

CIVIC AFFAIRS

19 September 2013

6.00pm - 8.36 pm

Present: Councillors Rosenstiel (Chair), Benstead, Boyce, Herbert, Johnson and Pitt

FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL**13/52/CIV Update Report on the Budget Setting Process**

The committee received a report from the Chief Executive regarding proposals for the 2014 budget setting timetable.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the procurement of an alternative financial modelling system (4.8 of the Officer's report), the Director of Resources confirmed that this would cost £80,000 (with £14,000 on costs) and would not offer material improvement on the current system. The advice of the external auditors was that the current system was fit for purpose.

While greater scrutiny of the budget was welcomed, Councillor Herbert did raise concern about the amount of meetings scheduled for January 2014. The Chief Executive acknowledged the concern but emphasised the importance of allowing individual Scrutiny Committees to have an input into the budget debate. The schedule also reflected the current requirements of the constitution.

Councillor Herbert raised concern also that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) appeared to follow a different scrutiny path. He felt that, with a budget of £50m, the HRA should be scrutinised by the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The Chief Executive confirmed that the process reflected the current constitutional arrangements and, whilst it was too late for any change to the 2013/14 process, it could be looked at in future years.

In response to Councillor Herbert's points the Chair highlighted that both the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Full Council had an opportunity to debate the housing capital programme.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Recommend to Council the timetable (attached to the Officer's report) for the Council's budget setting process for 2014 and the changes to the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in Appendix B of the Officer's report to reflect these.
- ii. Note the feedback on the progress made on other actions.

The meeting ended at 8.36 pm

CHAIR