

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2015 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Simon Killane (Chairman), Cllr Alan Hill (Vice Chairman), Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Stewart Dobson, Cllr Peter Edge, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr John Noeken, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr John Walsh, Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cllr Philip Whalley and Cllr Nick Watts (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Glenis Ansell, Cllr Pat Aves, Cllr Terry Chivers, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Keith Humphries, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Dick Tonge, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Roy While, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Cllr Jerry Wickham

22 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Jon Hubbard, who in his capacity as Group Leader would be presenting the proposals from the Liberal Democrat Group, and as such absent for the entirety of the meeting in his capacity as a committee member.

Councillor Hubbard was substituted by Councillor Nick Watts.

23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

24 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

25 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

26 **Purpose of Meeting**

The Committee noted and agreed the proposed procedure for the meeting.

27 **Wiltshire Council Financial Plan 2015/16: Opposition Group Amendments**

The only proposed amendments to the budget proposals received were from the Liberal Democrat Group.

Councillor Jon Hubbard, Liberal Democrat Group Leader, presented the proposed amendments to the administration budget as detailed in the agenda supplement, which sought an increase in council tax of 1.9%, with the additional monies raised to be allocated to £1.719M additional investments in place of proposed savings. Councillor Hubbard thanked his group for their work in compiling the proposals, and praised the assistance of finance officers to ensure the proposals were properly fully costed, legal and viable.

It was confirmed the proposed council tax increase of 1.9% would result in an increase of £23.23 annually for an average Band D property, and that the Associate Director of Finance had confirmed the proposals were financially deliverable as they would not change the net budget requirement. Details of the proposed changes were outlined as detailed in the agenda supplement, including a 3 month winter suspension on garden waste collection in place of an annual £40 charge, the reallocation of 40% of Area Board funding as being available for revenue funding and additional funding for the Wiltshire Hopper service.

The Committee, along with other members in attendance including members of the Executive, discussed the proposed amendments, noting that with all the reversals in savings and additional investments being financed through an increase in funding, rather than being offset by savings from other services, they would need to be considered by Full Council en bloc. Questions were raised about the Council Tax Freeze Grant from central government and whether this would be continued in future years following the General Election in May 2015, and whether the council could afford in the forthcoming and future years to retain the current Council Tax rate.

Other areas of discussion along with other topics as detailed in the appended report included examining the impact of the proposed amendments on the Waste Service in relation to garden waste collection and the administration proposals, along with areas of the service which would require further scrutiny in the forthcoming year to identify improvements whatever proposal was adopted, the current position of the music service, where savings within Highways and Streetscene as proposed could be reinvested, how to increase the role of Towns and Parishes where beneficial to efficiency, and the need for replacement services or transitional arrangements where a service was being reduced, removed or amended following a review.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) **To thank the Liberal Democrat Group for providing the opportunity to scrutinise their proposed amendment and that the opportunity advanced the Committee's efforts to:**
 - **Help add value to policy development;**
 - **Provide for a more robust and engaging scrutiny of the budget;**
 - **Help provide for a more informed, evidenced debate at Full Council.**
- 2) **Therefore, to invite all opposition groups to submit their proposals or amendments to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as soon as is reasonably practicable for consideration as part of all future Budget scrutiny events.**
- 3) **And to delegate to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to create firm proposals for a robust procedure for consideration of the Budget for next year, that is informed by consultation with members and officers and the Peer Review process.**

28 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 3 March 2015.

29 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 9.00 - 11.25 am)

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

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