

CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Friday 11 December 2009 at 6.00pm

Panel Members Present	Councillor Longhi (Chair) Councillor Coughlan Councillor Cook Councillor Harris Councillor Rochelle Councillor Turner Councillor Yasin
Portfolio Holders Present	CLlr Bird- Leader of the Council CLlr Arif- Business Support Services CLlr Towe- Finance and Personnel
Other Members Present	CLlr E Hughes- Chair, Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel CLlr C Creaney- Vice-Chair, Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel CLlr C Ault- Chair. Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel and Vice-Chair Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel
Officers Present	Rory Borealis- Executive Director (Resources) James Walsh- Chief Finance Officer Michael Tomlinson- Corporate Financial Systems & Treasury Manager Colin Teasdale- Performance and Scrutiny Officer

42/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Nazir and Young

43/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting

44/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

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

45/09 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANELS

The Chair invited the Chair or Vice-Chair from each of the other Scrutiny and Performance Panels to present their recommendations to the Panel.

The Vice Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel presented the recommendations of his panel (annexed), the Chair informed members that in addition to this panels recommendations he had also just received a resolution from Willenhall LNP, which read:

- (1) That the Willenhall LNP express its concerns at the decision to close Willenhall Leisure Centre in view of the knock-on effect it will have on the general health of people in the area and the impact on school and voluntary group budgets and that it was contrary to the Council's vision.;
- (2) That the Willenhall Leisure Centre remain open whilst a scrutiny investigation takes place into the possibility of bringing the unit cost at Willenhall Leisure Centre down to the same level as the unit costs of other leisure centres in the Borough.

Members discussed this resolution alongside the recommendations from the Community Services. Whilst Members were broadly in favour of carrying an options appraisal on Willenhall Leisure Centre, they felt this would best be completed by the Community Services Panel and that the resolution of Willenhall LNP should be forwarded to them for consideration. Members also commented that keeping the leisure centre open whilst this appraisal was carried out would have associated costs for which an appropriate alternative saving would have to be found if they were to achieve a balanced budget. They therefore felt it important for the Community Service Panel to either propose an alternative saving to cabinet that would meet the costs of keeping the centre open in the interim or else close the leisure centre pending the outcome of the options appraisal. Members further commented that any options appraisal should be robust, with detailed information including a report from the PCT on the impact of not meeting the obesity target within the local area agreement and also to ensure that any benchmarking undertaken was comparing like with like.

The Chair of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel presented the recommendations of his Panel (annexed.) Members queried the inclusion of recommendations for additional services alongside a support for the budget proposals with no alternative savings. The Chair of the Environment Panel confirmed that from the information they had received they believed these recommendations could all be met within the existing budget proposals. The Leader of the Council stated that all the recommendations bar the extended opening of Bloxwich public toilets were already included in Cabinets proposals and that he did not believe this one item would present a difficulty. Members were therefore supportive of the recommendations as long as it could be confirmed that the costs could be met within the existing budget proposals.

The Vice Chair of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel presented the findings of his Panel (annexed.)

The Vice Chair of the Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel presented the recommendations of his Panel (annexed) and explained to Members that members of the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel had also been invited to this meeting to discuss cross over items.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel presented the recommendations of his Panel (annexed) and commented that the Panel had been pleased to see the Cabinet had recognised the pressures in this area due to the predicted increase in demand resulting from the recession and recent high profile child protection issues elsewhere in the country.

RESOLVED

- 1. The resolution from Willenhall LNP be noted and forwarded to the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel;**
- 2. The Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel identify compensatory savings proposal that would make it possible for Cabinet to consider keeping Willenhall Leisure Centre open in the short term;**
- 3. Subject to alternative savings being identified and agreed by Cabinet, the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel carry out a full options appraisal to ascertain the long term viability of the centre and report this back to Cabinet;**
- 4. The recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel be supported, subject to final clarification that costs can be met within the draft budget proposals;**
- 5. The recommendations of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel be noted;**
- 6. The recommendations of the Social Care and Inclusions Scrutiny and Performance Panel be noted;**
- 7. The recommendations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel be noted; and**
- 8. Cabinet's draft budget proposals for 2010/11 be noted.**

46/09 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11- COUNCIL WIDE POSITION

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Personnel stated that the budget had been put together in difficult financial times and tough decisions had to be taken. He thanked all Scrutiny Panels for their continued input during this process.

The Leader of the Council reiterated that this was a draft budget and was subject to change as they had also to calculate the risk of government capping and the impact of this. He stated that he believed the role of scrutiny was essential, that he wanted an open and transparent process and that his cabinet would listen.

One member commented that any council tax rise above the level of inflation would have to be communicated to residents so they understood why the rise was necessary and what it was paying for.

Members commented that they were much happier with the process than in previous years.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet's draft budget proposals for 2010/11 be noted.

The meeting terminated at 6.55pm

Signed (Chair):

Date: