

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2011 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM.

Present:

Cllr Nigel Carter, Cllr Tony Deane (Vice Chairman), Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Charles Howard, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Jeff Osborn (Chairman), Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Judy Rooke and Cllr Jonathon Seed

Also Present:

Cllr John Brady, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr John Noeken, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Tony Trotman and Cllr John Thomson.

200. **Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies were received from Cllr Nick Fogg and Cllr Bill Roberts.

201. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record.

202. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

203. **Chairman's Announcement**

The Committee at its last meeting considered the difference between statutory and discretionary spend as covered within item 192 of the previous minutes. This would be discussed further under Item 6 of the agenda.

The Chairman took the opportunity following recent experiences to confirm to the Committee that his role was impartial, non-political and was representative of all back-bench members. However should members have a concern then he would be happy to reconsider his position. A number of members spoke in support of the impartial and professional way in which he performed his role.

204. **Public Participation and Councillors Questions**

There was no public participation.

205. **Budget Monitoring**

Prior to further consideration of the information provided within the agenda, the Chairman raised the issue of statutory and discretionary spend. The attending Corporate Director confirmed that the way in which the authority delivered the 400 plus services was at the authority's discretion and that an attempt to differentiate between statutory and discretionary could therefore be misleading and, as a result, unhelpful to members of the Committee. This was recognised by members.

The Chairman, in presenting the item to the Committee confirmed that the Committee's priority would hereafter focus on the budget base for the next financial year. With this in mind, the Chairman and Vice Chairman had held a useful meeting with the Cabinet member for Finance, Chief Finance Officer, Corporate Director for Resources and other officers to discuss progress in relation to the setting of budgets for 2012/13.

Information provided with the agenda for consideration included:

- i) The latest bi-monthly budget monitoring report as considered by Cabinet on 18 October;
- ii) A extract of the minute arising from the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee meeting held on 6 October 2011 in relation to the Budget Update item; and
- iii) The Capital Programme Monitoring Report to be considered by the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee on 15 November 2011.

With the assumption that members had considered the information provided the Chairman opened up discussion to the floor where the following points were made:

- i) **Bi-monthly monitoring report.**

Department of Transformation and Resources (DTR)

The 2010/11 outturn report proposed setting aside £0.5m for various projects relating to transformation. This was subsequently transferred to the general fund. Transformational work however had continued, which included Systems Thinking, SAP, Project Management and Cloud Computing services. The report proposed that this work therefore be funded from general fund reserves.

Chief Executives Office

The £0.5m overspend identified within Legal & Democratic services related to costs associated with the increased demand faced across the Council, including children's social care and development control. The removal of the internal legal fees recharge has also resulted in costs, previously shared across all departments, now falling within one service line.

A review of all vacancies and agency staff within the debt recovery area was being undertaken which was anticipated to result in a balanced budget by financial year end.

Members also asked some specific questions in relation to DNP and DCS which were answered at the meeting.

ii) HASC Minute Extract

Since the publication of the minute extract a further meeting of the Committee had been held where members were provided with a clearer understanding of the pressures faced by DCS. A panel exercise was also undertaken later that same day which also highlighted the issues faced by the Department.

iii) Capital Programme Monitoring Report

The Committee noted a slippage to the capital programme with approximately £49m to be reprogrammed into 2012/13.

Completion of the first half of the County Hall refurbishment scheme was expected to be completed in the summer of 2012. This would include the Customer Access Centre and Library. County Hall was expected to be fully re-opened by late autumn 2013.

The Chairman thanked both officers and Cabinet members for their attendance.

Resolved:

To note the information provided.

206. Business Plan Scorecard

A report providing a summary of progress against the Council's Business Plan was circulated with the Agenda together with a status breakdown for each of the Council's 13 main programmes.

The Corporate Director for Transformation and Resources, Service Director for Policy, Performance and Partnership and Cabinet members for Resources and Finance, Performance and Risk were in attendance to answer questions arising.

Upon discussion clarification was provided that the anticipated reduction in leisure service visits by the public had been considered in response to the current economic situation although this would continue to be reviewed.

The Council projected 1,800 new affordable homes by March 2015, which equated to an average of 450 per annum. It was recognised that much of this number would be met by external sources, such as housing associations. A conference was scheduled later this year to encourage further external participation.

In relation to the Information Services Programme clarification was provided that a briefing paper would be circulated to members by the end of December ahead of its planned release in January. Training on the system would be available to access on-line.

Although the scorecard for customer telephone call connection rates indicated that the Council was not on target for 2011/12 improvements had been made in the past two weeks and therefore this was likely to be achieved.

In raising concern over the red categorisation of AOWA (Adults of Working Age) and Phase 1a Minor Procurements as detailed within the Procurement Programme fishbone the Cabinet Member clarified that this was in part due to the service taking a people centred approach which had changed the specification of the procurement programme. Consultations would also delay the programme further and had therefore contributed to the red category given.

The Committee was reminded that the authority was seeking to secure approximately 10% procurement savings across the organisation this financial year. Approximately 5% had been achieved to date with other avenues being explored to secure additional savings. The Procurement and Commissioning Task Group were monitoring this area and the Procurement Board, lead by the Chief Finance Officer, were satisfied with the progress being made. The Task Group would be requested to include details of the Procurement Programme fishbone as part of its considerations at its next meeting.

The Workforce Report was also considered where it was noted that an increase in sickness rates had taken place. The seasonal increase was consistent with the previous year figures and was low in terms of industry standards.

The cost of replacing leavers of the organisation equated to £2m per annum. The recruitment process was being addressed which was expected to reduce this cost in the future. To further assist the Committee the Chairman requested that further details on the costs associated with consultancy and agency staff also be provided following the meeting.

The Committee welcomed the information provided and recognised that once further training had been undertaken on the Sharepoint system members would be able to drill down further within each Programme.

Resolved:

- 1) To thank Cabinet members and officers for the information provided;**
- 2) That the Committee would await Sharepoint training before deciding on whether further steps were required; and**
- 3) That the Procurement and Commissioning Task Group would be asked to include details of the Procurement Programme fishbone as part of its considerations at the next meeting.**

207. **Behavioural Framework**

A report providing an overview of the context and objectives of Wiltshire Council's Behaviours Framework ahead of its induction in 2013 was presented.

The Portfolio Holders for Organisational Culture and Customer Care, Service Director for HR and Operations were in attendance to present the report and answer questions arising.

Upon discussion clarification was provided that the framework had been established for officers initially but would be adapted to fit the needs of councillors in addition.

The Framework consisted of four key values as follows:

- To place customers first
- To strengthen communities
- To adopt a 'can-do' approach in everything we do
- To value our colleagues

There were six themes for help deliver the values as follows:

- Excellence
- Responsibility
- Working Together
- Leadership
- Simplicity
- Trust and Respect

The framework would be embedded throughout the organisation including within all aspects of recruitment, training and the appraisal system. The Member Support in the Locality Task Group would also scrutinise the Framework once adapted for Councillors.

Resolved:

To thank officers and Cabinet members for the information provided.

208. **S106 Task Group**

A final report from the S106 Task Group, established in March 2010, was presented following its last meeting held on 31 October 2011.

The Chairman of the Group, in attendance to present the report and ensuing recommendations, confirmed that the Group had been established to review the way in which S106 agreements were managed within the authority.

Congratulations were given to officers for the hard work undertaken to ensure details of S106 agreements were incorporated within the new database since the start of the review. Area Boards now also had the ability to monitor the delivery of S106's within their community areas.

Ensuing discussion included that two members of the Committee had served on a recent peer review of the Development Control service. It was understood that there had been a report arising from the review with several recommendations for improvement. With this in mind members proposed that the Environment Select Committee should be requested to create a Task Group to monitor the delivery of the arising Action Plan to emerge from the recommendations made, the membership of which it was proposed should include those members who had served on the S106 Task Group.

The future implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was also raised. However, it was noted that the Environment Select Committee Forward Work Programme already had CIL within its future scrutiny work.

The Chairman thanked the Task Group for the work undertaken.

Resolved:

- 1) To thank the Task Group for its work and endorse the concluding findings to emerge from the review;**
- 2) To congratulate the officers for the work done to date on the S106 database;**
- 3) To ask the Service Director for Development to nominate officers to attend a future Community Area Managers' meeting to outline the**

capabilities of the S106 database, to show an example of an Area Board report and ask them to discuss future requirements for information with their Board Chairmen;

- 4) To recommend to the Cabinet member and Service Director for Development to return to the Committee in May 2012 to provide an update on implementation of the recommendations; and**
- 5) To recommend that the Environment Select Committee considers creating a task group to monitor the delivery of the Action Plan to emerge from the recent peer review of the Development Control service.**

209. Library Services Review

The Committee, at its meeting held on 26 May 2011, received details of the communications/consultation plan undertaken in relation to the Library Services Review and resolved to receive a further update report six months later to ascertain whether the service aims were being successfully implemented.

The Cabinet member, Adult Care, Communities and Housing, Service Director Communities, Libraries, Heritage & Arts and Head of Libraries were in attendance to present the report and answer questions arising.

Upon discussion it was noted that the nine smallest libraries across the County now had a full complement of volunteers in place for the implementation date of 5 September. As over 600 volunteers had expressed an interest, the authority was now able to further extend opening hours in five other smaller libraries which had resulted in the authority reaching 28% budget savings whilst reducing opening hours by just over 6%.

In recognising the positive contribution of volunteers, the Committee however recognised that larger libraries were still required to employ full-time members of staff in order to retain existing opening hours.

