

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 January 2011

9.30 - 10.55 am

Present: Councillors Ward (Chair), Kightley (Vice-Chair), Herbert, Pogonowski, Saunders, Tunnacliffe and Znajek

Executive Councillors:

Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth, Cllr Blair
Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services, Cllr Pitt

Officers Present:

Director of Environment, Simon Payne
Head of Strategy and Partnerships, Trevor Woollams
Environmental Projects Manager, Andrew Preston
Historic Environment Manager, John Preston
Accountant (Services), Karen Whyatt
Accountant (Services), Richard Wesbroom
Committee Manager, Martin Whelan

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

11/1/env Apologies

The committee received apologies from Councillor Kerr and Councillor Newbold.

11/2/env Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2010 were approved as a true and accurate record.

11/3/env Declarations of Interest

Councillors Saunders

- Item 7 – Personal – Member of Cambridge Past, Present and Future
- Item 9 – Personal – Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign
- 10 – Personal – Member of Cambridge Past, Present and Future and Cambridge Transitions.

Councillor Pogonowski

- Item 9 – Personal – Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign

Councillor Shah

- Item 10 – Personal – Wife undertakes consultancy work for Cambridge Carbon Trust.

11/4/env Public Questions (See information at the end of the agenda)

There were no public questions.

11/5/env Revenue and Capital Budgets 2010/11 (Revised), 2011/12 and 2012/13 (Forecast)

Matter for Decision:

To consider the revenue and capital budgets for 2010/11 (revised), 2011/12 and 2012/13 (forecast) for the Environmental and Waste Services portfolio.

Decision of Exec Cllr for Environmental and Waste Services:

The Executive Councillor,

Review of Charges:

a) Approved the proposed charges for Environmental and Waste services, as shown in Appendix B of the committee report.

Revenue Budgets:

b) Approved the current year funding requests and savings, (Shown in Appendix A of the committee report) and the resulting revised revenue budgets for 2010/11 (shown in Table 1 of the committee report) for submission to the Executive.

c) Agreed proposals for revenue savings and unavoidable bids, as set out in Appendix C of the committee report, which have been incorporated into the budgets presented for the Environmental and Waste Services portfolio.

d) Agreed proposals for Priority Policy Fund (PPF) bids, as set out in Appendix E of the committee report.

e) Approved the budget for 2011/12 as shown in Table 2, for submission to the Executive.

Capital:

f) Resolved to seek approval from the Executive to carry forward resources from 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix G of the committee report, to fund rephased capital spending.

g) Approved capital bids, as identified in Appendix H of the committee report, for submission to the Executive for inclusion in the Capital Plan or addition to the Hold List, as indicated.

h) Confirmed that there are no items covered by this portfolio to add to the Council's Hold List, for submission to the Executive.

i) Approved the revised Capital Plan for 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix J of the committee report, to be updated for any amendments detailed in (f), (g) and (h) above.

Reason for the Decision:

These are set out in the officer's report on the Agenda.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

N/A

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Director of Resources regarding the Revenue and Capital Budgets 2010/11 (Revised), 2011/12 and 2012/13 (Forecast).

The Accountant (Services) provided a summary of the changes, which reflected the outcome of the university contract and the prioritisations of PPF bids. The committee noted the update.

The Scrutiny Committee made the following comments on the report

- (i) Concern was expressed about the implications on the service quality if £100k was removed from the cleansing budget. The Head of Streets and Open Spaces and the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services, advised that the savings were from a re-organisation of the management arrangement and would not result in a lower quality of service.
- (ii) Clarification was sought on the overall number of posts that would be lost as part of the budget process. The Director of Environment advised that the question was very broad and was linked to other processes such as the Senior Management Review and Service restructures, to ensure that the organisation was configured in the most efficient manner. The committee were advised that any changes to staffing arrangements would be managed in accordance with the organisational change policy.
- (iii) With regards to the budget for toilet maintenance, it was questioned how much was allocated to the refurbishment of the Silver Street Toilets. The Head of Streets and Open Spaces confirmed that due to the difficult location, the majority of the budget would be spent on the Silver Street location, which was likely to be around £400k.
- (iv) Cllr Pogonowski proposed an amendment to the wording of PPF2711 to remove the reference to income generation. The committee were advised that the Head of Legal had checked the wording of all budget documents. The amendment fell by 2 votes to 5.
- (v) Clarification was requested on the budget provision for gritting. The committee were advised that the grit provided to committee groups this winter had been provided by the county and that the distribution had been managed through existing resources. The Executive Councillor acknowledged that progress had been more limited than

hoped and that a report would be presented to the March committee regarding this subject.

- (vi) The Head of Refuse and Environment was asked for an explanation for the high level of fees for the licensing of sex shops. The committee were advised that the fees were designed to cover the enhanced level of consultation and associated administration that these types of applications may generate.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 1 as amended.

The Executive Councillor for Environment and Waste Services agreed the proposal subject to the amendments detailed above.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

11/6/env Howes Place Conservation Area

The Scrutiny Committee noted that the item had been withdrawn.

11/7/env Design and Conservation Panel terms of reference

Matter for Decision

The Council's Advisory Conservation and Design Panel was originally set up in 1973. Its name, Terms of Reference, and membership were reviewed in 2006. This report recommends changes to its Terms of Reference, which have been reviewed at the conclusion of the Panel Chair's term. It also responds to suggestions made by members of the Agents' Forum.

Decision of Exec Cllr for Climate Change and Growth:

The Executive Councillor approved the proposed changes to the Design and Conservation Panel's Terms of Reference, as amended at the committee.

Reason for the Decision:

To update the Terms of Reference where necessary, to clarify the matters being brought to the Panel, and to improve management of the agendas to meet ever-increasing demands on the Panel's time.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Chair advised that the item had not been called in, however a minor amendment had been agreed prior to the meeting. The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth agreed the proposal subject to the amendments detailed above.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

11/8/env Environmental Improvement Programme Capital Programme Review

Matter for Decision:

To review the progress and achievements of the Environmental Improvement Programme Capital Programme and make recommendations regarding the future proposed management of the fund.

Decision of Exec Cllr for Climate Change and Growth:

The Executive Councillor

- i) Noted progress and achievements to date of the Environmental Improvement Capital Programme
- ii) Approved the inclusion of a bid of £200,000 per annum to be considered in the Budget Setting Report to extend the programme to 2014/15 in accordance with a revised remit.
- iii) Recommended to Council that unspent funding from the Environmental Improvement Capital Programme estimated at £355,000 be carried forward.

Reason for the Decision:

The decision required consideration as the existing programme ends in April 2011.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

N/A

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Environmental Projects Manager regarding the review of Environmental Improvement Project.

The Scrutiny Committee made the following comments

- i) A number of presentational issues were highlighted and noted.
- ii) Clarification was requested on why the allocation from Section 106 funds was reported as £0. The committee were advised that the figure was correct, as Section 106 hadn't directly funded the Environmental Improvement programme, but that a number of projects had received Section 106 funding in addition to Environmental Improvement funding.
- iii) The Environmental Improvement team were thanked for their work.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 1.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth agreed the proposal subject to the amendments detailed above.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

11/9/env Cycleways Joint Capital Programme Review

Matter for Decision

To review the progress and achievements of the Cycleways Joint Capital Programme and make recommendations regarding the future proposed management of the fund.

Decision of Exec Cllr for Climate Change and Growth:

The Executive Councillor

- i) Noted progress and achievements to date of the Cycleways Capital Programme (PR007).
- ii) Approved the inclusion of a bid of £100,000 per annum (£50,000 from the City and £50,000 from the County Council) to be considered in the Budget Setting Report to extend the programme to 2014/15 in accordance with a revised remit.
- iii) Agreed to recommend to Council the carry forward of funding from the Joint Cycleways capital programme of £142,000 for the implementation of the Downham's Lane and Perne Road Roundabout schemes.

Reason for the Decision:

The decision required consideration as the existing programme ends in April 2011.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

N/A

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Environmental Projects Manager regarding the Cycleways Joint Capital Programme Review. The committee were advised that the County element of the funding was subject to confirmation.

The Scrutiny Committee made the following comments regarding the report

- i) The Executive Councillor was asked what would happen if the County Council declined to fund their element of the programme. The committee noted that the scheme would continue if the County Council declined to contribute.
- ii) An update was requested on whether the shortfall associated with the Madingley Road Cycleway scheme had been resolved. The Environmental Project Manager explained that the scheme was designed to reach the Observatory entrance, but that the County Council were currently exploring options to extend the scheme to the end of Conduit Head Road and ultimately the Park and Ride site. The Executive Councillor advised that work was ongoing to improve the accuracy of cost projections for cycleway schemes.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth agreed the proposal subject to the amendments detailed above.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

11/10/env Revenue and Capital Budgets 2010/11 (Revised), 2011/12 and 2012/13 (Forecast)

Matter for decision

To consider the revenue and capital budgets (2010/11) revised, 2011/12 and 2012/13 (Forecast) for the Climate Change and Growth Portfolio.

Decision of Exec Cllr for Climate Change and Growth:

Review of Charges:

a) Approved the proposed charges for Climate Change & Growth services and facilities, as shown in Appendix B of the committee report. .

Revenue Budgets:

b) Approved the current year funding requests and savings, (shown in Appendix A of the committee report) and the resulting revised revenue budgets for 2010/11 (shown in Table 1) for submission to the Executive.

c) Agreed proposals for revenue savings and unavoidable bids, as set out in Appendix C of the committee report, which have been incorporated into the budgets presented for the Climate Change and Growth portfolio.

d) Agreed proposals for revenue bids funded from existing or external funding, as set out in Appendix D of the committee report, which are incorporated into the budgets presented for the Climate Change and Growth portfolio.

e) Approve the budget for 2011/12 as shown in Table 2, for submission to the Executive.

f) Approved the transfer of the Sustainable City grants budget from 2011/12 onwards from the Environment to the Customer and Community Services department.

g) Approved the transfer of the funding for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership and the Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership from 2011/12 onwards from the Environment to the Chief Executives department

Capital:

h) Resolved to seek approval from the Executive to carry forward resources from 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix G of the committee report, to fund re-phased capital spending.

- i) Approved capital bids, as identified in Appendix H of the committee report, for submission to the Executive for inclusion in the Capital Plan or addition to the Hold List, as indicated.
- j) Confirm that there are no items covered by this portfolio to add to the Council's Hold List, for submission to the Executive, as shown in Appendix I of the committee report.
- k) Approved that the revised Capital Plan for 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix J of the committee report, to be updated for any amendments detailed in (h), (i) and (j) above.
- l) Approved the following project appraisals as detailed in Appendix K of the committee report, funded from existing capital programmes and/or additional external funding as identified in the following appraisals:
- K (1) Tins Path cycleway improvements
 - K (2) Essential Repairs to Grafton West Multi-Storey Car Park Boundary Wall

Reason for the Decision:

The reasons for the decision are set out in the officers report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

N/A

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee received a report from the Accountant (Services) regarding Revenue and Capital Budgets 2010/11 (Revised), 2011/12 and 2012/13 (Forecast).

The committee noted the update on minor changes.

The Scrutiny Committee made the following comments regarding the report

- i) Clarification was sought on the payback period for the Solar Photo Voltaic cells. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships advised that this would depend upon the size and exact location of the cells. It was noted that initial costings on 4kw installations suggest the rate of return would be around 10-12 years, but that it could be as low as 5-6

years if it was possible to obtain bulk discounts. It was also note that the initial costings would need to be tested and specialist advice was being sought. It was also confirmed that the proposed installations would not be funded through the Climate Change Fund.

