


CABINET

MINUTES of a MEETING held in THE GUILDHALL, MARKET PLACE, SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE, SP1 1JH on Tuesday, 12 February 2013.

Cllr John Brady	Cabinet Member for Finance Performance and Risk
Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Keith Humphries	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection Services
Cllr John Noeken	Cabinet Member for Resources
Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning
Cllr Jane Scott OBE	Leader of the Council
Cllr Toby Sturgis	Cabinet Member for Waste, Property, Environment and Development Control Services
Cllr John Thomson	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing
Cllr Dick Tonge	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Cllr Stuart Wheeler	Cabinet Member for Transformation, Culture, Leisure and Libraries

Also in Attendance:	Cllr Richard Britton
	Cllr Tony Deane
	Cllr Nick Fogg
	Cllr Mike Hewitt
	Cllr Jon Hubbard
	Cllr Julian Johnson
	Cllr Jerry Kunkler
	Cllr Jonathon Seed

Key Decisions Matters defined as 'Key' Decisions and included in the Council's Forward Work Plan are shown as 

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Alan MacRae and Maggie Rae (Corporate Director).

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on **22 January 2013** were presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2013.

3 **Minutes - Capital Assets Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee held on 22 January 2013 were received and noted.

4 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **Leader's announcements**

There were no announcements.

6 **Public participation**

The rules on public participation were noted; however the Leader reported that she would be happy for any members of the public present to participate in the discussion of items on the agenda.

7 **New Local Welfare Provision**

Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing, presented a report which outlined a proposal for the Cabinet to ratify the proposed criteria and delivery model for a new local welfare provision, and to delegate responsibility to officers to make minor amendments to the application of the scheme in light of any review and ongoing consultation.

A correction was highlighted on paragraph 7.5 on Page 27 of the Agenda papers, stating it should refer to Appendix D rather than Appendix E. Details were then provided on the accessibility of and eligibility for the scheme, as detailed in the report. It was noted that no cash awards would be made under the proposed scheme, with provision being provided by means of a purchase order for an item/service, or a referral to a third party to purchase agreed items or goods.

It was stated that owing to the urgent nature of any applications for the provision, efforts would be made to ensure appeal against refusal would be processed on the same day as that of the appeal, or by 1pm the following day if an appeal was made after 1pm.

The Cabinet welcomed a proposal to amend the scheme to allow people to appeal against refusal by 1pm the day after refusal of provision rather than at the time of refusal, and noted it was proposed officers would be granted delegated responsibility to make other minor amendments to the application of the scheme should other matters, such as signposting applicants to appropriate local services, require further drafting consideration.

The Cabinet Member also gave an assurance he would be asking officers to review the decision not to issue emergency cash loans during its first six months of operation, by which time more detail regarding demand and need would have been established.

It was,

Resolved:

- 1) That the cabinet ratify the proposed criteria and delivery model for a new local welfare provision.**
- 2) That the cabinet provide officers with delegated responsibility to make minor amendments to the application of the scheme in light of review and ongoing consultation.**

Reason for Proposal

As part of the Welfare Reform Act (2012), the Government is abolishing the current system of Social Fund discretionary payments. From April 2013, the support provided to households through the Social fund by means of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for Living Expenses will cease and Local Authorities will receive financial support to enable them to develop and implement their own 'successor models'

8 Business Plan Scorecard Update

Councillor John Brady, Cabinet member for Finance, Performance and Risk, introduced the report which provided a summary of progress against Wiltshire Council's Business Plan for the third quarter of 2012/13.

It was noted that the plan was currently in its second year out of four, and that though external factors such as recent severe weather and the economic downturn might impact on achievement of targets in any one year, the overall four year targets were still expected to be achievable.

At the end of the third quarter, 20 of the remaining 31 indicators were on target, another five were within 5 per cent, and three have no targets set. Only three indicators were not on target, with none being a priority target.

In relation to targets not yet met, it was stated that the last transfer of staff to the Cloud service be completed shortly, and that the Wiltshire Online programme to deliver superfast broadband had been delayed at the time of the report to sign the contract, which had now been achieved, and that further information would follow to the Area Boards when available.

It was also highlighted that the results not on target in relation to Children in Care GCSE results and Care Leavers in suitable education, employment or training, were higher than both the national average and statistical neighbours.

After discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That the progress against the Business Plan be noted.

9 **Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2013/14**

Councillor Jane Scott, Leader of the Council, presented a report which provided an assessment of Cabinet's draft proposals to Council to set a budget for 2013/14, and the impact on Council Tax, rents, fees and charges, the capital programme, schools, as well as reserves.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny had met on 7 February 2013 to consider the updated plan, with a report on its conclusions tabled at the meeting and attached to these minutes along with the minutes of the Budget Task Group from 25 January 2013, Group Leaders meeting with Trade Union Representatives, and the Group Leaders Meeting with Non-Domestic Rate-Payers, both held on 6 February 2013.

The Leader detailed the proposals as detailed in the report, highlighting the 1% pay increase for staff and fourth consecutive council tax freeze which had been budgeted. £27.656 million in savings had been identified, alongside £17.804 million increase in investment in frontline services such as safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, and waste services. The largest areas of savings had been achieved through improved procurement procedures, for example saving £1.2 million with regards the Highways Contract.

The Leader also announced that the Council had been awarded an additional £362,000 Rural Grant from central government, and thanked the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for taking into account the county's position.

Taking into account the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 7 February, which had been well attended by non-executive Members, the Leader moved an amendment that £162,000 of the new grant allocation would be distributed between the Area Boards to be focused on children and young people, with the remaining £200,000 to be allocated to the base budget for School Improvement.

Following discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet, following consideration of comments and recommendations arising from the Director of Finance and Corporate Directors' statements, Scrutiny and public consultations, makes the following recommendations to Council on 26th February 2012:

- a. **To endorse the update of the 2012-15 Financial Plan for 2013/14.**
- b. **To allocate the new Rural Grant allocated to Wiltshire on 5th February of £0.362 million between the base budgets for Area**

Boards (£0.162 million) and School Improvement (£0.200 million) as set out at paragraph 6.7.

- c. To recommend to Council, for approval, that the savings and investment proposals summarised at Sections 9 and 7 respectively of this report and Sections 4 and 5 of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report, provides a net revenue budget for 2013/14 of £340.518 million.**
- d. To recommend to Council to:**
 - i. Freeze Wiltshire Council's element of the Band D council tax for 2013/14 £1,222.43, as calculated in accordance with statute, as set out in Section 10 of this report.**
 - ii. Set the Council's total net expenditure budget for 2013/14 at £340.518 million.**
 - iii. Approve the award of grants to Parish and Town Councils as set out under Sections 10.9 and 10.10 of this report so no such precepting body is impacted by the local Council Tax support scheme introduced for 2013/14;**
 - iv. Set a 3.4% increase for dwelling rents in accordance with rent restructuring;**
 - v. Set the HRA Budget for 2013/14 (original) as set out at Appendix F of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report;**
 - vi. That all other rent or service charges related to the HRA be frozen at 2011/12 levels.**
 - vii. The Capital programme proposed at Appendix E of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan, attached to this report at Appendix 1.**
 - viii. Set the changes in fees and charges set out in detail at Section 6 of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report.**

Reasons for Proposal

The Cabinet, following Scrutiny and consultation, agrees recommendations to Council to enable it to:

- Set its revenue, capital, housing revenue accounts, fees and charges, levels of reserves and resultant Council Tax for 2013/14 to then issue Council Tax and rent bills.
- Provide the Council with a strong business and financial plan for sustainable delivery for the remaining 2 years of those plans.

10 Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14

Councillor John Brady, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Risk, presented a report which presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2013-14 including:

- a) The Prudential and Treasury Indicators (Prls and Trls) for the next three years;
- b) Other debt management decisions required for 2013-14 that do not feature within the Prls or Trls; and
- c) The Annual Investment Strategy for 2013-14.

Resolved:

To recommend that the Council:

- a) **adopt the Prudential and Treasury Indicators (Appendix A) and approve the change in Prudential Indicator 4, which now compares Gross (previously Net, of investments) Debt with the Capital Financing Requirement in accordance with an amendment issued by CIPFA in November 2012;**
- b) **adopt the Annual Investment Strategy (Appendix B);**
- c) **delegate to the Service Director, Finance the authority to vary the amount of borrowing and other long term liabilities within both the Treasury Indicators for the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary;**
- d) **authorise the Service Director, Finance to agree the restructuring of existing long-term loans where savings are achievable or to enhance the long term portfolio;**
- e) **agree that short term cash surpluses and deficits continue to be managed through temporary loans and deposits; and**
- f) **agree that any long term surplus cash balances not required to cover borrowing are placed in authorised money-market funds, particularly where this is more cost effective than short term deposits and delegate to the Service Director, Finance the authority to select such funds.**

Reasons For Proposals

To enable the Council to agree a Treasury Management Strategy for 2013-14 and set Prudential Indicators that comply with statutory guidance and reflect best practice.

11 Revenue Budget Monitoring

Councillor John Brady, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Risk, presented a report which advised the Cabinet of the revenue budget monitoring position as at the end of Period 9 (end of December 2012) for the financial year 2012/2013 and highlights new cost pressures or changes since the previous budget monitoring report on 18 December 2012.

Councillor Brady noted the revised decreases in cost pressures that totalled £0.761 million after transferring £1.700 million from reserves to support the pressure on safeguarding children as agreed in the period 7 budget monitoring report. This would give a revised potential year end cost pressure of £1.228 million. Councillor Brady stated action to return this to balance was being taken and this should be the position at the conclusion of the financial year.

The Cabinet thanked all those who had worked to provide a balanced budget for the Council.

Resolved:

To note the outcome of the Period 9(December 2012) budget monitoring.

Reason for Proposal

To inform effective decision making and ensure a sound financial control environment.

12 **Wiltshire Community Infrastructure Levy - Update**

Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning, presented a report which updated the Cabinet on the preparation of the Wiltshire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule and to ensure timely progress is made on preparing a CIL Charging Schedule that will enable the Council to charge CIL on new development to help pay for infrastructure within the county.

It was explained that new government guidance had been issued in December 2012, which required an adjustment of the previously agreed timetable.

It was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- (i) Notes the new statutory Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) guidance and implications in terms of the extra evidence and policy requirements, which must be completed before the Council can progress to the next stage of the process - consultation on a Draft Charging Schedule.**
- (ii) Notes the response to the consultation on the Preliminary Draft CIL Charging Schedule consultation.**
- (iii) Approves the revised timetable for the preparation of the CIL Charging Schedule.**

Reason for Proposals

To update Cabinet on progress in preparing Wiltshire's CIL and the implications of new statutory Government guidance on the process and timescale for its preparation; and ensure timely progress is made on preparing a CIL Charging Schedule that will enable the Council to charge CIL on new development to help pay for infrastructure within the county.

13 **Salisbury Central Car Park & Maltings**

Public Participation

Mr Eric Hart gave a statement in opposition to the proposals.

Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning, presented a report which set out the process taken in accordance with European Procurement Regulations, and following approval by Cabinet in December 2010 and February 2012, leading to the appointment of Stanhope plc as the Council's 'Preferred Bidder' for the regeneration of the Central Car Park and Maltings site, and which stated that commercial negotiations have progressed to a stage where the Council is in a position to enter into a Development Agreement for the regeneration of the site.

It was recommended that the meeting move into Part II to receive a detailed report on the outcome of the evaluation, to protect commercially sensitive information.

14 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

15 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Further notice was given in accordance with paragraph 5 (4) and 5 (5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of the intention to take the following item in private.

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Number 16 (minute 16 below) because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

No representations had been received on the question of taking the item in private.

