

AT A MEETING of the POLICY AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle Winchester on Wednesday, 26 January 2011.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Keith Chapman

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Keith Evans

Councillors:

p Adrian Collett	p Elaine Still
p Liz Fairhurst	p Bruce Tennent
p Brian Gurden	p Chris Thomas
p Robin McIntosh	p Pat West
p Stephen Reid	p Sharyn Wheale

60. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were reported.

61. **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.

62. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Select Committee Meeting held on 28 October 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: Minute 51

In relation to Minute 51, the Chairman reported that the Select Committee's recommendation regarding Special

Recognition Awards to Chief Officer's had been communicated to the Leader. The Leader's response had been that the constitution was currently under review and was being clarified in this regard, and that the Select Committee's recommendation would form part of the appropriate clause.

Matters Arising: Minute 53

In relation to minute 53, it was reported that the views of the committee had been reported to the Leader regarding the grant, and the Leader had provided assurances that lobbying had taken place with central government regarding the impact of grant changes.

63. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Liz Fairhurst to her first meeting as a member of this committee.

The Chairman reported that the Review Panel that had looked at Winter Resilience would be re-convened the following week to consider progress against the recommendations made.

64. **POLICY & RESOURCES REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12**

The County Treasurer gave a presentation regarding the Policy & Resources Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 and the Revenue Budget for 2011/12 (see Items 3 and 4 in the Minute Book). Members asked questions to clarify points. It was noted that a grant was being made available to the National Health Service for joint working with Local Authorities on Social Care, which could alleviate some of the demand pressures on this budget. However, Members were concerned that this did not directly cover the demand gap, as the use of the funding needed to be agreed through the Primary Care Trust.

Members highlighted the budget allocation for Advance and Advantageous Land Purchases, commenting that it was important to invest in land that could be of benefit to the County Council in the future. Concern was raised regarding the extent to which the County Council was maintaining this programme, and it was suggested that in the current economic climate land prices may be low which the County Council could take advantage of. The committee agreed to pass comment to the Executive Member for Policy & Resources in relation to this.

Committee's views to be passed on to Executive Member

A question was raised regarding the proposal to return any unallocated sums from the grants to voluntary organisation's budget to the policy reserve. Members suggested consideration be given to carrying forward any unallocated funds within the grants budget, to reduce the impact of reductions to the grants for voluntary organisation's budget for 2011/12.

Committee's views to be passed on to Executive Member

In addition, Members discussed the importance of ensuring that the reduced funds available for grants provided value for money. It was suggested that in future it would be beneficial to seek evidence to support the case that a particular grant allocation constituted value for money. It was agreed to add this issue to the work programme for future consideration.

Issue to be added to work programme

Members also highlighted the Home to School Transport pilot, expressed concern that there was no allocation in the budget proposals for carrying on this service, and questioned whether an assessment of the cost benefit of the pilot had taken place. It was queried where the funding could come from should it be found to be worth continuing. It was agreed that a written answer would be provided on this and circulated to Committee Members.

Written answer to be circulated to committee members

Following the debate, and agreement to pass on particular comments as noted, the Committee agreed the following:

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) The Recommendations regarding the Capital Programme listed at 10 in the report be supported.
- 2) The Recommendations regarding the Revenue Budget listed at 12 in the report be supported.

65. **ELIZABETH II COURT PROJECT – DELIVERING EFFICIENCY SAVINGS**

The Director of Property Business Regulatory and IT Services presented to Members regarding the efficiency savings and business change improvements achieved following the modernising of the Elizabeth II Court building (see Item 6 in the Minute Book). It was noted that the building had been fully occupied since September 2009, and therefore it had been possible to assess a full year of use of the new building.

It was reported that a 30% reduction in space occupied had been achieved due to vacation of office properties,

and that the level of occupancy of the new building was even higher than the original target of 1100 with 1250 staff using it as their office base. Significant reductions had also been seen in energy consumption, with average consumption on a like-for-like basis down 60%, which also exceeded the target set.

Members learned that revenue savings had been achieved from rental reductions on leased properties, capital receipts from disposals, reduction in Data Centre running costs, and cost avoidance through use of internal meeting room facilities rather than external venues. It was also highlighted that the project had been a catalyst for other efficiencies such as a centralised facilities management service, managed print services, and flexible working.

Members were pleased to hear that the project was considered best practice, and at least 30 other public sector organisations had visited to learn from this example. Furthermore, the project had achieved a number of awards and commendations, many of which were for its sustainable design.

The Chairman congratulated officers on delivering the project successfully. Members asked questions to clarify points. It was noted that facilities such as Ashburton Hall were hired out to external organisations when not in use by the County Council (post meeting update).

RESOLVED:

That the officer be thanked for their presentation.

66. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive presented the committee's future work programme.

RESOLVED:

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