- ii) It was suggested that the climate change fund should operate on a “invest to save” basis. The Executive Councillor confirmed that the fund already operated on a “invest to save” basis. The committee were advised of the administration of the fund, and its successes.
- iii) Clarification was sought on the level of usage of the electric car charging points within the Grand Arcade. The committee were advised that at present the facilities had not been used, but that a network of facilities needs to develop before a demand would develop.
- iv) An explanation of the rationale behind the proposed level of investment in solar panels and feed in tariffs was requested. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships explained the rationale, and advised that there were significant benefits if the scheme was implemented prior to March 31st 2012. After this date tariffs were due to be reduced by 9%, which would make installations less cost effective.
- v) Concern was expressed about the proposed level of cuts to the budgets associated with the Climate Change and Growth portfolio. The concerns were noted.
- vi) An update was requested on the status of the Environmental Improvement Project at the Riverside. The committee noted that the project had begun.
- vii) Concerns were raised regarding the potential reduction in Environmental Improvements budgets and the challenges associated with spending developer contributions. Specific reference was made to the difficulties in delivery the Snowy Farr memorial project. The Executive Councillor explained that the Snowy Farr project was being funded with Public Art contributions and whilst there had been difficulties in delivering the project, it was hoped that it would be concluded by the end of the summer.

The Executive Councillor also clarified that the existing arrangement of top slicing 20% of the schemes (EIP) budget for professional fees would be discontinued. It was also noted that the current year budget was high due to difficulties earlier in the programme, and that the team was only configured to routinely deliver a programme of around £500k.

Further concerns were raised about the reduced level of funding for each ward, which it was argued would be insufficient to deliver projects such as crossings. The Executive Councillor cautioned against subdividing area allocation. The committee were advised that whilst the city council had for a long period of time sought to support and enhance the highways, it was the responsibility of the County Council and that negotiations were ongoing regarding potential delegation of highways funding.

- viii) Clarification was sought on the likely level of developer contributions in forthcoming years. The Director of Environment advised that a number of significant schemes were nearing implementation and therefore contributions were likely to rise sharply in forthcoming years.
- ix) With regards to proposed improvements to Grand Arcade car park, the Head of Specialist Services was questioned whether the improvements were required. The committee were advised that the equipment had been installed in 2004 and due to redevelopments in that area had been very heavily used, and was increasingly limited in functionality.
- x) Concern was expressed about the increasing level of charges in the car parks. The concern was noted and the Executive Councillor advised that different charging models were being explored including emissions based charging.
- xi) It was agreed to address issues in relation to concessionary fares at Full Council as the Leader of the Council is leading on the issue.
- xii) The overall net income for car parks was requested. The Head of Specialist Services advised that the projected income for car parks was £7.9m in the current financial year, rising to £8.6m in the next financial year.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth agreed the proposal subject to the amendments detailed above.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 1.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth agreed the proposal subject to the amendments detailed above.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

11/11/env Review of Sustainable City Grants

Matter for decision

To review the administration and core purposes of Sustainable City Grants and recommend that they are combined and re-focused mainly on specific project based activity.

Decision of Exec Cllr for Climate Change and Growth:

The Executive Councillor

- i) Agreed that both Sustainable City grants budgets are rationalised into a single project based grants budget of £50,000.
- ii) Agreed to move the administration of this budget into Community Development and align the management, application and approval processes to those used by Community Development for other Council grants budgets.
- iii) Confirmed the existing core funding commitments for organisations and partnerships as set out in Section 6 of the committee report.

Reason for the Decision:

To reflect the changes in management arrangements and approach to the delivery of sustainable city grants.

Any alternative options considered and rejected:

N/A

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Scrutiny Committee made the following comments on the report

- i) It was questioned whether there is a risk of the objective of the grants being diluted due to the changes in administration. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships assured the committee that the programme will operate independently of other grants, and it was only the administration that was being aligned.
- ii) Clarification was sought on why the whole fund hadn't been allocated yet. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships advised that the fund was allocated in 4 rounds, and that the 4th round had yet to conclude.
- iii) The positive effects of the scheme were welcomed.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth agreed the proposal.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

N/A

11/12/env Decisions by Executive Councillors

The Scrutiny Committee noted the decisions.

The meeting ended at 10.55 am

CHAIR