16 **Salisbury Central Car Park & Maltings**

Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning presented a confidential report on entering into a Development Agreement with its preferred bidder for the regeneration of the Central Car Park and Maltings site, Salisbury, for consideration.

The issues and impacts in relation to the agreed commercial terms were considered. Including consideration of the impact on parking revenues as development is delivered and the level of future National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) generation arising from the scheme. The overall financial implications were summarised in net present value terms and detailed in the report.

Resolved:

- I. **That the Council enters into the Development Agreement with a Stanhope special purpose company with Stanhope plc as guarantor for the delivery of the Salisbury Central Car park & Maltings mixed use retail led development on the principal terms and conditions set out in appendix 2 of the report with such minor changes as may be approved by the Service Director (Economy and Regeneration).**
- II. **That the land now in the ownership of the Council within the area shown edged in red on the phasing plan displayed at the meeting (except for any public open space) be appropriated for planning purposes under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 immediately before the commencement of development it then no longer being required for the purpose for which it is currently held.**

Reason for Proposal

- i) The signing of the Development Agreement will commit Stanhope to investing further resources to deliver the development thereby enhancing the viability and vitality of the city as envisaged by the Core Strategy and Salisbury Vision.
- ii) The Appropriation for Planning purposes will require landowners with legal rights over the site to be compensated for interference with those rights whilst ensuring that such rights, if any, do not preclude the project from proceeding.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.10 pm)

These decisions were published on the 18 th February 2013 and will come into force on 25 th February 2013

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718504 or e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

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Budget Task Group

25 January 2013

1. Membership & Apologies

- a. Cllr Pip Ridout (Chair)
Cllr Mike Hewitt
Cllr Nigel Carter
Cllr John Brady
An apology for absence was received from Cllr Trevor Carbin and Cllr Mark Packard
- b.
- c. Also present:
Michael Hudson, Director of Finance
Teresa Goddard, Scrutiny Officer
Fiona Fitzpatrick, Interim Service Director Safeguarding

2. Budget Monitoring Report Period 9

Discussed period 9 of the Budget Monitoring Report, figures were made available at the meeting as released after the agenda had been dispatched.

The report showed there were additional cost pressures in Looked After Children but had been dealt with following December's Cabinet decision to transfer £1.7m from the reserves. Although there has been further cost pressure from Safeguarding Children which has arisen since the report, this reflects the national increase of children in care and the effect on Wiltshire. It also reflects the extra input into the service following the Ofsted inspection in March of last year. However, overall the Director of Finance was still confident of a balanced budget due to other actions to reduce spending.

3. Investment proposals for 2013/14

The Director of Finance presented the changes in funding for 2013/14 and the implications of the change in government funding formula. The overall cash affect of this is £9.8 million reduction, that is 3%.

He set out that there are three main areas of growth. Investing in communities, protecting vulnerable people, funding inflation and cost pressures.

- Inflation

There is a difference between cash reduction and real reduction. Real reduction includes demand and inflation. The level of inflation is less than forecast due to greater challenge and lower inflation. The assumptions for inflation have been set out at Appendix 3 and were discussed. The Director of Finance noted some pressures were due to changes in government policy, we now have to fund redundancy costs for teachers through academies in special measures. The health watch policy is an additional cost, and pension changes change in that also. Pay inflation is negotiated nationally, but Wiltshire is providing for 1% on the assumption this will be the agreed uplift at conclusion of those discussions.

- Communities

The Director of Finance set out this relates to two areas – car park income, largely due to the success of the reduction in the price of annual/season tickets and of the ‘free days’ for Town Councils to allocate. In addition, additional investment was put into Waste for the contract and MBT site. This was in line with the plan

- Vulnerable people

The Director of Finance set out the growth factors in adults referring to the report and details of population projections. Discussions followed on this and were agreed by the Group.

