

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2013 AT THE LANSDOWN HALL, TROWBRIDGE CIVIC CENTRE, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8AH.

Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin (Chairman), Cllr Nigel Carter, Cllr Tony Deane (Vice Chairman), Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Judy Rooke and Cllr Jonathon Seed

Also Present:

Cllr John Brady, Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Rosemary Brown, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Chris Caswill, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Christopher Cochrane, Cllr Peter Colmer, Cllr Linda Conley, Cllr Mark Connolly, Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Michael Cuthbert-Murray, Cllr Paul Darby, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Peter Davis, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Richard Gamble, Linda Griffiths, Cllr Mollie Groom, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Brigadier Robert Hall, Cllr Charles Howard, Cllr Chris Humphries, Cllr Keith Humphries, Cllr Tom James MBE, Cllr George Jeans, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Julian Johnson, Cllr John Knight, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Howard Marshall, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Jemima Milton, Cllr Francis Morland, Cllr John Noeken, Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Sheila Parker, Cllr Nina Phillips, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philipe, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr William Roberts, Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Sharon L Smith, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr John Thomson, Brian Warwick, Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cllr Fred Westmoreland, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Roy While and Cllr Christopher Williams

56 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received as follows:

Cllr Carole Soden
Cllr Desna Allen
Cllr Chuck Berry
Cllr Peggy Dow
Cllr Dick Tonge (Cabinet member for Highways and Transport)
Mr Neil Owen (Governor Representative)
Dr Mike Thomson (Diocesan RC Representative)
Linda Griffiths (Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network)
Parvis Khansari (Service Director Highways and Transport)

57 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

58 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. Upon request the Democratic Services Officer confirmed the paperwork to be considered as part of the Committee's deliberations. This included the Budget Task Group minutes arising from the meeting held on 25 January 2013 and circulated as part of Appendix 3 to the Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan 2013/14 Update report as a supplementary paper.

59 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

60 **Explanation of Proceedings**

The Chairman drew the members' attention to the report attached to the agenda which outlined the background, purpose and proceedings of the meeting.

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

The following were in attendance to present the report on the Council's proposed budget for 2013/14 which included, as an appendix, the draft Financial Plan to be considered by Cabinet on 12 February and Full Council on 26 February.

Carolyn Godfrey (Corporate Director)
Michael Hudson (Director of Finance)
Cllr Jane Scott (Leader of the Council)
Cllr John Brady (Cabinet member Finance, Performance and Risk)

Upon receiving the presentations the Chairman invited questions from members. Details of the main issues raised can be found within the attached report.

Resolved:

To recommend that Council take into account the main points made by the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as outlined within the attached report when determining the 2013/14 budget.

62 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for discussion.

63 Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 28 February 2013.

(Duration of meeting: 10:30am to 12:45pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Sharon Smith, of Democratic Services, direct line (01225) 718378, e-mail sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk

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

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Wiltshire Council

**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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