

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13 February 2015
5.00 - 6.45 pm

Present: Councillors Robertson (Chair), Sinnott (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Benstead, Bick, Cantrill, C. Smart and M. Smart

Councillor Smart joined the Committee after the decision on item 15/22/SNRa

Leader of the Council: Councillor Lewis Herbert

Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources: Councillor George Owers

Other Councillors:

Executive Councillor for Community, Arts and Recreation: Councillor Richard Johnson

Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price

Officers:

Chief Executive: Antoinette Jackson

Director of Customer and Community Services: Liz Bisset

Director of Environment: Simon Payne

Director of Business Transformation: Ray Ward

Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba

Safer Communities Section Manager: Lynda Kilkelly

Committee Manager: James Goddard

Other Officers:

Head of Legal Services: Simon Pugh

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

15/19/SNR Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

15/20/SNR Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

15/21/SNR Public Questions

There were no public questions.

15/22/SNR Amendments to the Budget Setting Report February 2015

15/22/SNRa Executive Amendment

Matter for Decision

The Head of Finance introduced the Executive Amendment.

The Officer's report detailed amendments to the Budget-Setting Report 2015/16 that was recommended to Council by the Executive at its meeting on 22 January 2015.

These amendments include corrections and also reflect new or updated information that has been received since that meeting and the consequent changes required.

Unless otherwise stated, any references in the recommendations to sections, pages and appendices relate to Version 1 of the Budget Setting Report (BSR) 2015/16.

Corrections and new or updated information:

- **Collection Fund Deficit, Appendix B(e):**
Change to item NCL3740 - increasing the City Council's share of the projected year-end deficit from £24k to £60k (revised calculation based on updated information), the additional £36k to be met from general fund reserves in 2015/16.
- **Budget Pressures, Appendix B(a):**
Inclusion of omitted item CF3672 £1m
- **Projects Under Development (PUD) List, Appendix D(a):**
Inclusion of omitted item UD016 Public Conveniences
- **City Deal:**
Change the "**City Deal Infrastructure Investment Fund**" to "**City Deal Investment and Delivery Fund**" - the Council has committed to pooling a proportion of gross NHB receipts with its local authority partners to provide funding to enable delivery of City Deal objectives to support and address the impacts of growth. The change in wording reflects ongoing discussions on the use of this funding [pages 22, 24, 31 and 100 in Appendix E refer].

Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources

The Executive Councillor approved the amendments:

i. Collection Fund Deficit:

Change to item NCL3740 – increasing the City Council’s share of the projected year-end deficit from £24k to £60k, the additional £36k to be met from general fund reserves in 2015/16.

ii. City Deal:

- Change the “City Deal Infrastructure Investment Fund” to “City Deal Investment and Delivery Fund”.
- To authorise the Section 151 officer to make necessary changes to the Budget Setting Report 2015/16, to be considered by Council at the meeting on 26 February 2015, to reflect the impact of changes for the above.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer’s report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions to endorse the recommendations as set out in the Officer’s report.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Councillor Smart joined the Committee after the decision was taken.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

15/22/SNRb Liberal Democrat Amendment

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group introduced the item.

The following questions (Q) were put by Members on the items in the Liberal Democrat Amendment and answered (A) as listed:

