

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in The Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday 5th December 2016 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members-

Councillor R. Bowler in the Chair

Councillors A. Anderson, P.M. Bowmer, G. Buxton, C.P. Cooper, P.A. Cooper, H.J. Gilmour, R.A. Heffer, A. Joesbury, D. McGregor, C.R. Moesby, T. Munro, J.E. Smith, K.F. Walker, B. Watson, D.S. Watson and J. Wilson

Officers:-

B. Mason (Executive Director – Operations), D. Clarke (Assistant Director – Finance, Revenues & Benefits), C. Millington (Scrutiny Officer) and A. Brownsword (Senior Governance Officer)

0507. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Barnes, J.A. Clifton, S. Peake, P. Smith, E. Stevenson and R. Turner.

0508. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no declarations of interest.

0509. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

0510. MINUTES – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2016

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor J. Wilson

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Committee held on 12th September 2016 be approved as a true and correct record.

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

0511. UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

1. Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee

The Vice Chair informed the meeting that the Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee were continuing work on a review into 'Where does Public Health fit within Planning Policy' which would be concluded in the New Year. A presentation had also been received on the work Environmental Health were carrying out to combat environmental despoilment.

It was also noted that a planning application was expected within the next few months for the new Doctors surgery in Creswell.

2. Growth Scrutiny Committee

The Chair of Growth Scrutiny Committee informed the meeting that Growth Committee were currently looking at the Council's debt management processes and had received presentations on the proposed Regeneration Frameworks and progress updates from the Chief Executive Officer.

3. Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee

The Chair noted that the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee was due to approve its final report for the 'Review of district heating charges'. An interim report had been submitted to the Executive on 28th November and the recommendations would be included within the final report.

0512. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN – REVISED BUDGETS 2016/17

The Assistant Director – Finance, Revenues & Benefits presented the report which had previously been approved by the Executive on 28th November 2016, for Members' information. The report gave details of the outcome of the revised budget process undertaken during October and November 2016.

General Fund Revenue Account

It was noted that the shortfall of £57,000 at the end of the previous year had been resolved and that £423,000 savings had been identified which would be transferred to the Transformation Reserve.

A question was asked whether services had been affected by turning a deficit into a surplus and the Assistant Director – Finance, Revenues & Benefits noted that work was carried out with managers was based upon an agreed principle to maintain

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

agreed service levels within the budgets. This year vacancy management and planning income had contributed to the surplus which had not impacted upon services

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account had performed well with some additional income in respect of Supporting People received from Derbyshire County Council.

Capital Programme

Work was being undertaken to provide more accurate details of project expenditure over the period of the MTFP which would be fed into the budget reports brought to Members in February.

Questions were asked regarding NNDR appeals and it was noted that the current rules encouraged appeals to the Valuation Office, with the result that there was a large backlog. The rules for submitting appeals were intended to become stricter in the future and would recur the payment of a fee, together with providing greater details of the grounds for the appeal.

Members asked questions regarding Welfare Adaptations, Discretionary Housing Payments, homelessness and street cleansing. The Executive Director – Operations noted that the issues would be investigated and reported back to the members of the Budget Scrutiny Committee.

Moved by Councillor R. Bowler and seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(Executive Director – Operations)

0513. BUDGET PROCESS FOR 2017/18 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Executive Director – Operations gave a presentation which included details of:

- National Business Rates Revaluation
- How have rateable values changed Derbyshire
- Business Rate Revaluation
- Budget process for 2017/18
- Autumn Statement
- Budget 2018/19 onwards
- Towards NNDR Localisation

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members expressed concerns regarding changes in the levels of Business Rate Valuation following the revaluation undertaken by the Government's Valuation Agency especially for small businesses and shops. The Assistant Director mentioned that many small businesses would be protected by Small Business Rate Relief, whilst all businesses would benefit from a transitional period during which the charge would be gradually increased. It was noted that the rateable value of Business properties was set by the Valuation Office and not by the local authority. The Local Authority was responsible for collecting the monies due, not for establishing the amount that should be paid.

Moved by Councillor R.J. Bowler and seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith
RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

The meeting concluded at 1132 hours.