The Committee praised the work undertaken by the officers to achieve the savings needed with minimum impact on services and whilst a new scanning system was implemented. In addition the department was also looking to implement an electronic book service further information of which would be publicised in due course.

Reassurance was provided that although the department was still required to make further savings in 2012/13, these had been programmed in to the budget and were being managed.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the work undertaken in response to the ambitions outlined in the Library Service Review approved by Cabinet in January 2011;**
- 2) To note the quick and excellent work response from our rural communities to support our library services;**
- 3) To continue to support work to deliver the vision for the service outlined in the Library Services Review; and**
- 4) To congratulate the officers for the speed of the review whilst retaining the service.**

210. Task Group Update

The Chairman introduced the update report on Task Group activity which was provided with the Agenda. The following information was highlighted:

ICT Task Group.

The next meeting to be held on 15 December would include consideration of Sharepoint as well as further information on the ICT team restructure.

Three areas of concern were identified by the Task Group at its last meeting for further fact finding meetings to take place on how these services used SAP. These were:

- Procurement
- HR
- Financial Management

The outcome of these meetings would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

Campus and Operational Delivery Programme (CAOD) Task Group

The business case for the three pilot campuses was now to be presented to Cabinet in December. The Task Group would meet on 28 November to consider the cases prior to their submission.

Procurement & Commissioning Task Group

The Committee were reminded that the focus of the Group was to monitor the delivery of the 4 year Business Plan £36m million savings, £7.4m of which had been targeted for this financial year. Reassurance was given at the previous

meeting that the savings would be realised and that work continued to identify opportunities to contribute to the £36m required.

Partnerships

The Committee noted that the 'Family of Partnerships' was undergoing a period of transition whilst the authority determined its priorities.

Recognising that partnership working had not been identified as a Business Plan priority and the current review of Scrutiny arrangements, the Task Group provided recommendations for the disbandment of the Group with any future partnership issues incorporated within the Committee's work programme.

The Committee agreed to this approach.

Resolved:

- 1) To recognise the current period of transition taking place within the partnership landscape and, in response, to stand down its Partnerships Scrutiny Task Group;**
- 2) That the future relationship with Partnerships would be incorporated into the current review of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements; and**
- 3) That the Committee would absorb into its work plan any key Partnership issues that emerge in advance of the completion of the Overview and Scrutiny review.**

Member Support in the Locality Task Group

The Committee noted that the Group would consider the proposed new format and table of content for the new Councillor's Handbook at its next meeting.

211. **Area Board Performance Indicators**

The Committee at its meeting held on 24 March 2011 considered an update on the implementation of recommendations arising from a review of Area Boards and requested that further detail on the Council's benchmarking of Area Boards, including performance measures, be presented at a future meeting.

Further information was duly circulated with the agenda papers which included:

- Area Board Good Practice document
- Area Board Review – Summary of Results
- Area Board Review – example of summary results for Amesbury Area Board

Within this item Cllr Peter Doyle, as a member of the Committee, had requested prior to the meeting that consideration also be given to whether the Committee should undertake scrutiny of the Area Board Community Issues System (CIS) as it was understood that the system operation varied across the County.

The Cabinet Member for Communities informed the Committee that the system had been developed internally by the Head of Area Boards as a tool to monitor issues raised within individual communities. Issues were not removed from the system without the agreement of the members of the individual Area Boards.

It was noted that the recent Area Boards performance survey had shown that the CIS had been well supported. The Service Director for Communities, Libraries, Heritage and Arts however welcomed suggestions for improvement.

In addressing the Committee Cllr Doyle confirmed that since his request it was understood that some of the concerns raised with him had now been addressed and with the reassurance provided within the meeting agreed that no further scrutiny would be required at the present time.

In relation to the performance of Area Boards, clarity was given that the performance framework had been developed with the Chairman of each of the Area Boards and that the survey conducted on performance would be undertaken on an annual basis to allow individual area boards to develop action plans where required to further improve performance.

Further work was also being undertaken to improve public involvement at Area Boards including better on-line accessibility.

Resolved:

To note the information provided.

212. **Scrutiny Representation on Project Boards**

Revenue and Benefits Project Board

The Committee considered the update provided with the agenda which included a copy of the Councillor's Briefing Note circulated on 19 October in relation to the Implementation of the New Software for Housing and Council Tax Benefit Claims.

The Scrutiny representative was also in attendance and confirmed that the Project Board had met on 17 November where it had been reported that the new system would 'go live' as planned for 28 November. The new revenue and benefits system was also expected to achieve further savings for the council.

Resolved:

To thank the scrutiny representative for the update provided.

Staffing Management Executive Board

The scrutiny representative was not in attendance to provide an update.

213. **Forward Work Programme**

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme provided.

214. **Date of next Meeting**

19 January 2012.

215. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.20 pm)

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