

THE EXECUTIVE

23 January 2014

6.00pm - 6.33 pm

Present: Councillors Bick (Chair), Smart (Vice-Chair), Reiner, Swanson, Smith and Ward

Officers Present:

Chief Executive – Antoinette Jackson

Director of Resources – David Horspool

Director of Environment – Simon Payne

Director of Customer and Community Services: Liz Bisset

Director of Business Transformation: Ray Ward

Committee Manager – Glenn Burgess

Other Councillors in attendance:

Councillor Herbert

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

14/5/EX Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Brown.

14/6/EX Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

14/7/EX Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record.

14/8/EX Public Questions

There were no public questions.

14/9/EX Budget Setting Report February 2014 (Executive)

The committee received an update report from the Director of Resources regarding the Budget-Setting Report (BSR) 2014/15.

As part of his introduction the Director of Resources confirmed the following:

- i. Appendix B(b) of the BSR incorrectly stated that the figures relating to the Council Tax requirement for 2014/15 would be available at this meeting. This information and that relating to Appendix N (Section 25 Report) will be available in time for Council on 27 February 2014.
- ii. Information relating to the Actuarial Report and Council Tax Referendum was still outstanding but Officers were actively chasing.
- iii. Information relating to the NNDR 1 Form had now been received and Officers would be formulating a response.
- iv. The Council Tax base, as set out in Appendix B(a) of the BSR, is calculated and determined by the Director of Resources under delegated authority.
- v. Officers are monitoring the other precepting authorities but were not expecting meeting dates to be delayed.
- vi. The Executive is being asked to recommend the BSR to Council on 27 February 2014 for approval, subject to any amendments at the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 7 February 2014.

The Executive and Officers received questions from the Leader of the Labour Group:

- i. Councillor Herbert requested clarification on scrutiny of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) BSR. The Director of Customer and Community Services responded that the HRA BSR had been taken to both the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and the Special Housing Management Board on 16 January 2014. A decision was required on rents/charges and housing revenue before the Council could set its Council Tax levels, but elements relating to Treasury Management and Housing Capital have been recommended to Council on 27 February 2014.
- ii. Councillor Herbert requested a detailed report on the capital elements of car park improvements. The Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change responded that it was within the gift of the Environment Scrutiny Committee to request a report and he would not have any objections.

- iii. Councillor Herbert requested further information on the review of Community and Neighbourhood Centre Management (ref: SR 3346). The Director of Customer and Community Services responded that the figures included in the BSR were cumulative estimates, some of which had come from the broader restructure and some had come from the ChYpPS Review. An amount had yet to be identified but detailed work was ongoing.
- iv. Councillor Herbert expressed concern regarding the proposed cuts to the Public Art Professional Support Services (Ref: SR3331). The Executive Councillor for Public Places responded that the current post is full time, but only 50% funded by the City Council. The remaining 50% is funded through developer money. The proposal in the BSR is for this post to remain full time, but be 100% funded through developer money. Councillor Herbert asked if there would be clarity on who the post holder reported to. The Director of Environment confirmed that the post holder would report to, and address the specific objectives of, the City Council.
- v. Councillor Herbert requested an update on progress of the Neighbourhood Resolution Panels (Ref: PPF3353). The Leader responded that, whilst a lengthy set up process was expected, problems filling the Coordinator post had delayed the project. Panel Hearings had started to take place in the last 3 months and were receiving good feedback. The Director of Customer and Community Services agreed to forward Councillor Herbert details on the precise number of hearings that had taken place.
- vi. Councillor Herbert requested an update on the refurbishment of Lion Yard Toilets. The Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services responded that a delay had been caused by an increase in construction costs. This had resulted in Officers having to review the tenders but a bid was now in place and the contract should be let within the next 7 days. In response to a further question from Councilor Herbert the Executive Councillor confirmed that the £233,000 allocated in the 2014/14 budget was extra capital that would also allow the Silver Street Toilets to be completed.
- vii. Councillor Herbert welcomed the increases in property investment, especially in a very challenging property market. It was suggested however that a review of procedures in order to make the buying of property more straight forward could be beneficial. The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources responded that discussions were already underway with the Head of Legal Services regarding Officer delegations and urgency procedures in order to simplify the process. Councillor Herbert welcomed a review of Officer delegations.

