

Lancashire County Council

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 7th January, 2011 at 10.00 am at the Cabinet Room 'B' - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor John Shedwick (Chair)

County Councillors

K Ellard	P Malpas
S Chapman	D O'Toole
Mrs F Craig-Wilson	P Steen
C Crompton	D Westley
M Devaney	B Winlow
Mrs J Hanson	

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Mrs L Oades.

2. Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

The following County Councillors declared a personal interest in item 3 - Scrutiny of the Proposals for Lancashire County Council's Revenue Budget 2011/12 – 2013/14 accordingly:

- F Craig-Wilson – Member of 'Friends of St Annes Library' and Fylde Borough Council;
- P Malpas – Member of Chorley Borough Council, School Governor at Coppull Primary School and Children's Centre, and School Governor at Parklands High School;
- P Steen – Member of Rossendale Borough Council, School Governor at Whitworth Community High School, Governor at Bacup Britannia Community Primary School, and SureStart Centre at Rossendale and Bacup;
- Mrs J Hanson – Member of Lancaster City Council;
- S Chapman – Governor at Albany Science College;
- D Westley – Member of West Lancashire Borough Council, and Governor at Ormskirk School;
- M Devaney – Member of Chorley Borough Council, and School Governor at Manor Road Primary School;
- B Winlow – School Governor at Lea Community Primary School;
- D O'Toole – Member of West Lancashire Borough Council, Governor at Ormskirk School; and

- J Shedwick – Member of Dukes Playhouse Board of Directors, and Member of the Sounding Board of the Lancashire Sinfonietta.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2010

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2010 be confirmed and signed by the chair.

4. Scrutiny of the Proposals for Lancashire County Council's Revenue Budget 2011/12 - 2013/14

The Committee considered a report regarding the County Council's Revenue Budget proposals for 2011/12 – 2013/14 which were agreed by the Cabinet at their meeting held on 6 January 2011.

The Chair welcomed Steve Freeman, Principal Accountant, to the meeting. Mr Freeman attended the meeting to answer any questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair proposed a process for the scrutiny of the Below the Line Savings, Service Efficiencies, Service Policy Proposals and Service Charging Proposals which were outlined in the Cabinet's Budget Proposals. He suggested that all the matters raised by the Cabinet under those headings be allocated to each of the Scrutiny Committees in accordance with their terms of reference. A document was handed out at the meeting which identified the proposed allocation of work to the Scrutiny Committee, Health Committee and the Education Committee accordingly, a copy of which is set out in the minute book as Annex 1.

The Chair reminded the Committee that additional Scrutiny Budget Meetings had been organised for the 12 and 14 January where Cabinet Members T Ashton, M Calvert, S Charles, M Perks and A Atkinson, G Driver, M Green would be in attendance respectively.

The Committee agreed the allocation of work for each of the Scrutiny Committees as set out at Annex 1 to these minutes. The Committee then considered its allocated work identifying issues for further consideration at the informal Budget Meetings to be held on 12 and 14 January 2011.

The following issues were identified as areas for further consideration by the committee:

Corporate / Cross Cutting

Below the Line Savings:

- These will be given consideration specifically at the meeting with the Leader, but may also be raised with other Cabinet members where issues are cross council

Adult and Community Services

Libraries and Arts:

- Further information was requested on the four proposals relating to Libraries and Arts funding (Reduction in mobile library service; Reduction in Resources Fund (Book acquisition); Libraries staff and service rationalisation; Reduce grant support for the Arts).

Specific questions raised were:

- Is the "Regenerate" programme for libraries still in place?
- What impact does Regenerate have on the revenue savings (and vice versa)?
- Are there any financial implications in relation to the agreement with Lancaster City Council on the Lancaster Museums?

Children & Young People

Transforming Care Services

- Further information was requested on the two options "Transforming Care Service for Children and Young People" and "Transforming Care Services - Reducing numbers of authority residential places and the number of adolescents accommodated in children's home provision"

A specific question raised was

- Whether specific children's homes had already been identified for closure and / or the process for doing so.

Early Years / Family Support

- Further detail was requested on the policy proposals for Early years/Family support.

Environment

"One Team" working

- The committee asked for further detail on the proposed efficiency saving connected to "One Team" working

Waste

- Further information was requested on the four proposals relating to waste (Maximising efficiencies of the PFI contract; Closure of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's); Reduction in Waste Minimisation activities; Cease entirely the tree planting programme within the Waste PFI Contract)

Specific questions raised were

- whether ceasing the tree planting programme has any implications for the original planning approvals
- the extent to which the long term benefits of a n extensive tree planting programme has been taken into account

Street Lighting

- The Committee queried whether the savings took into account the use of more energy efficient forms of lighting

Public Transport

- Further detail was requested on the four proposals relating to public transport (Review and retender existing bus services; Reduction in public transport information; Removal of Real Time information service; Reduced ability to progress new public transport and sustainable travel initiatives)

Specific questions raised were:

- the extent to which the revenue raising potential of the Real Time information service had been taken into account
- the impact of the review of bus services on concessionary fares costs

Environmental issues

- Further detail was requested on the proposals for the rationalisation of Public Rights of Way and Countryside Maintenance and for the reduced support for environmental and community projects.

Road safety

- Further information was requested on the proposal regarding more efficient spending on road safety initiatives and the Pre-Pass support scheme.

In order for the Committee to prepare for the informal Budget meetings on 12 and 14 January, Members requested that responses to the questions raised above be provided to them in advance of those meetings.

The committee also requested additional information outlining the proportion of current spend on the services under consideration that the proposals represented

It was suggested that a draft final report containing the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations on the Cabinet's Budget Proposals for 2011/12 – 2013/14 be presented to the meeting on 21 January 2011 for consideration, and that the final agreed report is passed on thereafter to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 3 February 2011.

Resolved: That,

- i. The allocation of work for the Scrutiny Committee, Health Committee and Education Committee as set out at Annex 1 to these minutes be accepted;
- ii. The Health Committee and Education Committee be informed of the work allocated to them;
- iii. The issues identified above for further consideration by the Scrutiny Committee be passed on to the Cabinet and the Executive Leadership Team to provide responses where possible in readiness for the informal Budget Meetings to be held on the 12 and 14 January 2011;

- iv. Additional information outlining the proportion of current spend on the services under consideration that the proposals represented be provided to the Committee in advance of the informal Budget Meetings on the 12 and 14 January 2011;
- v. A draft final report setting out the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on the Cabinet's Budget Proposals for 2011/12 – 2013/14 be presented to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 January 2011 for consideration;
- vi. The final report of the Scrutiny Committee on the Cabinet's Budget Proposals for 2011/12 – 2013/14 be passed on to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting to be held on 3 February 2011.

5. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6. Dates of Future Meetings - January 2011

It was noted that the following meetings would take place in January 2011:

- 12th January – 2pm (Informal Budget Meeting);
- 14th January – 2pm (Informal Budget Meeting); and
- 21st January – 10am (formal committee meeting)

All meetings will be held in Cabinet Room 'B', County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston