to £11,459.
- (iv) Recommended that the City Council approve the establishment of the Cremator Reserve, as set out in the Charges Report 2011/12 (CS.28/10), and detailed in paragraph 4.2, noting that approximately £70,000 would be transferred to the reserve as part of the year end process.”

In considering the Outturn report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- How did the recession cause the shortfall in Bereavement Services?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive (Dr Gooding) responded that the overall number of transactions within Bereavement Services had not reduced but the value of those transactions to the City Council had reduced.

- In response to a Member's question the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the £250,000 transfer to Redundancy Reserve was just for Carlisle City Council.
- The redundancy reserve had been identified as a risk on the Risk Register, was the Council comfortable that the amount in the reserve would cover the necessary redundancy payments?

Dr Gooding explained that the pressure on the redundancy reserve would not be known until the new Council administration was confident in their priorities and programme of savings. When the savings had been identified they would be considered through the usual process which included consultation with Overview and Scrutiny.

- A Member asked for more information with regard to the level of funds in the redundancy reserve and how much would need to be used. He also asked how employees felt about redundancy.

In response to the question Dr Gooding confirmed that there was just under £750,000 in the reserve. He explained that it would not be known how much would be required from the reserve until political decisions were made regarding the programme of savings for the authority. He added that staff were clearly anxious about the potential for redundancy, to help with this staff would be kept informed of plans and changes as soon as possible.

- A Member had some concerns that the cost of services from Bereavement Services increased annually and he was concerned that the price would continue to increase until customers could no longer afford the service.

The Portfolio Holder responded that the decision to increase the cost at Bereavement Services had been taken with officer advice and allowed small annual increases instead of one larger increase every few years. The costs had to increase due to the rise in costs to provide the service.

The Financial Services Manager (Miss Taylor) added that the annual corporate charging reports would be considered by the Panel in August and each charging policy was considered on an individual basis.

Dr Gooding explained that Bereavement Services should be a self sustainable unit that would not need to be subsidised by other services within the Council. Bereavement Services had managed to break even and had a small surplus to invest in the capital programme in preparation for the replacement of the cremator in line with the new mercury abatement emissions regulations.

- A Member commented that the Council should promote a 'Grow Your Own' policy and promote staff from within. He felt that opportunities

should be given to staff to enable them to gain the skills necessary to achieve internal promotion.

Dr Gooding responded that the terms of redeployment for members of staff facing redundancy ensured that the Council offered a variety of support to enable them to find alternative employment within the authority or with a new employer. He did not feel that the same circumstances applied to internal candidates who were not at risk of redundancy.

- Was the carry forward of £138,000 required for 2012/13 and why was there an overspend?

Miss Taylor explained that the overspend included in the table under 2.2 of the report was because there had been a number of over and underspends identified in 2011/12 and virements had been carried out to correct the budget and the balance of this resided within the Resources Directorate as a corporate overspend.

- Why had there been a shortfall in the Enterprise Centre income?

Miss Taylor agreed to provide the Panel with a written response to the question.

- The Panel requested an update on the funding that Tullie House had been able to source in addition to the Council's funding.

Miss Taylor informed the Panel that the Tullie House Business Plan would be considered by the Executive and be available for Overview and Scrutiny later on in the year.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Provisional General Fund Revenue Outturn 2011/12 Report be noted.

2) That the Financial Services Manager provided a written response to Members questions with regard to the Enterprise Centre.

ROSP.40/12 PROVISIONAL CAPITAL OUTTURN 2011/12 AND REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder presented report RD.10/12 on the Provisional Outturn for the Council's Capital Budget, together with details of the revised Capital Programme for 2012/13. He informed Members that the Outturn showed that the net underspend for Council services as at 31 March 2012 once committed expenditure totalling £1,553,300 was taken into account was £268,541. He added that requests had been made for carry forwards for new items of expenditure totalling £139,500 which would change the underspend to £129,041.

The Portfolio Holder set out the position with regard to carry forward requests on the Capital Programme. He also identified for Members the resources

which had been used to fund the 2011/12 Capital Programme and detailed the 5 year Capital Programme for the period 2012/13 to 2016/17. He reported that the programme for 2012/13 totalled £12,728,300 based upon the programme agreed by Council in February 2012 of £10,940,500; the commitments brought forward from 2011/12 of £1,553,300; an additional budget of £139,500 for continuing / new schemes subject to approval by Council; and additional budget for improvements and resurfacing of Talkin Tarn car parking facilities of £95,000 funded from surplus revenue income generated (Direct Revenue Funding).

It had been recognised that the carry forwards from 2011/12 had increased the 2012/13 capital programme and a further review was recommended to ensure that the Council had the capacity to deliver that level of capital programme. To that end, the 2012/13 programme needed to be reviewed by Project Officers to ensure that schemes could be completed in line with both the projected budget and projected timescales. The main challenge for 2012/13 and future years was the vehicle replacement programme and the uncertainty around the environmental enhancement work (currently planned to be funded by internal borrowing).

