

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th January,
2015

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Michael Braley (substituting for Councillor Paul Swansborough), Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Alan Mason, David Thain (substituting for Councillor David Bush) and Pat Witherspoon

Officers:

S Morgan and J Pickering

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

65. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 TO 2017/18 - PRE-SCRUTINY

Officers presented the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18 and highlighted the following areas:

- A balanced budget would be presented at the February meeting of the Committee.
- The government settlement was slightly less than anticipated.
- A Council Tax increase of 1.9% per annum had been included and any new build properties had also been factored in for Council Tax purposes.
- The new localised regime on Business Rates, which took effect from April 2013, and the pooling arrangements.
- The transformation work being carried out and the savings made from the different ways the Council was working.

Following presentation of the report Members raised the following points:

- The use of reserves and monies expected to be received in respect of the sale of Threadneedle House. (Officers agreed to provide Members with an update on the sale of the property outside of the meeting.)
- The Shopmobility scheme and the contribution received from the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, which it was noted had been

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Chair

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reduced over recent years, and the increased footfall within the Centre which had recently been reported.

- The costs of IER and any contribution received from central Government.

Officers confirmed that the report received at the February meeting would contain more detail in respect of both unavoidable pressures and savings to be made, together with a sustainable three year plan. It was confirmed that the predicted savings included within that plan would be carefully monitored and details provided to Members in order that Heads of Services could be held to account if necessary.

The Chair commented that she was disappointed with the number of formatting and typographic errors within the report. This was acknowledged by Officers and would be taken up with the relevant teams after the meeting.

The Chair commented that it was very difficult for the Committee to carry out constructive pre-scrutiny work when the reports were not received until the day prior to the meeting and questioned whether there was any way that this could be changed. Whilst accepting the difficulty this caused, Officers informed Members that it was a Constitutional issue. Officers highlighted that the budget report due to be considered at the Committee's February meeting would allow more time for Members to consider the budget and any comments would be reported directly into the Council meeting when the final decision on the Council's budget would be made. Officers also acknowledged that the budget scrutiny process had not run as smoothly as expected and this would be reviewed and a lesson learned exercise carried out in order for improvements to be made in future years. It was suggested that a report should be brought to the Committee in September so that Members could have a more structured and detailed input into the budget setting process in future years.

RECOMMENDED that

Officers approach the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in respect of contributing further funding for the Shopmobility scheme; and

RESOLVED that

the Medium Turn Financial plan 2015/16 to 2017/18 be noted.

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The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.33 pm