



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and time	THURSDAY, 22 JANUARY 2009 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Muriel Miller (Chairman), Ivan Bulwer, Vanessa Churchman, Deborah Gardiner, Heather Humby, Gill Kennett, Colin Richards, Margaret Webster
Co-opted Members (voting)	Mrs Sue Poston, Mr Charles Rogers
Co-opted Member (non voting)	Mr Bob Blezzard
Other Members Present	Cllr Barry Abraham, Cllr George Brown, Cllr Mike Cunningham, Cllr Jonny Fitzgerald-Bond, Cllr Geoff Lumley, Cllr David Pugh,
Officers Present	Mr Steve Beynon, Mr Dave Burbage, Mr Stuart Fraser, Mr Stuart Love, Miss Pakeezah Sponner, Mr Paul Thistlewood
Apologies	Cllr William Burt, Cllr Erica Oulton, Cllr Lady Pigot, Mrs Sara Sheath, Mrs Urszula Topp.

59 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [18 December 2008](#) be confirmed.

60 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Deborah Gardiner declared a personal interest in Minute number 61 as she worked for Unison.

Mr Bob Blezzard declared a personal interest in Minute number 61 as he was member of 3 Parish and Town Councils, Clerk to 1 Town Council and member of the Association of Local Councils.

Cllr Gill Kennett declared a personal interest in Minute number 61 as she was a member of the Association of Local Councils.

Cllr Collin Richards declared a personal interest in Minute number 61 as he was a member of a Parish Council.

Cllr Vanessa Churchman declared a personal interest in Minute 61 as she was a member of a Parish Council.

Mrs Sue Poston declared a personal interest in Minute 61 as she was a member of a Town Council.

61 **Revenue and Capital Budget 2009/10**

The Director of Resources gave a PowerPoint presentation updating information on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2009/10 since the Committee last met. The actions being taken to close the revenue gap was outlined. This however still indicated a gap of £3.250m. Service proposals amounting to £2.8m had been identified ranging from not funding certain activities, cost reduction by improved targeting and increase in some charging areas.

There were a number of key risks that had to be taken into account which could affect the level of expenditure or income together with several non insurable risks. An outline was also given about reserves and balances since 2005.

The capital programme for 2008/09 would be at or below the resources allocated with £3m of schemes deferred. There were commitments of £36m already for 2009/10. Whilst there were uncommitted resources, including prudential borrowing, for 2009/10 there were concerns about the Council having the capacity to deliver an extensive capital programme.

The level of Council Tax increase for 2009/10 would be no greater than the Retail Price Index (RPI) as at September 2008. This was 5% although both the Consumer Price Index and the RPI excluding mortgage payments were slightly above this. The responses received as part of the budget consultation exercise showed a preference for a Council tax increase of 3.5% with some reduced services.

In clarifying elements of the revenue and capital budget for 2009/10 the following issues were highlighted and discussed :-

- The potential 205 redundancies included the restructuring of Senior Management as agreed by the Cabinet in November 2008, a number of posts that were currently unfilled and posts that would be phased out over a period of time as the result of implementing the Business System Improvement (BSIP) Project.
- The proposal for fairer allocation of care services and value for money by reducing spend in expensive services was aimed at preventing duplication of social care. This was an area where the Council had a disproportionate high spend when compared to other authorities. Some care packages had already been renegotiated at a lower price without affecting clients requirements.
- Given the economic climate the suggested proposal for increased income from the Council's assets and rent portfolio of £160k might not be fully achievable and could also have a detrimental effect on any business or organisation that rented accommodation from the Council.
- It was confirmed that the first phase of Business System Improvement Project (BSIP) was scheduled to go 'live' April 2009. The second phase (which included Human Resources and Payments) would be implemented later in the year so that a number of strands could be brought together more effectively. The project was on target and within budget.

- Expenditure on Public Realm would be reduced by slowing down the programme of improvements.
- Consideration was to be given to extending the chargeable hours for those streets where on street parking charges were already levied. The cost of the parking permit would also be increased and the Committee highlighted a recommendation arising from its enquiry into car parking in 2007. This had suggested that a price structure could be based upon engine size/banding.
- Changes to the budget for support to parish and town councils were the result of the whole Island now being emparished and the Council enabling them to undertake a range of activities according to their own requirements. The full effect of the transfer of allotments would not take place until 2010/11.
- Reductions in events and publications would mean no Chairman's reception during Cowes Week and fewer editions of One Island.
- The budget should not affect the delivery of the key projects in the Corporate Plan but the document would need to be revised later in 2009 to reflect the changing circumstances created by the economic climate and the transformation of Council services.
- Representatives of the Committee had attended a number of the budget focus groups and were disappointed in the level of attendance. It was believed that the arrangements for these should be reviewed, particularly from an officer resource perspective.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT arrangements for undertaking the budget focus groups be reviewed for the 2010/11 process.
- (ii) THAT the budget papers that are to be considered by the Cabinet and Full Council should set out the previous 3 years expenditure/income to enable clear comparisons to be made on the costs of services.
- (iii) THAT consideration should be given by the Cabinet to changes to the costs of the car parking permit so that this reflects engine size to fit in with the council's Eco-Island aspirations.

62. Undercliff Drive Implementation Plan – Monitoring report

The Committee noted that the monitoring report had been revised in accordance with its instructions and now excluded all those actions that had been completed. The Chief Executive confirmed that all chief officers had received their appraisals as required under action 6. With regard to the permanent structure of the Procurement Team it was intended to appoint a Head of Procurement and Compliance during 2009 when the existing arrangements ended.

The revised Risk Management Policy and Strategy would be considered by the Audit Committee on 17 March 2009 and not February as stated in the report.

RESOLVED :

THAT the monitoring report be noted.

63. Forward Plan

The recently published Forward Plan for the period February 2009 to May 2009 was circulated at the meeting. In discussing the contents the following items were highlighted :-

- Use of Tesco (Brading Road, Ryde) Section 106 Contributions – Ryde – Cabinet Member delegated decision – List of consultees should have included local members. Also has to be a decision taken in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- Proposed Disposal of Well Road car park – Cabinet Member delegated decision – suitable alternative temporary and permanent provision will be agreed before disposal.
- Customer Insight - Cabinet decision on 31 March – withdrawn.
- To consider a Request from the Isle of Wight Community Club (Cowes) to Support facility Improvements – Cabinet Member delegated decision – negotiations had delayed completion of this matter.
- Items for Cabinet 31 March 2009 – 13 items listed but a number of these would now be Cabinet Member delegated decisions.

RESOLVED :

THAT the update to the Forward Plan be noted.

CHAIRMAN