The Portfolio Holder further outlined the proposed funding arrangements for the revised 2012/13 programme.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 1 June 2012 (EX.059/12).

It was resolved:

“That the Executive:

- (i) Noted the net underspend as at 31 March 2012 of £268,541 which included committed expenditure to be met totalling £1,553,300 in 2012/13, which had been approved under delegated powers by the Director of Resources.
- (ii) Recommended that the City Council on 17 July 2012 approve the carry forward requests of £139,500 for new items of expenditure.
- (iii) Recommended that the City Council on 17 July 2012 approve the use of the Sheepmount Reserve in 2011/12 to fund expenditure on Sheepmount Drainage.
- (iv) Noted the use of the Conservation Fund to fund expenditure on the Central Plaza; the Energy Efficiency Advice Reserve to fund expenditure on Fuel Poverty; and the Asset Management Reserve to fund expenditure on Industrial Estates and Asset Management Plan in 2011/12.
- (v) Recommended that the City Council on 17 July 2012 approve the revised programme for 2012/13, together with the proposed methods of financing, as detailed at paragraph 5.2 and Appendix B of Report RD.10/12.”

In considering the Outturn Report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Had the Council known that there would be an overspend on the Roman Frontier project?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive (Dr Gooding) responded that he would submit a full report to the Panel when the project closed. He reminded the Panel that the North West Development Agency (NWDA) had placed a lot of pressure on the Council to spend the grant money before the NWDA ceased. As a result the authority had to rush to meet the new timescales and the ERDF auditors had carried out an extensive audit of the project. They concluded that some of the contracts should have been procured in a different way and clawed back some of the grant money resulting in some of the overspend.

In response to a Member's question the Financial Services Manager (Miss Taylor) clarified that the budget for the Old Town Hall was £75,000 from the capital resources.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Provisional Capital Outturn 2011/12 and Revised Capital Programme 2012/13 report be noted.

2) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive submit a close down report with regard to the Roman Frontier when the project ended.

ROSP.41/12 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2011/12

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder presented report RD.12/12 providing the annual report on Treasury Management, as required under both the Financial Procedure Rules and the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. He also submitted the regular report on Treasury Transactions for the period 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012. Members' attention was further drawn to developments in the Money Markets over the previous twelve months and their effect on the Council's investments, together with the various performance statistics included within the report.

The City Council had only one substantial long term loan (the £15m stock issue) which was likely to remain on the books for some time yet as the cost of making a premature repayment would be very prohibitive in the present climate, particularly with interest rates being at such depressed levels. There were no plans to undertake any prudential or other borrowing during the current financial year. The focus of the authority's treasury management activities remained therefore very much on the investment aspect of the function.

He added that although investment conditions were, in one sense, as exceptional in 2011/12 as had been the case during the previous year, they were very different as investors coped with some of the lowest interest rates ever seen in the world economy. Although the effect on the City Council's investment interest was slightly down on the previous year, the performance achieved was significantly better than was originally budgeted and had helped to counteract some of the other budgetary pressures seen in the year. For

this authority, as indeed for most others, the reduction in investment income posed a very significant financial challenge.

Although the outlook for interest rates in the UK remained uncertain, there was a general expectation that rates would not start to rise again until well into 2013.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 1 June 2012 (EX.060/12).

It was resolved:

“That Report RD.12/12 providing the Annual Report on Treasury Management be received and recommended to the City Council for approval.”

In considering the Treasury Management Outturn Report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Panel asked that the Executive reconsider the Asset Management Plan to ensure that the Council was carrying out the best reinvestment and achieving the best rate of interest possible.

Dr Gooding responded that the targets set out in the Asset Management Plan were being achieved and more detailed information would be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

- The Panel asked for a brief explanation of how the Council used Treasury Management.

Miss Taylor informed the Panel that the Financial Services section received a daily bank balance and they used this to look at the cash flow of the authority and to keep the balance as near to zero as possible. The key aim of the Treasury Management policy is to protect the capital in all cases, with the rate of return being the secondary criteria. All investments in financial institutions are made in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy. The Asset Management Plan is the tool under which the Council is able to invest in alternative investment assets such as property. Miss Taylor added that the Council viewed investments using external advice on annual basis in line with the Council's Policy.

- Would there be any training for Member's about Treasury Management.

Miss Taylor informed the Panel that training had been arranged for the Audit Committee and arrangements would be made for Members of the Panel to be invited to that training.

- Members asked for an explanation in the increase of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream.

Dr Gooding informed the Panel that the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream figures monitored financing costs as a proportion of the total revenue stream from Government grants and local taxpayers. The increase in the ratio

of financing costs was mainly attributable to the forecast reduction in investment income.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Treasury management Outturn 2011/12 be noted.

