

**EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th February, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:-

Councillor M. G. Simper - Chairman

Councillor I. J. Monks - Vice-Chairman

Present: Councillors P. G. Bennett, P. G. Cuckston, R. E. Daw, R. C. Dudman, Mrs J. M. Hazel, P. Holden, J. P. Holland, D. Morgan, B. E. Mortimer and P. W. Richardson.

Also in attendance: Mr S. Duckett (Head of Public Health Services), Mr D. Povey (Financial Services Manager) and Ms L. Ellis (Committee Officer)

475. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T. J. Palmer (Vice-Chairman), Mrs T. B. Coombs, Mrs M. B. Osner and Mrs A. Warman.

476. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

**RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

477. Capital Strategy 2010-2015

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee were requested to determine the Council's Capital Strategy for 2010-2015 and an overview was provided by the Financial Services Manager.

Concern was raised by the Committee regarding the current Asset Maintenance Plan. It was confirmed that a new plan was currently being formulated, however the expenditure required for the new plan was likely to be significant.

Discussion then moved to the proposed schemes for the enhancement of Wimborne Square and the Verwood Playing Fields. Members expressed concern that completion of the schemes would leave only £100,000 for capital resources. It was confirmed that both Waitrose and Dorset County Council were contributing to the Wimborne Square enhancement scheme, reducing the net cost to Council. There was a deadline that the Council would need to work to on this project. Members requested that it be investigated whether the contribution from Dorset County Council could be increased.

In addition, Members were concerned that £250,000 for the regeneration of the Verwood Playing Fields seemed excessive and queried how long the project had been in the capital programme. The Financial Services Manager confirmed that the scheme had been in the programme for some

time and that Officers were looking at funding the project via Section 106 contributions. Members requested that this should be a recommendation to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Financial Services Manager confirmed that the valuation which had been received for the sale of land at Verwood had been estimated when the market was at its lowest. It was hoped that as the market had started to change that any sale of the land would now realise more.

**RECOMMENDED that:-**

- (a) the capital programme, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved;**
- (b) no major new schemes, with the exception of disabled facility grants and recreation grants, are started until the sale of Bakers Farm is complete or until significant capital receipts are generated from the sale of other Council-owned assets; and**
- (c) consideration be given that the scheme for the Verwood Playing Fields should not proceed unless it can be substantially funded from Section 106 agreements.**

Voting: Nem. Con. (1 abstention)

478. Revenue Budget 2010/11

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

An overview was provided by the Financial Services Manager on the Band D Council Tax for 2010/11. It was announced that since the report had been published that funding for concessionary fares had been reduced.

Members asked how certain the Authority was that the deficit would not continue to rise. In response, the Financial Services Manager stated that the best projected deficit figure was £1million but it could rise to £1.5 million.

Discussion then followed on the QE Leisure Centre, its recent scrutiny review and the recommendation that the Centre be put out to private contract. Members acknowledged that savings had been made on maintenance and staff uniforms but were concerned that no major savings had been identified. It was confirmed that the review of QE Leisure Centre staff was ongoing and that those changes had yet to go through UNISON. Completion of this review would provide savings.

Members were concerned that it had been a long time since the completion of the review and the length of time it had taken to get to this stage was not acceptable. It was requested by the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee that the Head of Community and Forward Planning Services be requested to report to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee why the process had taken so long. The Chairman of the Community and Culture SPD Sub-Committee confirmed that completion of the recommendations from the report had recently be

signed off, however this was before the Members had received a copy of this report. In addition, Members of the Community and Culture SPD Sub-Committee agreed that they would discuss whether to call-in the report.

Members discussed the Corporate Change Fund and it was confirmed that the entire Work Force Reserve would be transferred to it. It was requested that all Members should be informed of this point, as not all were aware of it.

**RECOMMENDED that:-**

- (a) the Council's revenue budget for 2010/11 be set at £11,110,417;**
- (b) the Band D Council Tax for 2010/11 be set at £190.93 an increase of 4.66 per year; and**
- (c) £699,000 of revenue reserves are set aside to establish a corporate change fund.**

Voting: Unanimous

479. Terms of Reference Document for the Change Programme

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee were requested to agree the Terms of Reference document for the Change Programme and an overview was provided by the Head of Public Health Services.

Discussion followed on the decision of North Dorset District Council not to join the eastern cluster and the future working arrangements of the Council and Christchurch Borough Council.

Members requested clarification on whether the Council would be using enhanced or statutory payment for potential redundancies. It was stated by the Head of Public Health Services that the authority was presently looking at the redundancy policy. It was also confirmed that informal talks had been held with the trade unions and Members requested that a bullet point be added to Section 10 (Risks) on this.

**RECOMMENDED that the comments of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, on the Terms of Reference Document for the Change Programme, be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee.**

Voting: Unanimous

480. Shared Service Arrangement for Public Health Services and Christchurch Borough Council Environment Health Services

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Head of Public Health Services provided an overview on the proposed interim management arrangements between East Dorset District Council

and Christchurch Borough Council regarding Public Health and Environment Services.

Members requested that both immediate savings and costs of the shared service be clarified. It was confirmed by the Head of Public Health Services that there would be immediate savings and no costs.

It was confirmed to the Committee that Licensing had not been included in the document, as at present it was part of Legal Services at Christchurch and not public health/environment services, as at East Dorset.

The Committee requested that the paragraph on governance be amended to reflect the move from the cluster to a partnership.

**RECOMMENDED that Members approve interim arrangements of the future management of Environmental Services in Christchurch and East Dorset.**

Voting: Nem. Con (1 abstention).

The meeting ended at 12.06 p.m.

CHAIRMAN