

CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Friday 22 January 2010 at 6.00pm

Panel Members Present Councillor Longhi (Chair)
Councillor Coughlan
Councillor Cook
Councillor Harris
Councillor Rochelle
Councillor Turner
Councillor Yasin
Councillor Young

Portfolio Holders Present Cllr Bird- Leader of the Council
Cllr Arif- Business Support Services
Cllr Towe- Finance and Personnel

Officers Present Rory Borealis- Executive Director (Resources)
Steph Simcox- Service Accounting and Financial Training Manager
Colin Teasdale- Performance and Scrutiny Officer

47/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Nazir

48/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting

49/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting

50/09 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr Cook requested that the minutes of 11 December 2009 reflected that he had moved a resolution, which was not seconded, to keep Willenhall Leisure Centre open for 12 months to carry out a review.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the change requested above, the meetings of 10 and 11, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

51/09 CORPORATE PLAN 2010/11

The Leader of the Council presented the draft Corporate Plan for 2010/11 and an updated version from the one circulated with papers was tabled (annexed). The Leader explained that the priorities expressed in the plan were those of his

Administration which he was committed to delivering and outlined each of the 9 priorities.

In response to a Member comment about the impact of the proposed closure of Willenhall Leisure Centre on the values and vision set on in the plan, the Leader informed Members that he had given a verbal undertaking to the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 21 January 2010 to consult with Cabinet colleagues to find a solution that would enable the centre to stay open for a period of time pending a review by Scrutiny re. future viability.

Members also asked a number of questions relating to the new Neighbourhood management model to which the Leader reminded the Panel that a full debate on the proposed new model would take place at the specially convened extraordinary meeting of Council on 28 January. He emphasised that the proposed new model involved much more coordination of partner organisations at a local level and create more local accountability and so closely linked to the aims of the Corporate Plan to create pride in Walsall and working smarter.

Members commented that the Corporate Plan was well structured, clear and accessible and as a public facing document much more user friendly than others they had seen which they welcomed.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel endorse the draft Corporate Plan 2010/11

52/09 REVISED DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 FOR THE FINANCE AND PERSONNEL PORTFOLIO AND BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES PORTFOLIO

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Personnel presented the report outlining the revised draft revenue budget and the draft capital programme for services within the panel's remit. He explained that there had been no changes to revenue budget that affected either portfolio from the version the Panel received on 10 December 2009 and that the draft capital programme was as presented to Cabinet on 16 December 2009 and forwarded to them for consultation.

Members had no comments or questions relating to the report and endorsed it as set out.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel endorse the revised revenue budget and the draft capital programme for 2010/11 for the Finance and Personnel and Business Support Services portfolios

53/09 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANELS

The recommendations of the 5 other scrutiny and performance panels were tabled (annexed).

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel note the recommendations of the other Scrutiny and Performance Panels

54/09 DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Personnel presented the council wide capital programme for 2010/11

Members had no comments or questions relating to the report and endorsed it as set out.

That the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel endorse the draft Capital Programme for 2010/11

55/09 REVISED DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Personnel presented the council-wide revised draft revenue budget for 2010/11 and also informed members that in response to a letter from central government warning of council tax capping, they were aiming to reduce the overall increase to less than 4%.

Cllr Cook proposed two investment items within the draft revenue budget - the creation of 3 business analyst posts and a single operating model for customer service improvements could be reduced or delayed to allow funding for Willenhall Leisure Centre to remain open for 6 months.

The Leader responded that Members were not fully aware of the impact of this proposal but that he had already given an undertaking to look at phasing other growth items to allow the strategic review of leisure centres to take place. He also reiterated that at no point had he given any instructions to his members to vote in any particular way on this or any other issue at scrutiny. Cllr Harris also confirmed that as Chief Whip he had never been asked to instruct the whip for any scrutiny issue. Members confirmed that they took the Leader and the Chief Whip at their word on this issue and did not question it.

Members commented that if a solution to allow Willenhall Leisure Centre to remain open for 6 months could be found that this was a life line that the people of Willenhall should not miss out on and that it was now a case of use it or lose it.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel note the recommendations of the Council's overall draft revenue budget and welcome the aim orally reported to the Panel to reduce the proposed Council Tax increase to below 4%.

56/09 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

In relation to item 73/09 of the Forward Plan, Cllr Coughlan asked for clarity over the reason the item had slipped from February to April. It was agreed that a response would be requested from officers to go directly to Cllr Coughlan.

The Chair also expressed an interest in items 101/09 (Civic Centre Investment Strategy), 58/09 (Corporate Asset Management Plan 2009-14) and 28/09 Walsall Gigaport. As all of these cut into the remit of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel it was agreed to share with the Chair what had been presented there in the first instance.

The meeting terminated at 7.05pm

Signed (Chair):

Date: