

AT A MEETING of the POLICY AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Thursday, 22 January 2015.

**PRESENT**

Chairman:  
p Councillor Elaine Still

Vice-Chairman  
p Councillor Keith Evans

Councillors:

p Ray Bolton	p Andy Moore
p Adrian Collett	p Patricia Stallard
p Criss Connor	p Mark Staplehurst
a Keith House	p Bruce Tennent
p Robin McIntosh	Ken Thornber
Anna McNair Scott	p Sharyn Wheale

Also in attendance:

Cllr Roy Perry, Executive Member for Policy & Resources

68. **BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

69. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Keith House, who was attending a Local Government Association meeting. The liberal democrat substitute Member was unable to attend in his place due to a New Forest National Park Authority meeting.

70. **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 Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5,

Paragraph 4 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.

71. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Select Committee meeting held on 23 October 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

72. **DEPUTATIONS**

No deputations were received at this meeting.

73. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Consultation Policy**

The Chairman noted that in July last year this Committee approved a draft consultation policy to be recommended to Cabinet. Since then there has been a significant development in case law in the form of a ruling from the Supreme Court, so further legal advice had been taken on whether the draft policy meets the new legal requirements. In broad terms the draft recommended by the Committee was found to be compliant, however it had been necessary to make some minor amendments to the text. The revised version had been circulated by email to committee members. It was reported that it was anticipated the policy would be considered by Cabinet on 6 February. If agreed, it will then become part of the Council's governance framework. The policy will remain on the committee's work programme for review in future, as agreed in July.

**Havant Project Appointment**

The Chairman reminded members that back in April 2014 the committee held their meeting in Havant, and heard about the work taking place to join up public sector service provision in communities. When the committee received an update in July it was reported that the key partner agencies involved in the project had committed to jointly funding a post to co-ordinate and drive forwards the work. The Chairman reported that an individual had recently been appointed to such a role, and it was intended to invite her to the next meeting of the committee, to provide an update on the work taking place.

**Outcome of Joint Task & Finish Group with Economy Transport and Environment Select Committee**

The Chairman reported that in July 2014 this committee allocated Members to a joint Task & Finish Group with the Economy Transport & Environment Select Committee, looking at models for provision of Highway Maintenance

Update work programme

Services following the end of the current contract. Cllr Bolton, Cllr Collett and Cllr Moore took part in this group. This Task & Finish Group came to a conclusion in December 2014, and the outcomes were reported to the Economy Transport & Environment Select Committee earlier in the week. The Economy Transport & Environment Select Committee had supported the recommendations of the Task & Finish Group as follows:

1) That the County Council take steps to develop a contract following the Term Maintenance Contract Plus model, for provision of highway maintenance services following the end of the current contract.

2) The Members of the Highways Phase 2 Task & Finish Working Group form an Advisory Panel, to work with the Executive Member for Economy Transport & Environment going forwards, to provide advice and oversight as the new contract is developed.

These recommendations would now be formally submitted to the Executive Member for Economy Transport & Environment.

The Chairman of the Economy Transport & Environment Select Committee commented that undertaking this work jointly between the two committees had worked well. A Member who had taken part in the Task & Finish Group paid tribute to the work undertaken by the group to weigh up the costs and benefits of different models.

74. **REVENUE BUDGET REPORT FOR POLICY & RESOURCES FOR 2015/16 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16 TO 2017/18**

The Committee considered reports and a supporting presentation from the Director of Corporate Resources, Chief Executive, Director of Policy & Governance, Director of Public Health and Director of Culture Communities & Business Services regarding the proposed revenue and capital budget for Policy & Resources for 2015/16 (see Item 6 in the Minute Book). The papers included reports due to be considered at the Decision Day of the Executive Member for Policy & Resources due to take place on 22 January 2015 at 2:00pm.

Members heard:

- That the savings required for 2015/16 had been agreed in the 2014/15 budget, and therefore had been implemented during the past year. No new savings proposals were included in the 2015/16 budget
- Following the same approach of planning ahead, savings proposals for 2017/18 would be brought forward in

summer 2015

- That the County Council had experienced a greater reduction in revenue support grant for 2015/16 than anticipated, and had anticipated to draw from the grant equalisation reserve to balance the budget. However, due to a surplus in the council tax collection fund and retained business rates the deficit had been covered and a draw from the grant equalisation reserve would not now be necessary

- While the county council was required to report on reserves totalling £482m (as at March 2014) the majority of this was committed and not available for general use. Available reserves amounted to £80m, however £28.5m of this was used to support the revenue budget in 2014/15. This funding was used to allow time for savings programmes to take effect. It was noted the reserves strategy, which explained what reserves were used for, would be published with the budget papers presented to the February Cabinet meeting

- The Policy & Resources capital programme was mainly routine maintenance of the county council's built estate, with some additional funds for flood prevention works e.g. the scheme in Hambledon

Following questions, Members heard:

- That the county does invest funds when possible, however only in low risk options and therefore only receives low interest rates (around 1%)

- Since grants were amalgamated by central government at the start of the current spending review period, the county council had seen a 51% reduction overall in funding received from central government

- That developer contributions towards infrastructure changing from section 106 to Community Infrastructure Levy would not impact the current capital programme, but would be a consideration in approximately three years time

- That there was funding for the Supporting Troubled Families Programme for 2015/16 (some of which is performance related), however funding was not guaranteed beyond 2015/16 as yet

- The Policy & Resources workforce situation was complex; there had been some reductions, however there was expected to be an overall increase by March 2016 due to the transfer of 336 staff from Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service due to the partnership between the authorities for providing 'back office' functions. There had also been an increase in the take up of free school meals and the catering provider HC3S had taken on 102 additional staff to meet this demand. It was noted that HC3S operate as a trading unit and therefore offset their costs via income, and funding was received from the partner authorities towards the team which now jointly provide services for HCC, Police and Fire,

therefore these staffing increases did not pose a pressure on the budget

- The County Council had bid for funding from central government for flood defence schemes, and some had been successful, however some of the funding would not come through for up to six years. Consideration was being given to the potential to fund schemes locally to get them started earlier, if the grants could be relied upon to offset these costs in future

- While the capital programme did not include a specific budget for advantageous land purchases for 2015/16, members were assured that the county would retain capacity to take advantage of opportunities to buy land should they arise, for example using capital receipts

Members commented:

- Cllr Moore requested a breakdown of departmental costs, to see how much was spent on staffing, how much on equipment etc. It was noted this level of detail would be published in the full budget provided for the February County Council meeting to agree the budget

RECOMMENDED:

That the recommendations to the Executive Member for Policy & Resources in the Revenue Budget report at section 10 and the Capital Programme report at section 10 are supported by the Policy & Resources Select Committee.

Recommendations passed to Executive Member

75. **APPROVAL OF TASK & FINISH GROUPS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Policy & Governance (see Item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding a task and finish group planned by the Culture and Communities Select Committee. The terms of reference was brought to this committee for approval as part of its role to coordinate the scrutiny function.

RESOLVED:

That the Task & Finish Group to Review Grants to Cultural Community and Recreational Organisations be approved.

76. **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 8 in the Minute Book).

RESOLVED:

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

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Chairman, 9 April 2015

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