

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 22 January 2013.

### PRESENT

Cllr P A Duckett (Chairman)  
Cllr Miss A Sparrow (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs L Birt  
Mrs R J Drinkwater  
Dr R Egan

Cllrs C C Gomm  
J Murray

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R W Johnstone  
Mrs M Mustoe

Substitutes: Cllrs

Members in Attendance: Cllrs M R Jones  
Deputy Leader and  
Executive Member for  
Corporate Resources

Officers in Attendance: Mr P Ball – Senior Finance Manager  
Mr B Carter – Corporate Policy & Scrutiny  
Manager  
Mr N Murley – Assistant Director Business &  
Performance  
Mr C Warboys – Chief Finance Officer

Others in Attendance

CR/12/80 **Minutes**

### RESOLVED

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 December 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

CR/12/81 **Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest or political whip in relation to any agenda items.

CR/12/82 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman had no announcements.

**CR/12/83 Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part D2 of the Constitution.

**CR/12/84 Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

**CR/12/85 Call-In**

The Committee were advised that no decisions of the Executive had been referred to them under the Call-in Procedures set out in Appendix A to Rule No. S18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

**CR/12/86 Requested Items**

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

**CR/12/87 Executive Member Update**

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources provided the Committee with an update on current activities pertaining to his portfolio, which were not already included on today's agenda and which covered the following issue:-

- The outcome of consultation with Town and Parish Councils regarding Council Tax Support grant distribution. The Executive Member confirmed that in general those responding were supportive of the methodology proposed to be used to distribute this grant, which would be based on the Council Tax Support awarded in each parish as a percentage of the total.

Members of the Committee raised the following issue during the verbal update, which was acknowledged by the Executive Member and officers present:-

- The need to monitor the methodology used during the year to ensure its continued appropriateness.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee supports the methodology proposed to be used to distribute Council Tax Support grant to Town and Parish Councils subject to adequate monitoring during the year to ensure its continued appropriateness.**

CR/12/88

**Draft Budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 - 2017 and Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17**

The Executive Member introduced this report, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to comment upon the draft budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 to 2017 and Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17, which had been presented and approved for consultation at a meeting of the Executive on 8 January 2013.

The Executive Member drew the Committee's attention in particular to his supplementary briefing note, which had been circulated at the meeting and which provided Members with further detail regarding the changes made since preparation of the draft budget report as a result of the announcement of the Local Government funding Settlement for 2013/14. The net effect of these changes equated to a £1.8M shortfall, which would be met by not making the previously planned contribution to reserves of £1.4m and £0.4m use of reserves.

Members of the Committee discussed the content of the report in further detail and raised a significant number of specific queries, all of which were addressed by the Executive Member and officers in attendance. In addition, the following issues were also raised:-

- Members were concerned about the proposed reduction in partnership funding, specifically the planned 10% reduction in the grant to the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Voluntary Community Sector organisations from 2014/15 onwards. It was Members opinion that this proposal should be reviewed prior to implementation.
- Members were concerned about the proposals to reduce staffing levels generally as part of the Customer First programme, with particular reference to a proposed reduction of 5 Full Time Equivalents in the Revenues & Benefits team, and the impact this would have on the quality and speed of service provided. The Committee therefore agreed to monitor the programme carefully and requested regular, detailed, reports from the Executive Member concerning these issues.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Draft Budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-17 and the Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 be endorsed as set out.**

CR/12/89

**Draft Budget Report for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Service) Business Plan**

The Executive Member introduced this report, which set out the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) during the first year of the Self Financing regime and presented the proposed 30 year Landlord Service Business Plan. The report also covered the budget setting process for 2013/14 and the assumptions that had been made in arriving at the projections in the

Plan, to create the financial framework for the Landlord Service to operate within.

The report also contained recommendations concerning debt repayment over the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), together with proposals that would effectively make resources available to enable the Council to achieve the ambitions proposed in the developing Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS).

Members of the Committee discussed the content of the report in detail and raised a number of specific queries, all of which were addressed by the Executive Member and officers in attendance.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the draft HRA budget proposals for 2013/14 be endorsed as set out.**

CR/12/90

**Fees and Charges 2013/14**

The Executive Member introduced this report, which proposed the revised fees and charges rates to be effective from 1 April 2013 and identified those charges where increases were different from the 2% advisory increase as per the 2013/14 Budget Strategy.

Members of the Committee discussed the content of the report in detail and raised a number of specific queries, all of which were addressed by the Executive Member and officers in attendance.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That the schedule of Fees and Charges for 2013/14 for Corporate Resources be endorsed as set out.**

CR/12/91

**Work Programme 2012 - 2013 & Executive Forward Plan**

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan and were content with the agenda items proposed for consideration at forthcoming meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Corporate Resources OSC Work Programme be noted.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.00 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....