

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday 30 November 2010 at 6.00pm in a Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall

Panel Members Present Councillor L. Harrison (Chair)
Councillor O. Bennett
Councillor P. Bott
Councillor C. Creaney
Councillor M. Flower
Councillor K. Sears
Councillor I. Shires

Portfolio Holders Present Councillor Z. Ali – Communities and Partnerships
Councillor M. Bird - Leader
Councillor A. Harris – Leisure, Culture and Environment
Councillor C. Towe – Finance and Personnel

Officers Present Jamie Morris – Executive Director, Neighbourhoods
Keith Stone – Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Judith Sunley – Head of Public Safety
Chris Holliday – Head of Leisure and Community Health
Sue Grainger – Head of Libraries, Heritage and Arts
Steph Simcox – Service Accounting and Financial Training Manager
Craig Goodall – Scrutiny Officer

60/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors R. Martin and D. Shires.

61/10 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors M. Flower and I. Shires substituted for Councillors R. Martin and D. Shires respectively.

62/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

63/10 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2011/12

Members considered Cabinets draft revenue budget proposals for 2011/12 for services within the remit of the Panel. The Panel considered the budget proposals a Portfolio at a time.

Communities and Partnerships

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships highlighted the 'cost pressures' and 'operational savings' being proposed for his Portfolio. He explained that no 'executive savings' were currently proposed.

Operational Saving 25 – Shared Emergency Planning Service with Sandwell

A Member of the Panel welcomed this initiative and felt that this type of arrangement should be explored for other services moving forward.

The Leader of the Council reported that sharing services with other Councils was currently being explored at a regional level.

Leisure, Culture and Environment

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Environment highlighted the 'cost pressures', 'operational savings' and 'executive savings' being proposed for his Portfolio.

Executive Saving 3 – Remodelling of Library Service

Following questions the Portfolio Holder explained that the policy was for libraries to become broader facilities with increased quality of service. He explained that the current number of libraries operated by the Council may reduce but the idea of libraries in localities would be encouraged through the voluntary and community sector. No libraries would close in 2011/12, rather the year would be used to review the library service and its offer before making changes in 2012/13. Funding for the introduction of self service machines had been taken into account.

The Leader reported that a regional library service was not planned at the current time.

Executive Saving 1 – Cease direct council operation of Bentley leisure pavilion

The Head of Leisure and Community Health explained that all sports pitches including football and cricket pitches and bowling greens would be retained under the Council's management.

Operational Saving 10 – Operational efficiencies within Leisure Centres

The Head of Leisure and Community Health explained that these efficiencies would be achieved by leisure centre managers identifying and stripping out all unnecessary costs whilst at the same time aiming to increase attendances and income at all four centres.

RESOLVED:

THAT:

1. the proposed 2011/12 budget for the Communities and Partnerships Portfolio be noted;

and;

2. the proposed 2011/12 budget for the Leisure, Culture and Environment Portfolio be noted.

64/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 20 January 2011.

The meeting terminated at 6.20 p.m.

Signed:

Date: