

AT A MEETING of the POLICY AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle Winchester on Thursday, 24 January 2013.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Carol Leversha

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Keith Evans

Councillors:

p Ray Bolton	p Elaine Still
p Adrian Collett	a Bruce Tennent
p Liz Fairhurst	a Chris Thomas
a Brian Gurden	p Pat West
a Robin McIntosh	p Sharyn Wheale

132. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Robin McIntosh who was attending a meeting at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Cllr Bruce Tennent who was on a business trip, Cllr Brian Gurden who was unwell and Cllr Chris Thomas who had a hospital appointment.

133. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

134. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Select Committee meeting held on 25 October 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Under matters arising, on Minute 128, it was noted that the views of the committee on the referred Motion had been reported back to 29 November 2012 County Council, and as recommended further consideration had been referred on to the Members Working Group – Review of Governance Models, who had met earlier in January.

135. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements to make at this meeting.

136. **REVENUE BUDGET 2013/14 – POLICY & RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

The Director of Corporate Resources gave a presentation to summarise the key points of the written report (see Item 5 in the Minute Book) which gave an overview of the budget situation for the whole County Council, and the proposals for the budget covering the Policy & Resources portfolio.

In terms of the overall position for the County Council, it was noted that the Council Tax freeze grant was due to cease after 2014/15, therefore there would be a significant funding gap in 2015/16 that the County Council would need to prepare for.

With regard to the Policy & Resources budget, it was reported that 97% of savings planned for 2012/13 had already been achieved. The savings planned for 2012/13 amounted to £9.4 million. Quarter two monitoring predicted an under spend of £2.6 million by the end of the 2012/13 financial year. This included the additional £1.5 million corporate savings achieved this year, which would be counted as early achievement of next year's 2% savings for Corporate Services.

Two percent of the remainder of the Policy & Resources budget for 2013/14 equated to £798,000. These savings were mainly anticipated to be achieved through efficiencies avoiding service impact. An additional £200,000 was planned to be saved from non departmental budgets. Savings proposals for this portfolio had been assessed as having low risk of delivery.

Members asked questions to clarify points and comment on the proposed revenue budget.

The Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) noted that the grant for Public Health came under the Policy & Resources budget and queried whether the funds received were considered sufficient. It

was reported that the Council was confident the grant was sufficient to cover the contractual liabilities inherited from the NHS, and the funding was ring fenced for public health activity. The level of grant was derived from a formula based on assessed health needs of the area.

The HOSC Chairman indicated that it would be important for Members to have oversight of public health spending, to ensure activity reflected local priorities. Members agreed to add an item on Public Health to the work programme, for scrutiny at a future meeting of this committee.

Public Health be added as a priority item to work programme

Members asked how long funding was available for the troubled families programme. It was responded that this was currently a three year programme starting in 2012/13.

Members asked whether trading units were aiming to increase income. It was indicated that in some cases units traded within the Council and therefore any surplus was not true 'income'. Trading units were required to at least generate enough income to cover their costs. Income generation was a focus across Council services; within the policy & resources functions particularly in property services.

A Member asked what the new corporate work streams to identify savings for future financial years was expected to cover. It was noted specific areas were yet to be defined. It was agreed to add this topic to the work programme for further detail to come forward to a future meeting of the committee.

Next phase of corporate efficiencies be added to the work programme

The Chairman queried whether the £50,000 reduction in grants to voluntary sector organisations was in addition to the 8% reduction made to this budget in the previous financial year. It was responded that this was in addition to reductions from previous years, however this budget had in recent years been under spent at the end of the financial year, since the availability of small grants through the members devolved budget scheme.

Regarding Members grants, members highlighted that they had been allocated an additional £5,000 each during 2012/13 which should be reflected in the revised budget for 2012/13. This was noted by the officers in attendance.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Select Committee supports the proposed budget to the Executive Member for Policy & Resources, as per section 11 of the report.

137. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14 – 2015/16: POLICY & RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

The Director of Corporate Resources presented a report (see Item 6 in the Minute Book) which outlined the proposed Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2015/16 for the Policy & Resources Portfolio.

The capital programme for 2015/16 was proposed to remain in line with current proposals for 2014/15, supplemented by additional grants where available e.g. central government was due to provide a specific grant for capital works on schools and early years sites.

It was reported that capital repairs of the existing estate remained the main focus of the policy and resources capital programme, alongside investment in Information Technology and strategic land purchases.

Members asked questions to clarify points and comment on the proposed capital programme.

A Member asked how much of the budget earmarked for land purchase and development would be spent on advantageous land purchases. It was responded that the majority would be for land purchases, although the £7.1 million allocation included the £4.5 million due to be paid to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council towards the Manydown site. It was indicated that the County could use funds from reserves or utilise its borrowing power to supplement this budget if suitable opportunities arose, however not much land was coming up for sale at the present time.

The Chairman of the Children & Young People Select Committee asked why the budget for capital repair of school buildings was reported in the Policy & Resources budget rather than the Children's Services budget. It was explained that of the capital allocation received for schools, 46% was managed by Children's Services for building works required to respond to school places demand. The other 54% of the budget was managed by the Policy & Resources portfolio for maintenance of existing buildings, from which projects were identified on a priority basis.

The Chairman thanked the officers presenting on behalf of the committee for their clear explanation of budgetary issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Select Committee supports the proposed capital

programme to the Executive Member for Policy & Resources, as per section 10 of the report.

138. **APPROVAL OF WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented for consideration the proposed terms of reference for a time limited working group to consider the future service provision proposals for the Chase Community Hospital (see Item 7 in the Minute Book). It was noted the topic was urgent due to the ownership of the site passing to the national NHS property management company in April 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Chase Community Hospital be approved, with expectation that the group would meet between January and March 2013.

139. **WORK PROGRAMME AND ONGOING WORK ACROSS ALL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The Chairman went through the committee's future work programme and invited Members views regarding the items listed.

The Chairman proposed the following to which the committee agreed:

- that the item on Hampshire Association of Local Councils be removed, as following discussions outside the meeting it was no longer considered necessary
- that the item on the voluntary sector be removed, as this was better handled through committees looking at particular service areas
- that the item on contracts be removed, as investigations had not identified an angle where scrutiny could add value
- that an update on recruitment and retention of staff be considered for the July meeting

In addition, the Chairman reported that she would be meeting with an officer from the Economy Transport and Environment Department to discuss how the feedback to a consultation on district transport statements had influenced the subsequent decision.

The Chairman then invited the Chairman of the Environment and Transportation Select Committee (E&T SC) to provide an update on the topic of school parking.

The Chairman of E&T SC reported that she had taken part in a Member working group regarding on site parking at schools, which was coming to an end and due to report to the Executive Member for Environment & Transport in the coming months.

The review had identified a number of issues in relation to parking at schools, and some examples of good practice. The E&T SC Chairman indicated that the review had not covered parking outside schools by parents, but she would be requesting the review group continue, to consider this aspect as a further phase. It was anticipated this would cover School Travel Plans which supported sustainable methods for children to get to school. Members of the committee recognised the issues discussed from their own divisions and supported the work of the review. It was agreed that a further update on progress be reported back to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's Work Programme be approved subject to the amendments made at this meeting.

Further update
be scheduled

That the work
programme be
updated

Chairman, 18 April 2013