

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 7th February 2007 in the Council Chamber, Level –1, Monkton Park Offices, Chippenham, commencing at 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Chairman: T.R. Sturgis

Committee Councillors: S.D. Meadows, J.H. Rooke, J.P.S.S. Thomson, R.L. Tonge and J. Webb.

Other Members Present: P.G. Allnatt, C. O’Gorman, S.K. Doubell and S.R. Walls.

Officers Present: N. Fenwick (Strategic Manager – Customer Services), S. Pangbourne (Strategic Manager – Corporate Services), P. Timmins (Interim S151 Officer), P. Jeremiah (Legal Team Leader) and J. Whittleton (Policy & Democratic Services Assistant)

O109. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors S.R. Coy, J.R. Ireland and J.M. Wood.

O110. Membership

There were no changes of Membership.

O111. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

There were no public questions nor petitions received.

O112 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 25th January 2007 were considered.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 25th January 2007 be signed as a correct record.

O113. Declarations of Interest

None.

O114. Chairman’s Announcements

The Chairman, Councillor T.R. Sturgis:

In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 having regard to the special circumstances pertaining in this matter – namely the need to make recommendations to the Executive meeting tomorrow evening, I am of the opinion that, despite its non-inclusion on the Agenda, the matter of Report 10 – Budget Planning Process should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency. This item will be taken after item 7.

O115. Corporate Plan 2007/10

Consideration was given to Report No. 7, circulated with the Agenda, which set out the Corporate Plan 2007/10, clarifying priorities, goals and pledges (action areas) for the coming three years. The contents of the Corporate Plan will guide the budget decisions Council will make for 2007/08 and beyond.

Issues discussed included:

- Pledges in the Corporate Plan;
- The green waste collection scheme;
- Training and development;
- Recommendations from the Audit Commission about defining non-priorities;
- The status and purpose of the Corporate Plan;
- CPA and community plans; and
- Whether the objectives are 'smart'.

Resolved to recommend to the Executive:

- 1) That an alternative to the term 'pledge' be used in the Plan.
- 2) That under the Goal of Waste & Recycling, the outcome focussed action be amended to read: *Increase green waste collection areas to cover 10% of households in the District*, rather than 33%.
- 3) That a conscious decision be taken to include non-priorities, in line with Audit Commission advice.
- 4) That under the Goal Consultation & Communication, an outcome focussed action, along with a 'smart' action be included, stating: To make decisions based on the Community Plan and to support community Planning groups.
- 5) That Portfolio Holders confirm whether or not the outcome focussed actions under their remit are achievable.

O116. Budget Planning Process

Consideration was given to Report No.10, which proposed a way of improving the budget planning and consultation process during consideration of the budget in 2007/08.

Issues discussed included:

- The strengths of the report format;

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- Communication with town and parish council during the budget process;
- The Medium Term Planning Matrix; and
- Whether the Council has the capacity to use the document.

Resolved

- 1) That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider how best to monitor the process contained in the Medium Term Planning Matrix, at its' first meeting after the May 2007 election.
- 2) That a simplified version of the Medium Term Planning Matrix, along with critical dates for Councillor input, be included in member training for new Councillors.

O117. Revised Capital Budget 2007/10

Consideration was given to Report No. 8, the revised Capital Budget in order to make recommendations, if necessary, to the Executive meeting on the 8th February 2007.

Issues discussed included:

- Investment properties and policies to keep individual properties.

Resolved that the Report be noted.

O118. Revised Revenue Budget 2007/10

Consideration was given to Report 9, the revised Revenue Budget and if necessary make recommendations to the Executive meeting on the 8th February 2007.

Issues discussed included:

- Whether the budget will enable portfolio holders and officers to hit targets;
- The budget and service delivery;
- The budget and the Corporate Plan;
- The process of reporting on service plans;
- The collection fund and bad debt provision;
- Treasury management monitoring; and
- Investing borrowed money.

Resolved

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- 1) That future budget monitors include information on the collection fund and bad debt provision.
- 2) That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Final Accounts & Audit Committee agree a process for members to monitor treasury management.
- 3) That a briefing take place for all Members on the issue of borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board, in order to invest.

The meeting finished at 7.49pm.

There 0 member of the public present.