

AT A MEETING of the POLICY AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle Winchester on Thursday, 23 January 2014.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Jonathan Glen

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Keith Evans

Councillors:

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| p Ray Bolton | p Patricia Stallard |
| p Adrian Collett | p Mark Staplehurst |
| p Criss Connor | p Elaine Still |
| p Keith House | p Bruce Tennent |
| p Robin McIntosh | p Pat West |
| a Andy Moore | p Sharyn Wheale |

24. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andy Moore. It was also noted that Cllr Roy Perry, Executive Member for Policy & Resources was unable to attend due to a conflicting diary commitment.

25. **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.

26. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Select Committee meeting held on 31 October 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27. **DEPUTATIONS**

No deputations were received at this meeting.

28. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reported that the scrutiny of economic development was now within the remit of the Economy Transport & Environment Select Committee, and that committee will be looking at economic development as part of its future work programme. It was still planned that a briefing on economic development open to all Members would also be provided.

The Chairman also noted that the November meeting of County Council also confirmed an amendment to the terms of reference of this committee, which now includes Rural Affairs, to match the responsibilities now included in the Policy & Resources Executive Member portfolio.

29. **TRANSFORMATION TO 2015**

The Chief Executive gave a presentation on the programme known as 'transformation to 2015' being undertaken corporately to prepare the council for anticipated funding reductions in 2015/16 (see Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Members heard:

- That the council's strategy was to look for savings ahead of time, in order to help pay for the cost of change
- That over £200 million would have been taken out of the County Council's budget between 2008 and 2015, and it was anticipated a further £100 million would need to be found in the next spending review period
- That the council's strategy was to seek to generate income, for example through providing shared services, in order to protect in house capacity to provide services directly
- That the number of staff the County Council could expect to employ was a complex picture – there would be some increases and some decreases in staff numbers for a variety of reasons, and if the county was successful in generating additional business, staff numbers could go up in future
- That the agenda for closer integration of health and social care was a key issue for the council in coming years, particularly as funding from the pooled fund announced by government to support this was accounted for in the Adult Services budget, but was currently within NHS budgets spent on NHS providers
- That raising Council Tax by 1.5% would only raise £6 million, which was not enough to change the council's strategy given the scale of savings required

Following questions Members heard:

- That it was acknowledged the quality of the market was poor in relation to domiciliary care, and a piece of work was taking place to see how the County Council could positively influence in this area. There are examples such as HC3S (the County Council's catering service) where providing a service in house rather than contracting out had been successful, and consideration was being given to other opportunities to follow this model
- That shared services worked best for 'back office' functions rather than operational services. The Integrated Business Centre focused on transactional processes, where volume could increase without introducing greater complexity
- That there was confidence the level of savings required in this round were achievable, and if they slipped slightly the difference could be met using reserves
- That the council recognised the importance of its staff, and maintaining its reputation as a good employer, in order to deliver the changes required. There was a programme of supporting staff known as 'transforming through you'
- That joint working with other authorities e.g. on the highways contract, would only be entered into if the County Council was satisfied it would deliver in terms of quality and local control as well as financial benefits

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

30. **IT UPDATE**

The Director of Corporate Resources presented a report providing the annual update on IT activity over the past year and priorities ahead (see Item 7 in the Minute Book).

Members heard:

- That there was a growing reliance on IT across the County Council and in terms of the services provided by the County Council
- That IT was contributing to the majority of 'transformation to 2015' programmes including the Integrated Business Centre dependent on IT
- That IT continues to fund a growing proportion of activity through income from external clients such as schools. This helped the County Council retain scarce IT skills and capacity in house.
- That data security was a growing priority, and nationally requirements were being put in place to establish standards for the Public Service Network. It is important to balance security requirements with flexibility e.g. to enable staff to use their own devices to access information

- That new technology areas such as cloud computing, consumer technologies, 'big data' and social media will be increasingly important in a wider move to 'digital business'.

Following questions Members heard:

- That Wi-Fi was being rolled out across the County Council's estate starting with heaviest used areas e.g. the HQ buildings and libraries. Wi-Fi will be put in to new buildings as standard including schools. This would include council run residential care homes. The Chairman of the Safe & Healthy People Select Committee requested further information on the programme of introducing this to care homes, and how domiciliary care workers were supported with IT.

- That there were opportunities for the County Council to provide IT support to a range of external organisations including partners in the health sector. This was being planned, however there were complexities with working with the NHS including existing contracts and constraints set nationally

- That the council was reliant on private sector input in some specialist areas of IT, however the council had good relationships with it's big suppliers, and it was in their interest as well as ours for this input to be effective and efficient. Internal capacity would be grown where efficiency and lower risks resulted.

RESOLVED:

That the report is noted.

That the IT item remain on the work programme as an annual update.

31. **REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR THE POLICY & RESOURCES PORTFOLIO 2014/15**

The committee received a presentation from the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the budget, in support of the reports from the Chief Executive and Directors of Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance, Public Health and Culture Communities & Business Services on the revenue and capital budget for the policy & resources portfolio for 2014/15 (see Item 8 in the Minute Book).

