

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Budget Scrutiny Committee of Bolsover District Council held in Chamber Suites 1 & 2, The Arc, Clowne, on Tuesday 16th July 2013 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors J.E. Bennett, K. Bowman, Mrs P. M. Bowmer, R. Brooks, J. A. Clifton, T.J. Connerton, C. P. Cooper, M.G. Crane, M. J. Dooley, S. W. Fritchley, H. J. Gilmour, J. E. Hall, R. A. Heffer, D. McGregor, V.P. Mills (left during Minute Number 0220), C. Munks, J. E. Smith, K. F. Walker and G.O. Webster.

Officers:-

B. Mason (Director of Corporate Resources) and A. Bluff (Democratic Services Officer).

0209. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Parkin, S. Peake, J. J. P. Phelan, T Rodda, R. Turner, S. Wallis, D.S. Watson and J. Wilson.

0210. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith, seconded by Councillor C. Munks
RESOLVED that Councillor K. Bowman be elected chair of Budget Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

0211. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith, seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton
RESOLVED that Councillor M.J. Dooley be appointed as Vice Chair of Budget Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

0212. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

0213. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0214. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members considered the Terms of Reference.

A short discussion took place.

It was suggested that an additional item be added to the Terms of Reference so that Scrutiny Chairs could present update information to the Committee;

7. Update Information from Scrutiny Chairs.

Moved by Councillor J.E. Bennett, seconded by Councillor M.J. Dooley
RESOLVED that an additional item be added to the Terms of Reference so that Scrutiny Chairs could present update information to the Committee;

(Governance Manager/ Standards Committee)

0215. MINUTES - 16TH JANUARY 2013

Moved by Councillor E. Hall, seconded by Councillor C. Munks
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of Budget Scrutiny Committee held on 16th January 2013 be approved as a correct record.

0216. EXTRAORDINARY MINUTES – 5TH FEBRUARY 2013

Moved by Councillor M. J. Dooley, seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith
RESOLVED that the minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Budget Scrutiny Committee held on 5th February 2013 be approved as a correct record.

0217. EXTRAORDINARY MINUTES – 8TH FEBRUARY 2013

Moved by Councillor C.P. Cooper, seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith
RESOLVED that the minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Committee be approved as a correct record.

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

0218. EXTRAORDINARY MINUTES – 19TH APRIL 2013

Minute 1133 – Scrutiny Arrangements 2013 Onwards

Councillor Bowman advised Members that recommendation 2 of Minute 1133, that Scrutiny Members receive paper copies of all Scrutiny agendas and reports, had now been superseded by colour coded files, which had been placed in all the Members rooms and contained copies of all Scrutiny agendas and reports.

A short discussion took place.

Moved by Councillor R.A. Heffer, seconded by Councillor E. Hall
RESOLVED that the minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Budget Scrutiny Committee held on 19th April 2013 be approved as a correct record.

0219. DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS COVERING REPORT PRESENTED TO AUDIT COMMITTEE AND FOREWARD

Committee considered the covering report and foreward to the draft Statement of Accounts which had been presented with the draft Governance Statement to Audit Committee on 26th June.

The year had started with a significant savings target to meet and this had been achieved which has put the Council in a more robust financial position. Efforts have been made to minimise the impact on services for local residents.

An outturn report providing detail on how the Council had performed in all of its services would be presented to Executive in August and would be brought back to Budget Scrutiny Committee in September.

Members asked questions in relation to Council Tax, the General Fund, Right to Buy, Welfare Reform, the Shirebrook Enterprise Centre, Housing Fund Revenue Account (HRA), the New Homes Bonus and the recent Peer Review Challenge.

A lengthy discussion took place.

In response to a question regarding the housing stock condition survey, the Director of Corporate Resources advised Members that external consultants were being appointed through the European Procurement Process and Contracts Standing Orders.

Members were advised that the draft Statement of Accounts and the draft Governance Statement would now be considered by External Audit.

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith, seconded by Councillor M. J. Dooley
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0220. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Committee considered a report in relation to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The report had been presented to Executive on 10th June and Audit Committee on 26th June.

The Director of Corporate Resources drew the meeting's attention to a table in the report, which set out the savings agreed in respect of 2013/14, the details of savings achieved to date and the projected savings at the year end. A brief narrative was also provided outlining progress made in each of the areas concerned.

Members were advised that the efficiency grant from the Government would be £1m in 2013/14 and a business plan would be in place by September 2013. A range of 'other' work was being undertaken to achieve the overall savings target of £993k.

The Council needed to look at how much could be achieved through the Growth Strategy and how much Welfare Reform and Universal Credit would cost the Authority. A budget timetable was included in the report for Members information.

Members asked questions in relation to property rationalisation savings, the sale of Sherwood Lodge to Morrison's, spend on the refurbishment of the Arc, the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Grant and the Capacity Grid.

In response to a question regarding vacancy management, the Director of Corporate Resources advised Members that Strategic Alliance Management Team continued to review all vacant posts to assess whether they need to be filled or could be part of the wider strategy of securing savings.

Councillor Mills left the meeting at this point.

In response to a question raised regarding the Icelandic Bank monies and where they fitted in with the savings, the Director of Corporate Resources advised Members that these had been included in the accounts at the request of CIPFA, based on an assumption that the full amount would be returned to the Authority.

A further discussion of the Icelandic Bank issue took place.

Members raised further questions in relation to a staff pay increase of 1% and empty property rates.

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith, seconded by Councilor C. Munks
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0221. STRATEGIC RISK REPORT

Committee considered a report regarding the Strategic Risk Register which had been presented to Executive on 14th May.

The Director of Corporate Resources explained the scoring on the Risk Register and answered Members' questions.

Moved by Councillor R.A. Heffer, seconded by Councilor G.O. Webster
RESOLVED that the report be received.

0222. UPDATE INFORMATION FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

The Chair of Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee gave a verbal update to the meeting on the Committees review work, being 'High Street and Town Centre Regeneration', focusing on Bolsover town centre.

If time permitted, a light touch review would also be carried out on the other 3 main towns in the District, being Clowne, Shirebrook and South Normanton.

Further to a question raised, the Chair reported that there had been three reasons why Bolsover town had been chosen for the review;

- The Council had won £100k of High Street funding for Bolsover
- A new Morrisons store was due to be built in Bolsover in the near future
- The possibility of securing European funding to invest in Bolsover.

A short discussion took place.

Improvement Scrutiny Committee

The Chair of Improvement Scrutiny Committee gave a verbal update to the meeting on the Committees review work being the 'Impact of Welfare Reform'.

Committee was aware that another group was looking at the impact of Welfare Reform on residents, so the review would focus on the impact on the Council's Contact Centres and staff. The Joint Assistant Director of Resources and the

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Customer Contact Manager would be attending the Committee's next meeting in July to ensure no duplication of work would be carried out.

Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee

The Chair of Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee gave a verbal update to the meeting on the Committee's review work being 'Barriers to Private Rented Housing'.

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager would be attending the Committee's meeting in July to give a presentation to help steer the review.

If time permitted, a short review would also be carried out regarding Enforcement Notices.

The meeting concluded at 12noon.