2) That Members of the Panel be invited to future Treasury Management training events.

**ROSP.42/12 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN POSITION 2011/12 FOR
COUNCIL TAX AND NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC
RATES**

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder presented report RD.13/12 setting out the 2011/12 provisional outturn and performance position for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates.

He informed Members that the estimated outturn of 98.71% suggested that overall liability raised and Council Tax collected would again exceed the budgeted projections of 98.5% (if the collection pattern for recovering 2011/12 arrears followed that of previous years). The impact of increased collection performance was an overall surplus on collection fund of £443,395, the City Council's share of the surplus being £58,513.

The Portfolio Holder pointed out that the Council had maintained collection performance so that for the third year running Carlisle was in the 3rd quartile when compared to districts nationally. The Council would never be in a position to move into the higher collection quartiles for the reasons set out at Section 3.1 of the report.

He added that year-end arrears of £939,794 equating to 2.2% of the 'in year' debit collectable was up on the 2010/11 figure of £736,159 (1.9%). Most Councils had reported reduced collection rates in recent years, partly due to the recession and partly because of the introduction of increased empty rates liability from 1 April 2008. Until the Government released national collection rate performance statistics the Council could not determine whether the 0.3% reduction in collection performance mirrored the position nationally. It should, however, be noted that as the Council operated as a collection agency on behalf of the Government in collecting and recovering NNDR the increased collection performance had no financial impact on the Council.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 1 June 2012 (EX.061/12).

It was resolved:

“That the provisional outturn position at 31 March 2012 for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates; together with the position with regard to write offs and bad debt trends be noted.”

RESOLVED – That the Provisional Outturn Position 2011/12 for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates report be noted.

**ROSP.43/12 ELECTED MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – PROVISIONAL
OUTTURN FOR 2011/12**

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder presented report RD.14/12 setting out the amount of allowances paid to Members as part of the Elected Members' Allowances Scheme for 2011/12. He informed Members that £352,768 had been paid in allowances to individual Members which represented an underspend of £14,232. There was no recommendation at this stage to review the budget for Members' Allowances. The position would, however, continue to be closely monitored during 2012/13 as part of the usual budget monitoring process.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 1 June 2012 (EX.062/12).

It was resolved:

“That Report RD.14/12 be received and the overall underspend of £14,232 on Elected Members' Allowances for 2011/12 be noted.”

RESOLVED – That the Elected Members' Allowances – Provisional Outturn for 2011/12 report be noted.

**ROSP.44/12 CORPORATE PLAN: END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE
REPORT**

The Policy and Performance Officer (Mr Oliver) submitted the end of year performance report against the 2011/12 Corporate Plan (PPP.08/12).

Mr Oliver reported that a summary of the progress made in the delivery of each of the Corporate Plan Key Actions and further details were provided in the report. The contents of the report had been determined by the Senior Management team on 14 May 2012 and the Key Action Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ratings had been assessed by the relevant Director. He added that the RAG rating column related to work that had been carried out during 2011/12.

Mr Oliver explained that the financial year's corporate performance had to be set against the context of a reduced revenue and capital budget. Reviewing the Council's financial relationships had dominated the Corporate Plan, partly due to the budgetary pressures and increasingly due to the wider public sector reform agenda.

Communities had in turn become increasingly self-reliant and the Council had seen the start of service delivery by social enterprises, moving from a reaction to a more proactive approach has been key. The role of partnerships at a local level had created more opportunities for involvement in decision making, while at a countywide level partnership work had ensured that services were economic and efficient. Developing new and sustaining existing partnerships had been a challenge throughout the year and would remain so in 2012/13.

The Council's dependency on partnership work to further its key actions had often dictated a pace of change not of its choosing.

He added that the Council's reputation for customer care had brought new partners into the contact centre, proving that a service could still grow in scale and scope despite the financial constraints.

Members asked that the Scrutiny Chairs Group consider the presentation of the Corporate Plan reports to allow for full and detailed scrutiny.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Corporate Plan End of Year Performance Report be welcomed.

2) That the Scrutiny Chairs Group give consideration to the content and layout of future Corporate Plan reports.

ROSP.45/12 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Organisational Development Manager (Ms Titley) presented report CE.10/12 which gave an end of year update on progress against the 2011/13 Organisational Development Plan.

Ms Titley reminded the Panel that the Organisational Development (OD) Plan had been approved by the Executive in March 2011. The Plan set out key objectives, outcomes for the Council's employees, key actions and measures of success. Most of the measures of success were indicators the authority already used, but some were based on questions from the 2011 employee opinion survey.

She explained that the priorities in the OD Plan were based on those in the Local Government Workforce Strategy 2010 - organisational development, leadership development, skills development, recruitment and retention, although pay and rewards had become recognition and reward.