In response to questions from the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources the Director of Resources confirmed the following:

- i. The required delegations to the new Director of Business Transformation and the new Head of Finance were being finalised.
- ii. The format for calculating Council Tax Base is prescribed by Government. Whilst Officers were mindful of local discretions there had been no indication of any changes to the format.

The Executive resolved unanimously to recommend the Budget Setting Report 2014/15 to Council on 27 February 2014, subject to any amendments at the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 February 2014, namely:

General Fund Revenue Budgets: [Section 4, page 37 of the BSR refers]

Budget 2013/14:

- a) To approve, with any amendments, the revised budget items shown in Appendix C(a) of the BSR.
- b) To approve, with any amendments, the Non Cash-Limit budget items for 2013/14 as shown in BSR Appendix C(b).
- c) To approve, with any amendments, the overall revised budget for 2013/14 for the General Fund, as shown in BSR Section 4 [page 37 refers] and BSR Appendix D(a).

Budget 2014/15:

- d) To agree any recommendations for submission to the Executive in respect of:
 - Non Cash Limit items as shown in BSR Appendix C(b).
 - Revenue Savings and Bids as shown in BSR Appendix C(c), (d) & (e).
 - Priority Policy Fund (PPF) Bids as shown in BSR Appendix C(f) – based on the position as outlined in BSR Section 4 [page 37 refers].
 - Bids to be funded from External or Earmarked Funds as shown in BSR Appendix C(g).

e) To note the Council Tax taxbase, as set out in Appendix B(a) of the BSR, as calculated and determined by the Director of Resources under delegated authority.

f) To recommend to Council the level of Council Tax for 2014/15 as set out in BSR Section 3 [page 32 refers].

Note that the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel will meet on 5 February 2014 to consider the precept proposed by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority will meet on 13 February 2014 and Cambridgeshire County Council will meet on 18 February 2014 to consider the amounts in precepts to be issued to the City Council for the year 2014/15.

Treasury Management: [BSR Section 6, page 58 of the BSR refers]

g) To recommend to Council to approve:

(i) the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix M(a) of the BSR and to confirm that the Authorised Limit for external borrowing determined for 2014/15 will be the statutory limit determined under section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003,

(ii) to delegate to the Section 151 Officer, within the borrowing totals for any financial year within (i) above, to effect movement between the separately agreed figures for 'borrowing' and 'other long term liabilities',

(iii) the Treasury Management Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies set out in BSR Appendices M(b) and M(c) , and

(iv) the Council's Counterparty List shown in BSR Appendix M(c), Annex 3.

Other Revenue:

h) To delegate to the Section 151 Officer authority to finalise changes relating to any corporate and/or departmental restructuring and any reallocation of support service and central costs, in accordance with the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (SeRCOP).

Capital: [BSR Section 5, page 47 of the BSR refers]

Capital & Revenue Projects Plan: [BSR Section 5, page 51 refers]

- i) To approve project appraisals that have been referred by Executive Councillors:
- j) If applicable, to agree any recommendations to the Executive in respect of the bids outlined in BSR Appendix G(a) & (b) for approval to include in the Capital Plan, or put on the Hold List, including any additional use of reserves required.
- k) To agree to carry forward resources from 2013/14, resulting from variances as detailed in BSR Appendix G(c), to fund re-phased capital spending.
- l) To agree the revised Capital & Revenue Projects Plan as set out in BSR Appendix G(d), the Hold list set out in BSR Appendix G(e), and the Funding as set out in BSR Appendix G(f) for the General Fund.

Note that the Appendices include new capital bids, but will be updated in subsequent versions to Council to incorporate approved rephasing included in the above recommendations.

General Fund Reserves:

- m) To note the impact of revenue and capital budget approvals and approve the resulting level of reserves to be used to:
 - (i) support the 2013/14 budget
 - (ii) support the 2014/15 and future year's budgets.

as set out in BSR Appendix D(c).

The meeting ended at 6.33 pm

CHAIR