The Interim Service Director, Safeguarding joined the meeting and the Director of Finance and her set out the reasons for the proposed additional growth in safeguarding and looked after children’s budget. The Director of Finance set out the impact of sensitivity analysis and the uncertainties of accurate predictions given the nature of care and age of those being cared for. He set out how this was thus provided for in reserves so that the Council could meet its corporate parenting role without finance being the barrier to care, whilst also requiring rigour in assessments and focus on longer term prevention. The Interim Service Director, Safeguarding set out how she had introduced ‘gateway panels’ to assess care / placements to help with this process. The Group asked questions around the knowledge of the team and ability to predict, what was being done to change the position in the future and how we compared to other authorities when we benchmarked. Replies were given and the Group agreed that the growth and provision in reserves was prudent and good practice and supported this.

4. Reserves

There is a huge amount of volatility in new funding methods. Funding assumptions are based on untested assumptions, and risks include the closure of the two largest NNDR payers.

The suggestion is to create a level of reserves and earmark for specific purposes. It is a very full and frank assessment of reserves.

The reserves amount has been decreasing over the past few years and members were keen to ensure the Council has sufficient reserves. The Director of Finance agreed and noted there are no statutory guidelines or levels it was for his posts determination. He set out that his approach was to do this on an assessment of risk which is appended to the report and members reviewed that and agreed with the assessment The Group did welcome the fact that no money was being taken out of reserves to prop up the general fund and that the future plans saw more going back into reserves.

5. Recommendations

Task Group agrees the pressures have to be considered and we take them as they are with the shortfall.

The methodology used throughout this report by the Section 151 officer is endorsed by the Task Group.

To aim to bring the reserves back up in the medium term financial plan.

6. Next Meeting Date

7 February 2013 Extraordinary Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the Annual Budget Review.

**Notes produced by:
Teresa Goddard (Scrutiny Officer)**

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MINUTES

Meeting: Group Leaders Meeting with Trade Union Representatives
Place: Council Chamber, Monkton Park, Chippenham, SN15 1ER
Date: Wednesday 6 February 2013
Time: 2.30 - 3.35 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these Minutes to Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN. Direct line 01225 718504 or email kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

In attendance:

Councillor Jane Scott, Leader of the Council, Conservative Group Leader
Councillor Jon Hubbard, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Nigel Carter, Devizes Guardians Group Leader
Councillor Ricky Rogers, Labour Group Leader
Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing
Mike Osment, UNISON
John Hawkins, ATL
Mike Harrison, NUT
Alan Tomala, UNITE
Jenny Fivash, UNISON
Carlton Brand, Corporate Director, Wiltshire Council
Michael Hudson, Service Director (Finance), Wiltshire Council
Barry Pirie, Service Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development), Wiltshire Council
Joanne Pitt, Service Head - Human Resources Strategy and Policy, Wiltshire Council
Paul Loach, Head of Service - Human Resources Operations
Lorraine Nowlan, Human Resources - Operations Manager, Wiltshire Council
Pam Denton, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council

Apologies:

Sue Anderson, UNISON
Tina Green, UNISON
Sue Dawson, ATL
Jenny Marshall, UNITE
David Brown, NAHT
Siobainn Chaplin, CYWU
Ian Phillips, NASUWT
David Nicholson, ASCL
Marion Gatrell, VOICE
Richard Harris, CYWU

MINUTES

1. **Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2013/14**

Michael Hudson, Service Director (Finance) presented the Wiltshire Council Financial Plan Update 2013/14.

The Council's budget was £9.852 million down from the previous year when taking into account the 2012/13 government grant and council tax, compared to 2013/14.

The Council was committed to continuing the freeze in Council Tax for the forthcoming year. The budget also included 1% put aside to cover pay inflation increase.

The Council was continuing to invest in key frontline services such as safeguarding vulnerable children/adults and waste, with a total increased investment of £17.804 million.

Procurement had been an area of large savings, such as with £1.2 million saved with regards the Highways Contract, and a saving of £400,000 from the extension of leisure contracts. In total, savings of £27.656 million had been identified for 2013/14. The largest tranche of savings had been achieved through service efficiencies.

The Service Director (Finance) stated the budget for 2012/13 was anticipated to be balanced.

The Leader of the Council welcomed questions from the Trade Union representatives present. There would also be the opportunity to submit questions and comments following the meeting.

The level of central government funding reduction for Wiltshire was raised, and details were given of changes to government formulas, reallocation to academies, and Wiltshire historically receiving back less of its collected Business Support Rate than more deprived areas nationally. Additional funds resulting from the transition of Public Health into the Local Authority were noted, as well as the level of grant from the Educational Support Fund not being released until 31 March 2013.

In response to queries on the level of lobbying to central government undertaken by the Council, The Leader of the Council provided details on officer, partner and cross-party elected member efforts to lobby for the best deal on funding for Wiltshire. The Service Director (Finance) offered to discuss with Trade Unions other ways that they could carry out joint lobbying in future.

The Service Director (Finance) offered to circulate to attendees a link to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) website which demonstrated how Wiltshire's allocation of Business Support Grant funding was

calculated, and offered to engage with the Trade Unions to co-ordinate lobbying efforts for Wiltshire.

It was also noted that there were also further opportunities to make representations when the Budget would be discussed at the following meetings:

- Overview and Scrutiny – 7 February 2013
- Cabinet – 12 February 2013
- Council – 26 February 2013

2. **HR Update**

Barry Pirie, Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development, had circulated the HR update prior to the meeting.

It was stated engagement with staff was high, with staff surveys in 2011 and 2012, hub visits by senior management, staff forums and other measures in response to requests for greater consultation and engagement, and a strong emphasis on the ideal culture of the council, through the development of the behaviours framework, was being fostered.

Details of redundancies for the council and schools were provided.

The Council has always worked hard in partnership with Trade Union colleagues and professional bodies to limit any impacts on staff at all times. Despite the difficult times, there had been an increase in positive responses, leadership and communication as reported through the staff surveys.

3. **AOB**

Carlton Brand, Corporate Director, offered to liaise with the Union representatives and attend branch meetings to engage and offer updates.

ACTIONS:

1. **The Service Director (Finance) to discuss options for future lobbying of Government on funding settlements with local Trade Unions.**
2. **The Service Director (Finance) to circulate a link to the DCLG funding settlement website.**

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MINUTES

Meeting: Group Leaders Meeting with Non-Domestic Ratepayers
Place: Council Chamber, Monkton Park, Chippenham, SN15 1ER
Date: Wednesday 6 February 2013
Time: 4.00 - 4.30 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these Minutes to Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN. Direct line 01225 718504 or email kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

In attendance:

Councillor Jane Scott, Leader of the Council, Conservative Group Leader
Councillor Jon Hubbard, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Nigel Carter, Devizes Guardians Group Leader
Councillor Ricky Rogers, Labour Group Leader
Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing
Carlton Brand, Corporate Director, Wiltshire Council
Michael Hudson, Service Director (Finance), Wiltshire Council
Pam Denton, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council
Ken Teal, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

MINUTES

1. **Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2013/14**

Michael Hudson, Service Director (Finance) presented the Wiltshire Council Financial Plan Update 2013/14.

The Council's budget was £9.852 million down from the previous year when taking into account the 2012/13 government grant and council tax, compared to 2013/14.

The Council was committed to continuing the freeze in Council Tax for the forthcoming year. The budget also included 1% put aside to cover pay inflation increase.

The Council was continuing to invest in key frontline services such as safeguarding vulnerable children/adults and waste, with a total increased investment of £17.804 million.

Procurement had been an area of large savings, such as with £1.2 million saved with regards the Highways Contract, and a saving of £400,000 from the extension of leisure contracts. In total, savings of £27.656 million had been identified for 2013/14. The largest tranche of savings had been achieved through service efficiencies.

The Service Director (Finance) stated the budget for 2012/13 was anticipated to be balanced.

Details were provided of the central government formula for calculating the grant to Wiltshire from collected business rates, and the current multiplier for business rates was stated to be 46.2p for those with a rateable value under £18,000 and 47.1p for those with a rateable value over £18,000.

