

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Tuesday, 20th January, 2015 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Wilkinson (Chairman)
Councillor B Murphy (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors G Baxendale, K Edwards, M Grant, P Groves, P Hoyland,
W Livesley, D Neilson and J Saunders

Apologies

Councillors A Moran and M Simon

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Peter Raynes – Finance Portfolio Holder
Councillor Barry Moran – Performance Portfolio Holder
Councillor Paul Findlow – Governance Portfolio Holder
Councillor Peter Mason – Deputy Cabinet Member

3 OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Suarez – Chief Executive
Peter Bates – Chief Operating Officer
Lorraine Butcher - Executive Director of Strategic Commissioning
Tony Crane - Director of Children's Services
Caroline Simpson - Director of Economic Growth & Prosperity
Steph Cordon - Head of Communities
Angharad Jackson – Programme Manager – Adult Social care
Alex Thompson - Corporate Manager Strategy & Reporting
Steve Reading – Principal Accountant

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of the existence of a party whip.

6 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

7 2015/16 BUDGET

The committee considered a report of the Chief Operating Officer which set out the draft budget proposals for 2015/16 and provided details of estimated medium term net budgets for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The report included proposed savings that were within the range of the Pre-Budget Report which had been considered by this committee at its meeting held on 2 December 2014. The following budget principles had been reported to this Committee during the engagement process in 2014, and the Committee was informed that each point remained valid as part of the final stages of balancing the 2015/16 budget:

- i. Freeze Council Tax for a fifth consecutive year.
- ii. Enter into no additional external borrowing in 2015/16.
- iii. Maintain appropriate reserves levels that protect against risks.
- iv. React to changes in demand and existing budget proposals that can achieve a balanced budget for 2015/16, including:
 - a. Increasing spending in Adult Services.
 - b. Forecasting income from growth in the tax base and increasing returns on investments.
 - c. Reducing overall spending in all other service areas by targeted interventions.

The Capital Budget, approved by Council in February 2014, included a three year programme of schemes, with indicative spending profiles which would be adjusted based on availability of associated funding.

An outline of the additional schemes to be proposed as part of the 2015/16 budget had been included in the report also. The phasing and timing of these schemes was still to be finalised.

The Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that the provisional Revenue Support Grant settlement was broadly in line with what had been expected at the draft budget stage, which, in effect, reduced the Council's overall grant by about 20%.

The Committee reviewed the various elements of the budget consultation report on a section by section basis, and representatives of each of the

service areas was invited to explain the principal elements of the budget proposals as they related to their service area and were then questioned by Members of the Committee.

The following points were raised:

That the word 'responsibilities' should be used throughout the report instead of the word 'burden'

That additional information be provided to members outside of the meeting to:

- Detail the total number of young people who would be 'in transition' to adult social care during 2015/16;
- Provide more detailed information to explain how back office savings would be achieved in adult social care to increase productivity;
- Set out a more clear explanation as to the impact of the discontinuation of government grants;
- Supply additional information to members outside of the meeting on the proposals relating to home to school transport

Finally, the Vice Chairman Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook to monitor the proposed savings of £858,000 in relation to the review of Supported Living, investment in Shared Lives, Review Supporting People Commissioned Services and review of Respite Services, in view of uncertainty regarding the precise number of individuals likely to be involved in these proposals.

RESOLVED – That the report and budget proposals be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.40 pm

Councillor S Wilkinson (Chairman)