



COMMUNITY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2008

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2008/09 TO 2010/11

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community Services and Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2008/09 to 2010/11. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. M. B. Page CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources and Efficiencies and Mrs. R. Camamile CC, the Cabinet Support Member for Environmental Issues within the Community Services Department.

Mr. Page CC, in introducing the report, advised the Committee that, in the light of representations made, the Cabinet were unlikely to pursue the proposed saving of £25,000 to be achieved by withdrawing the public library facility at County Hall.

In response to questions, the Committee was informed as follows:

Growth

- (a) An option appraisal was underway to determine the most appropriate system to replace PlanCon. As part of this process, consideration would be given to procuring a system complimentary to those used by the District Councils, with a view to achieving better co-ordination and communication.
- (b) The additional cost included for the Coroners Service was in response to potential cost increases arising from the agreement made with the City Council, in 1997, to provide the service. The estimate of £80,000 ongoing represented the top end of the additional estimated costs.
- (c) The additional costs of the Registration Service reflected the fact that the Service would now be performance managed by the County Council.

Savings

- (d) The efficiency target of the Department was particularly challenging. To date, 30% of the required efficiency savings for 2009/10 and 2010/11 had been identified. Work was currently being undertaken to identify the remaining savings. This would entail a critical look at how the Service was delivered and managed without adversely impacting on service delivery.

- (e) The self service issue and return of books would be introduced in the major and shopping centre libraries. This would affect approximately 8 FTE posts. However, given the vacancy and turnover levels, it was anticipated that there would be no compulsory redundancies.
- (f) A review of the Environment and Heritage Service was currently being undertaken. Details of this review would be reported to members in due course.
- (g) The 2007/08 savings target of £45,000 in relation to Country Parks was met by income from increased charges. Negotiations were underway with external bodies regarding the transfer of the management of certain Country Parks. The level of savings achieved was dependent on the outcome of those negotiations. It was anticipated that the transfer of between 6 and 10 Country Parks would achieve the requested savings.
- (h) Discussions had only just commenced in respect of the restructuring of the Bibliographical Service and Development Librarians, to achieve the required savings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Director of Community Services be requested to submit reports on the progress or otherwise in achieving the saving targets in relation to:
 - (i) Efficiency targets;
 - (ii) Country Parks;
 - (iii) Review of Environment and Heritage Service;
 - (iv) Self service issue and return of books;
 - (v) Bibliographical Services/Development Librarians.
- (b) That the Director of Community Services be requested to submit a report on the outcome of the option appraisal to replace the existing PlanCon system;
- (c) That the Director of Community Services be requested to submit a report to a future meeting on how the County Council could encourage the establishment of local theatres in villages as and when appropriate funding opportunities may become available;
- (d) That the Cabinet be advised as follows:
 - (i) that the Committee welcomes the likely withdrawal of saving proposals in relation to the County Hall library;
 - (ii) that, in line with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Review Panel, consideration be given to provision being made in the budget to develop closer working with the City Council, including developments linked to the Performing Arts Centre.