Ms Titley outlined the progress made against each of the Key Actions within the Council's priorities.

In considering the Organisational Development Plan update Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Members supported the Talent Management Programme and felt that every opportunity should be given to staff to enable them to progress within the Council if they chose to. Members were also concerned that the reduction in workforce would lead to a reduction in the opportunity to train.

Dr Gooding confirmed that there was a variety of training opportunities available for staff if they wanted to train and agreed that staff would be under more pressure as the workforce changed but reassured Members that the Council would be as flexible as possible to allow training.

Ms Titley agreed that the reduction in the workforce would be a challenge but there was an opportunity for the Council to approach training in a different manner and be more creative about in house training and support to staff.

RESOLVED – That the Organisational Development Plan be welcomed.

ROSP.46/12 SICKNESS ABSENCE 2011/12

The Town Clerk and Chef Executive (Dr Gooding) presented report CE.11/12 giving a summary of the level of sickness absence and causes in each directorate along with actions being taken to address and reduce the level of absenteeism.

Dr Gooding highlighted the number of full time working days lost due to absence and explained that although there was an increase in absence for the whole Council the figure was still below the National Average. He informed the Panel that he had received the Return to Work figures after the publication of the report and agreed to circulate the figures and further information to all Members. He stated that the overall figure for the number of return to Work Interviews carried out within the authority was 80% and that this was not an acceptable figure.

He informed the Panel that the level of sickness within the Shared Service was quite high and if the Shared Service figures were removed the City Council's overall figure would be 9.9 days instead of 11.1. He added that both Allerdale and Copeland felt unsettled and out of touch with the City Council and this needed to be made a priority. He reminded the Panel that the Welfare Reform would dramatically change the way Revenues and Benefits operated and this in turn would change the way the authority provided the service and those changes could affect the staff and potentially have an effect on sickness absence.

Dr Gooding reported that a Lean Systems Review of sickness absence had commenced in January 2012. He outlined the scope of the Review and the findings. A number of improvements had been identified from the Review including amendments to way the Trent System was used by managers.

He highlighted the steps that would be taken next and added that it was hoped that the Review would be completed by Autumn 2012.

Dr Gooding explained that as well as the Lean Systems Review, the Organisational Development (OD) Team had arranged for Carlisle Eden Mind to attend July's Management Briefing to talk to managers about what they can do to support staff affected by stress, anxiety and depressions which is the greatest cause of sickness absence. The OD Team was also working with the Safety, Health and Environment Team (SHE) to pilot an Employee Assistance Programme which would offer a range of staff health and wellbeing support. In addition the SHE Team had begun a programme of workstation assessments for staff that regularly use a PC to help minimise the health risks associated with using a PC for lengthy periods of time.

In considering the sickness absence report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member suggested that Managers may struggle to find the time to carry out return to work interviews and that was one reason why there was only an 80% completion rate.

Dr Gooding agreed that managers may have felt this way and it reflected the culture within the authority. He acknowledged that managers were busy but reminded the Panel that managers' principle purpose was to support their staff and therefore Return to Work interviews should be seen as a management priority.

- A Member asked that Trade Union representatives be invited to attend the Panel give their opinion and feedback on the sickness absence within the authority so that the Panel can gain a balanced view of the overall absence within the authority.
- Were patterns of absence identified and addressed?

Dr Gooding responded that any patterns of absence should be identified by the managers through the return to work interviews and addressed through the good relationship between managers and staff.

- Were the figures for accidents at work available for scrutiny?

Dr Gooding confirmed that the figures for accidents at work were recorded but not included in this report. He agreed to include them in future reports.

- What practical steps was the Council undertaking to reduce the level of long term sickness?

Dr Gooding explained that the Council now had in house Occupational Health Service which allowed for staff to gain support to return to work and provided a rigorous challenge for employees who ought to be back at work but who were not. Having an in house Occupational Health Service also allowed for quick referrals and a appropriate return to work plans.

Ms Titley added that Managers were being encouraged to refer staff to Occupational Health at an earlier point to reduce any absence taking place. She explained that the Employee Assistance Programme would also be available to provide health and wellbeing support to staff.

- The cause of sickness absence table within the report had 1% of the proportion of sickness recorded as 'No Reason given', Members felt that this was unacceptable and that a reason should always be given for absence.

Dr Gooding agreed that it was not acceptable not to give a reason for absence and agreed to investigate the figure further. He believed that the percentage

would change when all Managers were carrying out the back to work interviews in accordance with policy.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Sickness Absence 2011/12 report be welcomed;

2) That Trade Union representatives be invited to the next meeting of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel when Sickness Absence was considered;

3) That Sickness Absence continue to be monitored by the Panel on a quarterly basis.

(The meeting ended at 11.45am)