

Appendix B

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 December 2010

Comments regarding the supplementary savings proposals contained within the Corporate Budget Strategy report presented to Executive on 7 December 2010

At its meeting of 14 December 2010, the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the viability and suitability of the specific supplementary savings proposals relating to the Sustainable Communities directorate. Detailed below are the outcomes of this meeting.

Sustainable Communities Directorate

a. EGRS1 Merge the Community Involvement and Community Engagement teams

The Committee queried the number of staff currently employed in the Community Involvement and Community Engagement teams and discussed the roles that these teams fulfilled. It was noted that where the support provided by these teams was proposed to be removed the Town and Parish Councils could seek to continue that support as encouraged under the Community Engagement Strategy

Following questions from the Committee it was clarified that this proposal was a cessation in service provision by the Sustainable Communities Directorate rather than a merger of two teams.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal relating to the Community Involvement and Community Engagement Teams in order to achieve a full year saving of £300k.

b. EGRS4 Remodelling of the Library Service

The Committee noted that a full review of the operation of the library service was planned and would commence after 1 January 2011. The Committee emphasised the importance of this review as a means of identifying further potential savings.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to remodel the Library Service in order to achieve a full year saving of £350k.

c. CSPPW4 Closure of household waste recycling centres (2 days per week)

Members raised concerns regarding fly-tipping outside of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) if hours were reduced. Concerns were also raised that the publicity required to notify residents of the change in hours would outweigh the savings that could be achieved by implementing this proposal. Members also requested that further advertising be made available at the HWRCs of furniture banks that promote the reuse and reallocation of household furniture.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to close the household waste recycling centres on 2 days per week in order to achieve a full year saving of £60k.

- d. CSPPWL1 Remodelling of the Community Safety Team

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to reconfigure the community safety team in order to achieve a full year saving of £30k.

- e. CSPPWL5 Remodelling of Waste Services teams

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to remodel waste services teams in order to achieve a full year saving of £30k.

- f. CSPPWL6 Sports Development and Play Service

The Committee were informed that this proposal was complex as some of the funding for this team was received from external sources such as the NHS. The Committee commented that without a full understanding of the implications on Central Bedfordshire of the comprehensive spending review it was difficult to agree to this proposal. As a result the Committee felt that it was under informed and was unable to provide a constructive response.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to delete the Sport Development and Play Service in order to achieve a minimum of a full year saving of £200k.

- g. CSPPWL7 Review provision of Outdoor Education Service with a view to increased efficiency

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to review the provision of the outdoor education service in order to achieve a further full year saving of £123k.

- h. CSPPWL8 Sandy Leisure Centre

The Committee discussed the importance of seeking an alternative provider to deliver the facilities at Sandy Leisure Centre. In reaching its recommendation Members were mindful of the petition received on this matter, which asked the Council to ensure that Sandy Leisure Centre remained open and accessible.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal regarding Sandy Leisure Centre in order to achieve a saving of £143k in a full year. The Executive were requested to proactively seek alternative providers such as the school or the voluntary community sector to run the facility so that the proposals did not result in the closure of the leisure centre.

Cross Cutting Proposals

i. CC6a Passenger transport review increased target

The Committee noted that this proposal had been approved by the Executive at their meeting on 7 December 2010 during consideration of a report on the local bus services and community transport interim support strategy.

j. CC35 Delay Harmonisation of Council Tax

The Committee were aware that this proposal was not within the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee but felt it was appropriate for them to express a view on the proposal. Members commented they felt that residents would be amenable to the Council retaining the £1.6million that would be lost as a result of harmonising council tax if it was invested to retain services that would otherwise be lost.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive take account of the view of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the proposal to delay harmonisation of council tax should be adopted in order to achieve additional income of £1.595 million in 2011/12.