

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor Mark Shurmer (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Gay Hopkins, Brenda Quinney and Alan Mason

Also Present:

Councillors Michael Braley, Juliet Brunner, David Bush, Mike Chalk, Carole Gandy, Malcolm Hall and Jinny Pearce.

Officers:

S Hanley, J Pickering, G Revans and S Morgan and I Westmore

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers:

J Bayley and M Craggs

142. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Luke Stephens.

As all Councillors had been invited to attend the meeting apologies were also received on behalf of Councillors Robin King and Wanda King.

143. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

144. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 29th November 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

145. BUDGET SETTING 2012/13

The Committee received a presentation which outlined the revenue and capital budget bids that had been submitted for 2012/13. Members had the opportunity to seek further information about any of the bids and about how they had each been determined by the relevant Director and Head of Service as either a high, medium, or low priority for Council funding. It was at the Committee's discretion whether to eventually recommend that any of the individual bids be re-classified as a funding priority if they felt this was suitable. Officers confirmed that the Council would not bear the full costs of joint bids if any of these were rejected by Bromsgrove District Council.

Regarding the revenue bid for an Energy Advisor, Members suggested that Officers might wish to explore whether the expertise of outside agencies could be utilised to support the Council's future performance in this area and also how the staff resource for this area would be managed across the two Councils.

Concern was raised regarding the capital bid to improve the footpaths in Morton Stanley Park. Members suggested that improvements could be made in a more cost-effective manner than by implementing the proposals included in the bid.

Members queried whether it was suitable for the Council to continue to contribute funding to the events programme for the Morton Stanley Park Festival. Officers explained that attracting private sponsorship to support the Festival was certainly important to help sustain its success. However the Council needed to continue making its own contribution to ensure that the Festival was sufficiently funded.

The Committee was informed that the Council had recently received a response from the Government regarding the consultation on the localisation of the Non-Domestic Rates. Each district local authority was now to receive around 80% of the rates, with the remaining 20% going to the County Council. The allocation of the business rates had therefore arranged from the initial proposals. It was also confirmed that there would still be a 10% reduction in Council Tax benefit. However, the Council would now be able to share the financial liability with neighbouring authorities.

RECOMMENDED that

the priority levels for the revenue and capital bids be supported subject to the following amendments:

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- i) the bid for improvement to footpaths in Morton Stanley Park be removed
- ii) the bid for the Energy Advisor be deferred to allow Officers to obtain additional information and report back to the Committee; and

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm
and closed at 7.03 pm