Finance

- i. (Q) Would the amendment lead to higher spending? (A) The purpose of 2015/16 Budget - Bids & Savings – GF (P16 of Officer's report) was to avoid higher net spend 2015 – 2020.
- ii. (Q) There appeared to be a conflict of information. £97,500 spending increase was implied in Appendix [B(e) Non-Cash Limit] (P16), but tables later in the report suggested a decrease. (A) Tables on P38 showed savings targets.
- iii. (Q) The amendment would lead to an unsustainable budget and higher savings requirements in future. (A) Again referred to tables on P38 showed savings targets. Labour and Liberal Democrats both wished to make savings by 2020, each had their own spending priorities. There were £2.471m of undefined savings.
- iv. Queried details of saving expectations in 2015/16 Budget - Bids & Savings – GF (P16 – 17). (A) Reducing the backlog in delivery would make the process more efficient.
- v. (Q) Referred to 2015/16 Budget - Capital Bids – GF (P17), how would separating a small element of highways project funding for City Council use, instead of the Joint Area Committee, lead to efficiencies? (A) The intention was to decentralise some funding to Area Committees so they could decide how to use it. The role of the Joint Area Committee was different from the Area Joint Committee it replaces.
- vi. (Q) Queried reason for abandoning introduction of self-service telephony and electronic enquiry services 2015/16 Budget - Bids & Savings – GF (P16). (A) An automated and complex self-service system did not provide the service people expected from the Council. The Customer Service Centre was brought in to address this.

Housing

- vii. (Q) Queried housing sites expected to come forward. (A) Sites in Council General Fund ownership
 - Mill Road Depot.
 - North West Cambridge.
 - Park Street Car Park.
- viii. (Q) What is the average timescale to execute housing projects and make potential sites available? (A) To be set out in future for scrutiny by relevant committees. The timescales in Liberal Democrat and Labour 2015 – 2016 budgets were similar.

The Director of Environment said the Mill Road Depot site should come free for housing by 2018. Three operational sites needed to be released before the land as a whole could be released. A detailed plan was being worked up regarding the timeframe. This was also dependent on the Local Plan timetable. Three years seemed a realistic timeframe.

Timeframes for making intermediate housing sites available depended on particular site factors such as ensuring access and undertaking consultation. Eighteen months to three years seemed a realistic timeframe.

- ix. (Q) Requested clarity on how £450,000 of income would be generated from housing sites in 2017 – 2018. (A) The income figures were based on briefing details given by Officers. Councillor Bick undertook to share the briefing information with The Executive to show the evidence base for amendment figures.

If sites were brought forward for use quickly, the Council would get the income sooner.

- x. (Q) Sought clarity on how planning process could be speeded up to bring more sites forward for development and build housing. (A) Undertake due planning process faster ie in parallel not in series.
- xi. (Q) Why had the Liberal Democrats not undertaken faster house building when they were in control of the Council? (A) A number of factors had come into place recently such as some sites only now becoming available.

Community, Arts and Recreation

- xii. (Q) Were living wage sums appropriate? (A) The premise of the amendment was to expect employers contracted by the Council to pay a living wage. This would be paid for by contractors making operational efficiencies. The situation would not be cost free, the Council would have to negotiate with contractors.
- xiii. (Q) Why should the Council subsidise contractors to pay the living wage when they should be doing this already? (A) Some contracts were put out to tender prior to the Council implementing its living wage policy, therefore changes to contract terms would have to be negotiated (as a moral expectation), not expected arbitrarily. New contracts would reflect living wage expectations.

- xiv. (Q) Were funding sources appropriate for Nightingale Recreation Ground Pavilion refurbishment (P17)? (A) £400,000 was appropriate funding. The intention was to re-instate the scheme in the Capital Plan.
- xv. (Q) Was Jesus Green Pavilion sufficiently developed to receive funding (P17)? Had appropriate consultation been undertaken on the scheme? Should the scheme should be listed in 'projects under development' rather than the Capital Plan? (A) The project had received funding for two years prior to removal from the Capital Plan. The intention was to re-instate the scheme. Detailed consultation information was not set out in the Capital Plan.
- xvi. (Q) 2015/16 Budget - Bids & Savings – GF (P16) set out tapering living wage costs. Please clarify details. (A) Figures provided a platform/expectation that could be used for future negotiation. Also for Lion Yard toilets and partnership work with the Police.
- xvii. (Q) Had Liberal Democrat budget amendment figures 2015/16 Budget - Bids & Savings – GF (P16) been drawn up in conjunction with advice from the Police in terms of their resource expectations? Labour had liaised with third parties when in opposition. (A) The budget amendment was Liberal Democrats saying that Labour had got its spending priorities wrong. The Police need resources to assist the Council.
- xviii. (Q) Would revealing that the Council was prepared to negotiate on living wage terms and conditions (ie provide subsidies) weaken its bargaining position? (A) No.
- xix. (Q) Sought clarification regarding Deletion of proposed cutback in Maternity Fund funding 2015/16 Budget - Bids & Savings – GF (P16). (A) Accept that saving will be made here if they cannot be found elsewhere, but object to making savings in the Maternity Fund on principle.

