

AT A MEETING of the POLICY AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Friday, 20 January 2017.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Elaine Still

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Keith Evans

Councillors:

p Ray Bolton	p Anna McNair Scott
p Adrian Collett	p Andy Moore
p Criss Connor	p Mark Staplehurst
p Keith House	p Bruce Tennent
a Roger Huxstep	a Ken Thornber
p Robin McIntosh	a Sharyn Wheale

153. **BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

154. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Roger Huxstep, Cllr Ken Thornber and Cllr Sharyn Wheale. The conservative Substitute Member Cllr Edward Heron attended in their place.

155. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

156. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Select Committee meeting held on 22 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

157. **DEPUTATIONS**

No deputations were received at this meeting.

158. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements to make on this occasion.

159. **ANALYSIS OF MEMBER DEVOLVED GRANT BUDGETS**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Transformation and Governance regarding the Members Devolved Grants budget (see Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Members heard that:

- The Members devolved budget was currently £8,000 per Member. It had been a proposal as part of the Transformation to 2017 savings that this reduce to £5,000 per member
- When the savings proposals were considered by the Policy & Resources Select Committee, the Committee recommended that this proposal be re-considered
- Since then, an analysis of the use of Member grants had been undertaken and a revised proposed change was being recommended
- The average spend by members was £6,400 in the first two years of this administration and £6,700 in year three
- It would be possible to avoid making this saving by using Policy & Resources reserves for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years. The situation would then need to be reviewed

Members commented:

- Members from the minority political groups were disappointed that the sample of Members surveyed about the scheme as part of the analysis had not covered all of the political groups
- Some Members argued that being able to carry forwards a proportion of the funds from year to year was helpful in managing grants over time

Following the debate, Members of the committee were in agreement regarding making a recommendation to retain Members grant budget at £8,000, however there were differing views regarding carry forwards.

The following was proposed by Cllr Collett and seconded by Cllr House:

That up to £2,000 of unspent grant funding be allowed to be carried forwards to the next financial year.

This was put to the vote and lost by 5 votes for, 7 against.

The following was then proposed by the Chairman, and carried by majority vote:

RECOMMENDED:

That the annual Member Grants budget remain at £8,000 per Member.

That in future, any unspent grant funds no longer be carried forwards to the next financial year.

Recommendations
passed to
Executive Member

160. **BUDGET**

The Committee considered reports and a supporting presentation from the Chief Executive, Director of Culture Communities and Business Services, Director of Transformation, Director of Public Health and Director of Corporate Resources – Corporate Services, regarding the budget. This included; reports on budget setting and provisional cash limits 2017/18, and transformation to 2017 report no. 9 that had been considered by Cabinet in December 2016; the proposed revenue budget for policy and resources for 2017/18 and the proposed capital programme for policy and resources for 2017/18 to 2019/20, due to be considered by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources at the Decision Day on 20 January 2017 (see Item 7 in the Minute Book).

Members heard that:

- The budget setting report had been provided in accordance with the remit of the Policy & Resources Select Committee to scrutinise financial management
- The grant loss anticipated in the next two years was greater than that experienced in the previous four years
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out that a further £140m in savings are required by 2019/20 in order to balance the budget
- According to the reserves strategy, around £100m in reserves is available to use, however the majority of this is the grant equalisation reserve which will be fully utilised in 2018/19
- The savings required for the 2017/18 budget had been agreed in 2015; no new savings were proposed in this budget

- By October 2016 £65m of the £99m savings for 2017/18 had been secured. It had been agreed that £13m of savings for the Adults Health and Care Department could be delivered during 2017/18

- The savings target for the Policy & Resources budget for 2017/18 was £11m and it was expected to slightly over achieve. The majority of these savings had been achieved through staff reductions.

Following the debate, the Chairman proposed the following that was agreed:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Policy and Resources Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources in section 10 (page 7) of the capital programme report.

The Following was proposed by the Chairman and carried by majority vote (with the following members abstaining; Collett, Connor, House, Tennent):

RECOMMENDED:

That the Policy and Resources Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources in section 10 (page 10) of the revenue budget report.

Recommendations passed to Executive Member

161. **ANNUAL IT UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Corporate Resources providing an update on the work of the IT section over the past year (see Item 8 in the Minute Book).

Members heard that:

- The new Head of IT Operations had joined the County Council in May 2016
- The IT section had overachieved against it's savings target for the 2017/18 financial year
- East Hampshire District Council and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service had decided not to continue with the County Council providing their IT services
- The funding structure had been changed so that corporately prioritised IT projects would not be charged to departments
- Future priorities included; the continuation of the Digital Programme; supporting departments with IT requirements relating to Transformation to 2019 savings proposals; improving WiFi coverage of council buildings to support an increasingly mobile workforce; and

implementation of Sharepoint electronic records management system

Following questions, Members heard:

- As part of the digital programme the County Council's webpages had been updated, to make them clearer and support access from mobile devices

RESOLVED:

The Select Committee note the report.

162. **WORK PROGRAMME AND ONGOING WORK ACROSS ALL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Members noted the work programme for the Committee and the overview of scrutiny activity across all Committees (see Item 9 in the Minute Book).

RESOLVED:

That the work programme is agreed, subject to any amendments arising from this meeting.

Chairman, 22 June 2017