

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
4 FEBRUARY 2010**

Present: Councillors Cartwright, Sabetian, Waite, Webb (as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Barlow) and Wilson (in the Chair)

Lead Members in attendance: Councillor Beaver

Apologies were received from Councillors Armstrong, Barlow and Pragnell.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The following councillors declared an interest in the minutes as indicated:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Webb	21	Personal – Chair of Link Project

20. MINUTES

Councillor Cartwright expressed concern that his disappointment regarding the absence of an update on the Policy Development Project on Climate Change at the last meeting had not been noted.

RESOLVED that following the amendment to the minutes as shown above, the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2009 be approved as a true record.

21. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2010/11 – 2012/13

Jane Hartnell, Head of Policy, Partnerships and Sustainability gave a brief introduction of the draft Corporate Plan which set out the proposed priority areas of activity and investment for 2010/11 to 2012/13. Members were invited to comment on the draft Plan and related budget proposals.

Members discussed the draft Corporate Priorities in some detail, making particular reference to the impact of the economic downturn on local businesses and how the Council would extend support for investment within the town. Members also commented on the proposed climate change priority.

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Members made particular reference to the national Place Survey that local authorities were required to carry out every two years, to measure how local people felt about the quality of life in their area, and how satisfied they were with local public services. Some members expressed concern over the perceptions of people surveyed, indicating that people would be genuinely concerned over issues, rather than having a perceived concern. Jane Hartnell replied that these surveys were about people's perception of the town they lived in and the Council was using communication tools to make people aware of the positive changes being made in and around the town.

RESOLVED that the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council's draft Corporate Plan for 2010/11 - 2012/13 be referred to Budget Cabinet on 15 February 2010.

22. CONSULTATION ON REVENUE BUDGET 2009-10 REVISED AND 2010-11, CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009-10 TO 2012-2013

Neil Dart, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources, gave a short presentation on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as part of the public consultation process. Members were invited to submit their comments on the budget proposals.

Members were advised that the budget had been balanced for 2009-10. Members of the committee and Councillor Beaver extended their thanks to staff for their efforts in balancing the budget. Neil Dart did explain that the council would be facing more financial difficulty in 2011-12, as the current funding streams (including Area Based Grants) were predicted to be cut by central government, regardless of the administration in control after the General Election.

Members were also advised of the £1.672million VAT rebate the council had successfully claimed back. This was a one-off payment, although there was the chance that more could be claimed back in the mid to longer term.

Members discussed the proposal to use £250,000 for projects for young and older people. Councillor Webb expressed concern that the allocation was too prescriptive and did not include other community groups. Councillor Beaver replied that young and older people would encompass the whole divide.

Councillor Webb suggested that a sum of money from the VAT rebate be used as a contingency in relation to adverse weather conditions, such as the town had experienced earlier in the year.

Councillor Sabetian asked where in the budget had been allocated provision to support the cycle networks around the town, Neil Dart replied that there

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was no specific allocation for this; the term 'support' did not necessarily mean financial.

Members also discussed the proposed cut in the Staff-Side Co-ordinator post. Neil Dart replied that the matter had been raised at Staff and Management Forum, where concern had been expressed at this loss of post. The committee asked that this be formally noted.

Elsewhere in the budget report, members briefly discussed Community Safety, Members' Web Pages and the Simalto exercise.

RESOLVED that the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme be referred to Budget Cabinet on 15 February 2010.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.58pm)