The Leader of the Council welcomed questions from the Non-Domestic ratepayer present. There would also be the opportunity to submit questions and comments following the meeting.

The Leader and Deputy Leader provided details of Council investment in superfast broadband to cover 91% of Wiltshire by 2016 and would be capable of handling all streaming requirements of businesses for the region.

It was also noted that there were also further opportunities to make representations when the Budget would be discussed at the following meetings:

- Overview and Scrutiny – 7 February 2013
- Cabinet – 12 February 2013
- Council – 26 February 2013

**Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Report on the Draft 2013-14 Budget**

Purpose of report

1. To feed back to Cabinet and Full Council a summary of the main issues discussed at the special meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee held on 7 February 2013.

Background

2. This special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee provided an opportunity for non-executive councillors to question the Leader and Cabinet on the draft 2013/14 budget before it is considered at Cabinet on 12 February 2013 and Full Council on 26 February 2013.
3. The Director of Finance gave a presentation covering the key components and influences on setting this year's budget. He explained that the Budget Task Group has previously been through the technical aspects and the minutes of that meeting have been circulated. Messages in his presentation included:
 - Council tax has been frozen again for a 4th year and there is a commitment there for the same in 2014/15 even with a continued reduction in funding from central government.
 - Balancing the budget is dependent on procurement savings, some of which have already been achieved.
 - Central government funding has been adjusted and has had a negative impact in Wiltshire, despite lobbying undertaken by Group Leaders.
 - Better analysis of the movement in the budget for Safeguarding children has resulted in an investment to meet anticipated demand, part of which will be managed through earmarked reserves.
4. Carolyn Godfrey spoke on behalf of the Corporate Leadership Team describing how the 2013/14 budget was formulated and the challenges faced in achieving a balanced budget, but also the positive things that will be delivered.
5. The Leader of the Council gave her thanks to Michael Hudson and his team, and reiterated the information around procurement and commissioning, which

has meant that less severe measures have had to be applied than was first anticipated in the business plan. Listening to communities and the Transformation Programme were delivering significant benefits.

6. Councillor John Brady spoke on the format and production of the reports, and in particular:
 - That it has been redesigned to be much more 'user-friendly'.
 - Thanks were given to Overview and Scrutiny and in particular the Budget Task Group for their challenge throughout the year.
 - A new, more scientific way of looking at the budget has been developed by Michael Hudson and his team, including the management of reserves to minimise the need for mid-year virements.

Main issues raised during questioning and debate

7. The rural grant lobby had been announced on the evening of 5th February 2013. Wiltshire has secured an additional grant with the 4th highest award available due to lobbying and our rural position.
8. Welfare reform is reflected in the base of all budgets including children's services. There are joint projects in place with the voluntary sector and other agencies, and most Wiltshire families that could be effected by these changes have been identified by the Council. Investment in economic development and the job market are key to encouraging people to be less dependent on welfare.
9. A key public priority is highways maintenance, which is seeing an increase in capital spending from £18.7 million to £21.4 million in order to maintain and keep the infrastructure together.
10. It was confirmed that the Budget Monitoring Report to Cabinet will see extra spend in 2012/13 due to pressures faced and this £300,000 is grant for flooding and is additional money.
11. Amendments were made to the savings figures for libraries, heritage and arts on page 10 of the appendices to the report:
 - Staff restructures and savings (Libraries): £135,000
 - Stop performing arts service (Libraries): £9,000
 - Reduce stock fund: £185,000

It was explained that performing arts are being moved to the arts service, resulting in a reduction in funding. The University College London is responsible for the future funding of Victoria County History. Resources remain to complete the Warminster volume. Discussions are being held on potential models of funding for the future.
12. Appendix G on Development Services welcomes improved provision and enforcement of Section 106 agreements. An acknowledgement was made of

the work done to improve this to the benefit of the authority and local communities.

