

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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### MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

#### **Present:**

Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Howard Greenman, Cllr Alan Hill (Vice Chairman), Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Simon Killane (Chairman), Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Stephen Oldrieve, Cllr Tony Trotman and Cllr Bridget Wayman

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Dick Tonge, Cllr Stuart Wheeler and Cllr Philip Whitehead

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#### 12 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Glenis Ansell, Stuart Dobson and John Walsh.

#### 13 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

#### 14 **Chairman's Announcements**

It was stated that the meeting would be live broadcast and recorded.

#### 15 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

#### 16 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 14 February 2017 at 1100 at Monkton Park, Chippenham.

#### 17 **Procedure of Meeting**

The procedure for the meeting was noted.

## 18 **Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2017/18**

The draft Wiltshire Council Financial Plan Update for 2017/18 was presented by Councillor Richard Tonge, Cabinet Member for Finance, and Michael Hudson, Associate Director of Finance, ahead of its submission to Cabinet on 7 February and Full Council on 21 February 2016.

It was noted that Council on 18 October 2016 had approved a Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Statement 2017-2020, an agreement with central government to secure details of four years of funding settlements, with the council committing to specific efficiency targets. The Committee had considered details of that plan on 10 October 2016, which included assumptions of 1.99% annual rise in Council Tax and 2% Social Care Levy. The proposals for 2017/18 were considered within the framework previously agreed, though since the agreement it had been stated councils could bring forward an additional 1% increase in the Social Care Levy, which it was proposed be accepted.

Details of the income and proposed expenditure were provided. It was confirmed under the proposals the council would set a balanced budget. A report from the Financial Planning Task Group was also received and considered.

The Committee, along with other members in attendance including all members of the Executive, discussed the proposed budget, and clarification was sought on many issues from the attending Cabinet Members and Corporate Leadership Team, with details contained in the report as appended to these minutes. Particular focus was given to service budget proposals, how proposed savings would be achieved, impacts upon staffing levels, community grants and adult social care along with other topics as detailed in the appended report.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

### **Resolved:**

- a) To thank the Financial Planning Task Group for its report and for its work throughout the year monitoring and scrutinising the finances of the council; and,**
- b) To note that the process for scrutiny of the budget had been robust and added value.**

## 19 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.45 pm)

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Wiltshire Council

APPENDIX to the Minutes of 1 February 2017

Cabinet 7 February 2016

Council 21 February 2016

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## **Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Report on the Draft 2017/18 Financial Plan**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To report to Cabinet and Full Council a summary of the main issues discussed at the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 1 February 2016.

### **Background**

2. The special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee provided an opportunity for non-executive councillors to question the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Associate Director for Finance on the draft 2017/18 Financial Plan before it is considered at Cabinet on 7 February 2017 and Full Council on 21 February 2017.
3. The Cabinet Member for Finance, supported by the Associate Director of Finance, was in attendance along with the Leader of the Council and all members of the Executive and the Corporate Leadership Team to provide clarification and answers to issues and queries raised by the Committee.
4. In addition to the draft Financial Plan available on the website a briefing from the Cabinet Member for Finance open to all members was held on 24 January 2017.
5. Details had included:
  - Council Tax to be increased by 1.99%, plus a 3% Social Care Levy, a 1% increase from the Medium Term Financial Plan approved by Council on 18 October 2016.
  - The continuing reductions in grant funding from central government, being a further 17.6% reduction for the next financial year.
  - Increases in investment to protect vulnerable children and adults, and investing in the environment and roads.
  - Details of service changes required to achieve the £13.331m savings proposed.

### **Main issues raised during questioning and debate**

6. The Chairman invited the Chairmen of the Select Committees to lead off discussion, with a focus on budget proposals and their implications for services relating to those committees, before opening to general queries.

### Financial Planning Task Group

7. The report of the Task Group on the proposals was received and noted, in addition to thanks to its members for their work monitoring and scrutinising the council's finances throughout the year.
8. The report would be forwarded for attention at Cabinet and Full Council along with the report of the Management Committee itself.

### Environment Select Committee

9. In relation to the council's key actions within its business plan details were sought on highways investment, and in response it was confirmed that while Wiltshire was due to receive £2.946m of the National Productivity Investment Capital Fund aimed to reduce congestion at key locations and improve maintenance of local highway assets, the conditions around using the grant had not yet been clarified.
10. Details were sought on proposed efficiencies in services including Leisure, Parking provision and Planning consultation in respect of town and parish councils.
11. The £1.003m savings required under Waste services was discussed, with a suggestion the Environment Select Committee might need to consider further scrutiny to monitor the changes proposed.
12. In response to queries on reviewing the model for community support it was stated the review would include the management structure for area boards, and details were sought on the proposed £0.400m savings through a review of Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) partnership arrangements and whether there would be reductions to payments to all partners. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a list of VCSE groups along with details of current arrangements and proposed reductions for each.
13. Other topics discussed included the reduction in the subsidy for councillor ICT provision, details of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and that no funds being allocated for carbon reduction.

### Children's Select Committee

14. The Committee discussed the increasing pressures regarding children with special educational needs and adults with learning disabilities, in part from new statutory requirements for the 18-25 age group. £1.000m of the increased pressures related to children transitioning into Adult Care. It was reported that when a young person transferred from children's to adults' services their funding moved with them and there was consequently a need to ensure the Children's services budget was not disadvantaged.
15. It was noted that a lot of work had been undertaken on the council's School Improvement Strategy, and that £0.500m was being invested to support this Strategy.

16. Details were sought on budgets for Safeguarding and Early Help services with the intention to record internal meetings electronically rather than recruit dedicated minute-taking staff to save £0.100m.
17. In response to queries it was stated details would be provided to members on the number of local authority schools which would be running deficit budgets for the next financial year.
18. It was confirmed that the £0.050m total reduction in area board youth funding would apply to all area boards, not only those which had not utilised their full previous allocation of youth funding.
19. It was also stated by the chair of Children's Select Committee that figures showing young people's engagement with area board-funded youth activities could not be directly compared with previous years as the methodology for calculating these had changed.

#### Health Select Committee

20. The increasing pressures on Adult Social Care was discussed, with the 6% increase in investment noted. Details were sought of the £1.510m of savings that would still be required, with a focus on preventative work to reduce demand and changes to working practices. It was noted that a significant amount of the growth in investment related to the effect of the National Living Wage on adult services contracts.
21. The £1.000m of savings identified from a review of the Learning Disabilities service for adults was highlighted and it was suggested that the Health Select Committee might monitor the review and any impact upon this group.
22. Further details were also sought on the review of services in Public Health and Public Protection, and the £0.175m of savings identified across that service identified.

#### General Enquiries and Observations

23. Other issues discussed included clarifying the number of staff posts that were likely to be removed under the Financial Plan, approximately 200. It was confirmed some had already been identified within service budgets while others remained to be identified, and it was hoped that removing vacant posts would minimise the need for redundancies.
24. Details were also sought on the number of apprenticeships at the council, approximately 30, and efforts to increase this, as well as assessment of the use of dedicated reserve funding and health and wellbeing centre funding allocations. It was confirmed that potential movements in the rate of inflation and the impact of central government's reform of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) presented a level of financial risk, as set out in the General Fund Reserve Risk Assessment.
25. At the conclusion of the debate it was resolved that the budget scrutiny process had been robust, in-depth and had added value to the draft budget proposals.

## **Proposal**

26. That Cabinet and Council take into account the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in considering the update to the Financial Plan 2017/18.

**Councillor Simon Killane**  
**Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

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6 February 2017