15/23/SNR Public Spaces Protection Order

Matter for Decision

The report set out the result of the officers' review of potential areas for public spaces protection orders proposed by the Area Committees and asked the Executive Councillor to approve in principle the proposal to make a public spaces protection order in respect of Mill Road Cemetery, Petersfield Green and the front garden of Ditchburn Place; in the form set out at Appendix A of the Officer's report. Also to authorise officers to publicise the proposed order and to consult.

Decision of the Leader

- i. Approved in principle the proposal to make a public spaces protection order for Mill Road Cemetery, Petersfield Green and the front garden of

Ditchburn Place, Cambridge in the form set out at Appendix A of the Officer's report.

- ii. Authorised officers to publicise the proposed order and to carry out consultation as required by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Communities Section Manager.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. It was recognised that some areas of the city such as Mill Road Cemetery were affected by anti-social drinking. The Council wished to take steps to address this.
- ii. The PSPO was designed to stop anti-social street drinking, not displace it by moving drinkers from one area to another.

Liberal Democrat Councillors made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Sought clarification regarding the scope of the PSPO, and if it would impact on people having social drinks in public, as well as those who behaved in an anti-social way.
- ii. Asked how 'anti-social drinking' could be quantified in a meaningful way. There were no specifications in the document on how the Police should implement the power. An agreed protocol as discussed in proposals for a Designated Public Places Order in 2006 would address this and ensure the power was used with discretion.

In response to Members' questions the Leader said the following:

- i. The intention of the PSPO was to discourage anti-social drinking in public places. It was not expected to stop people having social drinks at picnics etc.
- ii. The power was not automatically available to the Police, it had to be given by the Council. This would decentralise its use and enable Officers to make on the spot decisions on whether to exercise the power or not. A Police Constable would have discretion by not having a

bureaucratic protocol in place, to be considered alongside any other rules and regulations. The Leader undertook to liaise with the Police regarding the PSPO implementation process. Labour Councillors did not think there was a need for a usage protocol as the PSPO would not stop general drinking, only anti-social street drinking.

- iii. The evidence base of need for a PSPO was set out in P4 – 7 of the Officer's report.
- iv. A PSPO was part of the range of options the Police could use to stop anti-social drinking.

Liberal Democrat Councillors requested a change to the recommendations. Councillor Bick formally proposed to add the following text (shown in bold) to recommendation 1 from the Officer's report:

To approve in principle the proposal to make a public spaces protection order for Mill Road Cemetery, Petersfield Green and the front garden of Ditchburn Place, Cambridge in the form set out at Appendix A **subject to agreement with the Police on a protocol defining situations where the power to enforce would be used, namely in response to incidents of anti-social behaviour;**

On a show of hands the proposal was lost by 5 votes to 3.

The Leader and Labour Councillors said the amendment would delay the introduction of the PSPO and a protocol was not needed as the PSPO and 2006 DPPO were two separate entities, and he had arranged a meeting with the police to ask appropriate questions on implementation.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions to endorse the recommendations as set out in the Officer's report.

The Leader approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

15/24/SNR Procedural Item: Change to February 2016 Meeting Date

The Committee agreed they would like the Committee Manager to investigate if it were possible to move future February Committee meetings from Fridays to another eg Mondays or Thursdays.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

CHAIR

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