

Notes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Acorn Plus Working Group
1st February 2012

Present: Councillors: Leonard Crosbie (Chairman)
John Bailey
Philip Circus
George Cockman
Jim Sanson
David Skipp

Apologies: Councillors: Roy Cornell
Claire Vickers

1. **TO APPROVE AS CORRECT THE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD 4TH JANUARY 2012**

The notes of the meeting held 4th January 2012 were approved as a correct record.

2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

There were no announcements.

4. **TO CONSIDER THE VARIANCES IN THE TRANSPORT BUDGET (OPERATIONAL SERVICES)**

At the last meeting of the Working Group Members received the financial information for the Acorn Plus project for its three years of operation, however Members requested further explanation for the variances in the figures.

This information was provided for the meeting.

The Group compared the budgets for the Acorn Plus for 2011/12 against the predicted expenditure; in particular the Group looked at the budgets for Repairs and Maintenance, Tyres, Derv and Insurances and the notes explaining the variances.

The Group noted that the Cabinet Member had no involvement in the preparation for the budget for Acorn Plus project, Cabinet Members were not engaged in the process or the make up of the detailed budgets.

The Group also wanted to include a note in its final report that in future, the Budget Review Working Group receive figures in this level of detail when considering the Budget.

5. **DRAFT REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP**

The Chairman of the Working Group circulated the first draft of the final report for Members consideration and comments.

The Group made a number of amendments which would be incorporated into the final draft.

The Group was not satisfied that it had received all the financial information that it needed for the review.

The Group felt that the main issue identified in this review was that there had been an unrealistic budget in the first instance for the Acorn Plus project. The Members felt that it was understandable that the budget in the first year may not have been accurate but following the revised business case and budget in autumn 2010, there was yet another overspend of £790,000. These observations would be incorporated into the final report.

The Group also compared the waste collection figures for other district and borough councils in West Sussex.

Members concluded that responsibility was not fully assumed by the Cabinet Member or senior management for the Acorn Plus project and as a result the Group wanted to ensure that in future, operational responsibility was clearly defined for both management and Cabinet Members.

A copy of the Chief Internal Auditors' report to the Business Improvement Working Group, on Acorn Plus Project – Corporate Lessons Learnt was circulated for Members to read.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Another meeting of the Working Group was not scheduled; the second draft of the report would be circulated via email.

The meeting ended at 3.25pm having started at 1.00pm.

CHAIRMAN