13. It was highlighted that the savings information provided for many of the services in the budget book (appendix C) does not reflect how and where the savings will be achieved. Rather, there are generalised references to reviews or restructuring. Cabinet Members confirmed these would not impact on frontline services.
14. Some reductions in funding within the savings in the budget book (appendix C) will result from improved partnership working and there was a request for this to be more transparent in future reporting.
15. It was confirmed that the proposed budget does not require a reduction in the number of open access youth centres, and again the focus needs to be on effective partnership working.
16. Some of the Disabled Facilities Grant has been transferred to the housing associations by central government.
17. Details of the £4.5 million procurement savings are to be made available to members, showing what has been delivered and any potential areas of risk.
18. The car parking investment stated in the 'washing line' diagram was clarified as a reduction in income due to policy decisions around free day allocations, rather than a direct investment into development of car parking services.
19. It was requested that future reporting avoids excessive abbreviations.

Conclusion

20. Cabinet and Full Council are asked to take this summary of the issues raised at the special scrutiny meeting into account when finalising the budget and council tax for 2013/14.

Cllr Trevor Carbin
Chairman –Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Report Author: Teresa Goddard, Scrutiny Officer, 01225 713548.

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Maltings and Central Car Park Development - Personal Statement

Wiltshire Council, hence this Cabinet, claims that there has been public consultation on the Maltings and Central Car Park development.

“One thousand people visited and approximately 300 completed a feedback form”.

That is a direct quote from Stanhope’s letter sent to me, personally, at Salisbury Vision’s request. One of *this* Cabinet’s members is quoted in the local press as saying “This would be a significant move forward in the regeneration of this site.”

Out of Salisbury’s 2011 census population of nearly 460,000, one thousand attendees is a tiny proportion. There is no evidence whatsoever that any of those attendees thought the proposals worthwhile or appropriate for Salisbury, now or in the future.

That a Cabinet member has already applauded such misrepresentation, in the public media, clearly indicates an established bias in direct favour of agreeing to this development whatever the public view may be.

The only part of the Stanhope exhibition that was of any consequence consisted of two slim panels. One carried a list of aspirational bullet points, The other, two rather vague plan drawings. There was no technical detail and no documentation to take away for consideration. Salisbury Vision and Wiltshire Council were not represented.

This clearly questions the council’s obligation to fulfill the protocols for full and proper public consultation for this very substantial development using publicly owned land. It also brings into question the commercial intent of those who have engaged in the process. Particularly as a number of those involved have well established commercial interest in Salisbury and have been invited to sit on the unelected advisory body, Salisbury Vision.

The vast majority of the arrangements made by Wiltshire Council with the advice of Salisbury Vision, in respect of this development, have been made behind closed doors. This would seem to indicate a predetermined intention to sign up to Stanhope being the approved developer and for that company’s proposal to be accepted. There is clear evidence that previous interest has been shown in the commercial development of this site by at least one member of the Salisbury Vision board.

However, there is no evidence at all that Salisbury’s taxpayers agree with any part of this proposal and this clearly suggests that Wiltshire Council and Salisbury Vision are intent upon foisting this development upon Salisbury no matter what. This can only be interpreted as the public bodies involved being openly dismissive of the public consultation process. This view is supported by clear documentary evidence of such dismissiveness in relation to other important projects currently in hand in the Salisbury environment.

There is no indication whatsoever that any other proposal for this site has been given due consideration and no suggestions for ideas or possible expectations have been sought from anyone. As far as can be determined local appointed representatives for

Salisbury, who have been engaged in the whole arrangement process, have done so as amateurs. That, in itself, is inadequate.

It is vitally important that Salisbury taxpayers are given every opportunity to engage with and decide upon what they would wish their city to become, now and in the future. 'Your Wiltshire Magazine', published by Wiltshire Council claims that it wants exactly that. Wiltshire Council should stand by its word and that can only happen if there is complete transparency in the process with full technical and visual detail being properly presented in the public domain. To date that is not the case.

It is extremely difficult to see how a proposal such as this can be further promulgated at this time without compromising the integrity of Wiltshire Council and this Cabinet.

Eric G Hart