Members heard:

- That the settlement announcement from central government had indicated the council tax freeze grant would be built into baseline budgets going forwards. This was helpful as it avoided the 'cliff edge' funding gap the County Council had been expecting.

- Based on a range of increases and decreases experienced, the net deficit for 2014/15 would be £32

Information requested to be followed up with Chairman of S&HP SC

million. It was planned to use £25 million from the grant equalisation reserve in 2014/15 to address this (leaving around £12 million in that reserve for future years)

- That the reports were seeking approval for outline plans to achieve savings required for the 2015/16 financial year in order to enable work to start early on progressing these

Following questions Members heard:

- That the County Council was confident existing infrastructure schemes in the capital programme could be funded from section 106 funding, and section 106 agreements would still be required for large developments. Community Infrastructure Levy was designed for 'off site' infrastructure needs arising from development, and the County Council had good relationships with the district and borough councils to negotiate about these requirements

- That it was proposed to cease the Accredited Community Safety Service (ACSO) by March 2015 and reinvest £1.5 million in the library service. The alternative would be closing 15 to 20 libraries. It was acknowledged that ACSOs were brought in prior to Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) being introduced in Hampshire. There were over 300 PCSOs in Hampshire and currently around 30 ACSOs, and there was some overlap in their duties, with ACSOs having less powers. It was intended to work with the Police & Crime Commissioner over the coming year to mitigate the impact of withdrawing the ACSOs.

Members commented:

- That ACSOs had performed a valuable role, providing a deterrent by their presence in areas not regularly covered by the Police or PCSOs. Some Members were concerned by the potential impact of ceasing this service. Other Members acknowledged that the majority of the roles ACSOs performed were actually the responsibility of other agencies such as the police or district councils. It was agreed that it be reported to the Executive Member for Policy & Resources that Members of the committee had concerns about this proposal, however this would not be a formal recommendation as it was not a unanimous view

- That officers were to be commended for producing a budget making significant savings with little effect on front line services. However, some Members were concerned about proposals to make further reductions to mobile library service stops. It was responded that the library service was making increasing use of volunteers to get books to service users who were unable to visit library buildings, and this would be expanded to mitigate the impact of any changes to the mobile library service. There would be a consultation on any planned changes and feedback on alternative locations would be welcomed. The Chairman of the Culture &

Concerns about ACSO proposal be reported to Executive Member

Communities Select Committee indicated that her committee would be monitoring any changes to the library service, and that she would request a briefing note be circulated to all Members explaining the alternatives to the mobile library service that were available e.g. the home library service.

Briefing note on library services be requested

RECOMMENDED:

That the Executive Member for Policy & Resources approve the revenue budget proposals for submission to the Leader and Cabinet (as per the recommendations in section 11 of the revenue budget report).

That the Executive Member for Policy & Resources approve the capital programme for submission to the Leader and Cabinet (as per the recommendation in section 11 of the capital programme report).

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

Members noted the work programme for the committee and the overview of scrutiny activity across all Committees (see Item 9 in the Minute Book).

The Chairman indicated that in line with the terms of reference change highlighted in his Chairman's announcements, economic development would be removed from the work programme for this committee. It was noted that the Chairman and Vice chairman would work with the relevant Directors (e.g. Director of Policy & Governance, Director of Corporate Resources, Director of Culture Communities and Business Services) to identify areas for the future work programme where scrutiny could add value.

The Chairmen of each of the other scrutiny committees gave an update to report on the work of their committee. It was highlighted that at their meeting the previous day, the Children & Young People Select Committee had agreed to hold a task and finish group on short breaks for children with disabilities, with a view to making recommendations regarding savings proposed in this area in 2015.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme is agreed, subject to any amendments arising from this meeting.

That the proposed Task & Finish Group of the Children and Young People Select Committee is supported.

The work programme be updated in consultation with the Chairman

33. **FOLLOW UPS FROM LAST MEETING**

The Chairman reported on the following issues raised at previous meetings:

At the July 2013 meeting Cllr Moore raised an issue regarding the Amey contract. The Economy Transport & Environment Select Committee has on its work programme an item on the Amey contract due to come to the 27 March 2014 meeting; Cllr Moore would be invited to attend this meeting.

At the last meeting it was agreed to initiate a working group on consultation guidance. This working group was due to hold an initial meeting on 17 February, and updates on its work would be provided to future committee meetings.

At the last meeting the intention to convene an additional meeting of the committee in the spring at Havant Plaza was raised. This session was intended to focus on partnership working, and the pilot work taking place in Havant to work through with partners the challenges and opportunities to improve service provision and coherence of services provided in communities. Dates were being considered for this and the proposed date would be confirmed to committee Members as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the updates are noted.

Cllr Moore be invited to ETE SC meeting considering the Amey contract

Havant meeting date be confirmed

Chairman, 10 April 2014