

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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### **MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2024 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman), Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Johnny Kidney, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Jo Trigg and Cllr Tom Rounds (Substitute)

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Nick Holder, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling.

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#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tony Pickernell.

The following substitutions had also taken place with Cllr Tom Rounds attending the meeting in place of Cllr Tony Pickernell and Cllr Gavin Grant attending the meeting in place of the late Cllr Bob Jones MBE.

It was noted that Cllr Gavin Grant and Cllr Chris Williams joined the meeting in a hybrid capacity via Teams.

#### **2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 were presented for consideration, and it was;

#### **Resolved:**

**To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023.**

#### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman marked the recent deaths of two Committee members, Cllr Tony Trotman and Cllr Bob Jones MBE. The Chairman paid tribute to the work of the two Councillors who were dedicated scrutiny members.

## 5 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted by members of the public.

## 6 **Wiltshire Council's Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2026/27**

The Chairman introduced a report and appendices within the Agenda Pack which presented the administration's Budget for 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27. The Chairman noted that on Page 27 of the Agenda Pack there was a short report setting out a suggested process for the Committee's consideration of the budget.

The Chairman also noted that the debate that would take place during the meeting was in the context of the following meetings:

- An open to all members budget briefing provided on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024;
- The special budget meeting of the Financial Planning Task Group on 19<sup>th</sup> January; and;
- Informal meetings of the other three select committees, where questions on the budget were submitted to their chairmen to be addressed to the Executive.

The draft Wiltshire Council Budget 2024/2025 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25-2026/27 was presented by Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Clewer and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Nick Botterill, supported by the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Resources Andy Brown; and Section 151 Officer, Lizzie Watkin. In addition, the Director of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer) and other members of the Corporate Leadership Team were present to provide clarification and answers to issues and queries raised by the Committee.

The published budget papers proposed the net general fund budget for 2024/2025 to be £485.772m. as well as a 2.99% general increase to Council Tax and a levy of 2% to be spent solely on Adult Social Care. In addition, the papers proposed that the Council Tax requirement for the council be set at £351.077m for 2024/25 with a Band D charge of £1,805.73, an increase of £1.65 per week.

Topics were raised included, but were not limited to, discussion on staff vacancies, the Council's de-carbonisation programme and climate adaptation, savings relating to adult care, integrated care, the impacts of inflation, SEND funding, the latent demand reserve, and risks to the financial position of the Council.

The Chairman noted that the key points of the debate that took place would form a report which would be taken to the Cabinet meeting set to take place on 6 February 2024 as well as the Full Council meeting scheduled for 20 February, along with the budget report of the Financial Planning Task Group. In addition, it was noted that an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny

Management Committee to scrutinise any opposition amendments to the budget before Full Council had been arranged for Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 1.30pm. The deadline for submitting budget amendments was 5.00pm on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:**

- 1. To note the Draft Wiltshire Council budget for 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2024-25 to 2026-27 and to refer the comments of the Committee and the report of the Financial Planning Task Group to Cabinet and Full Council for consideration on 6<sup>th</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> February respectively.**
- 2. To support ongoing scrutiny investigation of the budget, including the Financial Planning Task Group's continued focus on monitoring delivery of the budget and the development of the budget for 2025-26.**

*Chairman called the meeting to a break at 1pm and resumed at 1.05pm.*

7 **Management Committee Task Groups**

A report was received on the Task Groups and Panels established by the Management Committee.

**Financial Planning Task Group**

Chairman of the Task Group, Cllr Pip Ridout noted that the task group met on 8th December to consider the report to Cabinet proposing the Council Tax base, and on 19th January 2024 to consider the draft budget and MTFS. Cllr Ridout suggested that the questions raised by the Select Committee Chairmen be added to their Forward Work Plans for further monitoring and investigation, however if they did not have the time they could refer these areas back to the Task Group.

**Evolve Programme Task Group**

Chairman of the Task Group, Cllr Jon Hubbard noted that the Task Group had met on 15 December 2023 to review how the initial rollout of the programme had gone and to receive an update on the rollout of the payroll system. The initial rollout had gone reasonably well however there had been some challenges experienced. It was suggested that there could potentially be scope for a rapid scrutiny exercise relating to the procurement exercise included within the programme, which had proved to be inadequate. It was agreed that Cllr Richard Britton would contact Cllr Jon Hubbard regarding concerns from the

Wiltshire Pension Fund regarding the April implementation of payroll, which could then be discussed with Stuart Honeyball, Director of Transformation.

### **Stone Circle Task Group**

The Chairman noted that the task group had recently started work and was chaired by Cllr Ruth Hopkinson. Its purpose was to investigate appropriate arrangements for scrutiny engagement on the council's wholly owned companies. Its next meeting is scheduled for 9th February.

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson noted that the first meeting was to scope out the task ahead, with a lot of questions raised and a briefing from Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer), Perry Holmes. The Task Group has clear ideas of what they are doing and hope to have the questions raised answered at their next meeting.

### **Area Boards Task Group**

The Chairman noted that the task group concluded its initial review last year, but on 15th January was reconvened to revisit its recommendations and discuss how successfully it felt they had been implemented.

From the discussions, it was concluded that some of the recommendations needed further work and the task group asked Cllr Graham Wright as Chair to discuss these initially with relevant Cabinet Member(s), Portfolio Holder(s) and officers, before deciding the next steps.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

#### **Resolved:**

#### **The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:**

- 1. To note the update on the Task Group activity provided.**
- 2. To note the Financial Planning Task Group's forward work plan.**
- 3. To approve the proposed membership and terms of reference of the Stone Circle Governance Task Group.**
- 4. For the Chair and Vice-chair of OSMC and the Chair of the Evolve Task Group to explore the merits of a separate scrutiny exercise looking at the procurement process followed as part of the Evolve Programme.**

## **8 Forward Work Programme**

The Chairman noted that Director of Adult Social Care (DASS), Emma Legg was in attendance and would be able to answer questions relating to the Health Select Committee. The Director provided clarity on topics raised, including but not limited to, quality assurance and risk mitigation, breadth of reach,

commissioning being integrated within the Adult Social Care Directorate, changes in leadership structure, differences in allocating caseloads and coproduction. Other areas raised included the strategic direction of the department, the briefing of the team, strength of choice, the level of assurance provided from audits and how the Health Select Committee could engage further with inspections.

The Committee considered the forward work programmes for each select Committee, as well as updates from the Chairman for each Select Committee.

The Chairman noted that vice-chairman and himself had recently held work planning meetings with the Executive and directors on the Transformation, and ICT, Broadband & Digital portfolios. Further discussions regarding the timing of some scrutiny engagement on aspects of transformation (other than Evolve, which is already well covered) would take place and would be reported back to Committee.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:**

- 1. To note the updates on select committee activity and approve the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.**

9 **Date of Next Meeting**

The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as 12 February 2024 (opposition budget amendments) and 13 March 2024.

10 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.45 pm)

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