

AT A MEETING of the POLICY AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle Winchester on Thursday, 11 March 2010.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Keith Chapman

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Keith Evans

Councillors:

p Adrian Collett	p Elaine Still
p Brian Gurden	p Bruce Tennent
p Robin McIntosh	p Chris Thomas
p Anna McNair Scott	p Pat West
p Stephen Reid	p Sharyn Wheale

Also in attendance: Cllr Jonathan Glen, Executive Member for Economic Development.

31. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally at the time of the debate declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

The following Members declared personal interests:

Councillors:

Keith Chapman – Item 4: declared he is a Vice President of the Hampshire Association of Local Councils.

Adrian Collett – Item 4: declared he is a member of two Town Councils.

Bruce Tennent – Item 4: declared he is a member of a Parish Council.

32. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee held on 21 January 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising thereon:

Minute No. 30 – Work Programme

It was reported that the second Liberal Democrat Member on the Review Group looking at Winter Resilience was Cllr Adrian Collett.

33. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

a. Executive Member in attendance

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Jonathan Glen, Executive Member for Economic Development, who was attending the meeting in relation to item 5.

b. Winter Resilience Review

The Chairman reported that the Review Group allocated at the last meeting of this committee to undertake this review met in February to agree the scope for this review, which had subsequently been circulated to members of this committee. All Members of the County Council had been written to, regarding issues raised with them by members of the public during the severe winter weather, and responses had started to come back. Key service stakeholders had also been written to regarding the impact of the weather on services provided by the County Council, health, police, fire, voluntary sector and businesses. It was planned to hold oral evidence sessions in June to investigate the issues in more detail, with a view to providing a report with recommendations to Cabinet in September.

34. The committee agreed to take the recession measures item first, in order to allow the Executive Member for Economic Development to leave after this item to attend another meeting.

RECESSION MEASURES

The Director of Economic Development presented a report (see item 5 in the Minute Book) regarding the measures the County Council had taken to provide support to businesses and individuals in Hampshire affected by the recession. This included measures to support the retail sector, measures to support work experience opportunities, volunteering and apprenticeships, as well as the establishment of Smarter Working Centres. Updated figures were circulated regarding the uptake of the initiatives as of 1 March 2010.

It was indicated that a further update on these measures was due to be considered by the Hampshire Economic Board in April, and that this report could be circulated to members of this committee for information. Members asked questions in relation to the report which were answered by the officers present, and the Executive Member for Economic Development where appropriate. Due to the level of interest the item generated, the Chairman suggested that an update on these issues be provided to the committee in future.

RESOLVED:

That the committee:

- a) welcomes the progress being made by the County Council in providing support to businesses and individuals during the recession
- b) requests an update on these issues be brought back to this committee in future
- c) intends to invite Cllr R Ellis, Executive Member for Rural Affairs and Human Resources, to attend when economic development items are considered in future, in relation to the rural aspect

That an update on recession measures be added to the future work programme of the committee, and that Cllr Ellis be invited to attend when economic development issues are considered by this committee in future.

35. **PRESENTATION FROM HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

The Chief Executive of Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) gave a presentation about the work of the association (see presentation slides, item 4 in the Minute Book). It was reported that approximately 45% of the grant HALC receive from the County Council goes towards staff costs and training costs. It was indicated that in future the grant may be provided under a service level agreement. This would enable clearer expectations to be established, regarding funding being provided on the basis that the activity it supports links to the County Council's aims and objectives.

RESOLVED:

The committee thanks the Chairman of HALC for his time, and endorses the work that Hampshire Association of Local Councils do.

36. **INSURANCE ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Chief Executive presented a report (Item 6 in the

Minute Book) detailing how the County Council manages its insurance. It was reported that the County Council largely self insures, and that the current trend in local authorities is increasingly to self insure. Due to the lack of competition in the insurance market and the volatility of the cost of premiums, there is increasing evidence that self insurance provides value for money.

Regarding liability claims made against the council, it was highlighted that Hampshire has the smallest number of claims per head of population, compared to the other authorities in the benchmarking club used to compare our performance to comparative authorities. Within this group Hampshire County Council is second highest at successfully defending liability claims. The County Council also has the fifth lowest average cost per claim in the country.

RESOLVED:

The committee thanks the officer for their report, and supports the policy to self insure.

37. **FLOODING LIGHT TOUCH REVIEW REPORT**

The Chairman of the Environment & Transportation Select Committee presented a report (Item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding the findings of the light touch scrutiny review of flooding undertaken by the Environment & Transportation Select Committee. It was reported that due to undertaking this review, Hampshire County Council had become a leading member on a network set up by the Local Government Information Unit regarding scrutiny of flooding. It was also highlighted that the urgent recommendation the committee made in relation to the production of leaflets for Councillors giving key contact details in relation to flooding, would be considered by the Executive Member for Policy & Resources that afternoon.

It was acknowledged that the Flood and Water Management Bill is currently progressing through parliament, and that it may be timely to pick up an in-depth review of flooding once this has become legislation.

RESOLVED:

That the Policy & Resources Select Committee agree to undertake an in-depth review of flooding, once the Winter Resilience Review has concluded. The Winter Resilience Review is anticipated to report to Cabinet in September. At that time, the scope of an in-depth review

That an in-depth review of Flooding be added to the Committee's work programme, to be scheduled for after the completion of the Winter Resilience Review.

of flooding will be drawn up, taking into account the areas of interest indicated by the Environment & Transportation Select Committee in their light touch review report.

38. **BUDGET MONITORING – 2009/10 QUARTER 3**

The County Treasurer presented a report (Item 8 in the Minute Book) regarding the current budget position of high risk and demand led services, with predicted overspend and underspend at year end.

RESOLVED:

The committee welcomes the action being taken indicated in the budget monitoring report, to manage high risk and demand led service budgets.

39. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive presented the committee's work programme for 2010, as of January 2010 (Item 9 in the Minute Book). It was requested that indicative timings be provided for the Winter Resilience Review.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's Work Programme be approved, subject to any issues raised at this meeting.

That the Scrutiny Officer update the work programme.