

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee

held on Tuesday, 7 February 2017 at 7.00 pm

at the Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Alice Badcock (Vice-Chairman), Ed Blagrove, Vicky Jenkins, Monica Lovatt, Ben Mabbett, Chris Palmer, Judy Roberts and Dudley Hoddinott (In place of Debby Hallett)

Officers: William Jacobs and Ron Schrieber

Also present: Councillors Matthew Barber and Roger Sharp; Simon Hewings (Capita Accountancy)

Sc.43 Notification of substitutes and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Debby Hallett (substitute Dudley Hoddinott) and Mohinder Kainth.

Sc.44 Declarations of interest

None.

Sc.45 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

Sc.46 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the Scrutiny Committee

None.

Sc.47 Budget 2017/18

The committee considered the head of finance's report. This brought together all relevant information to allow Cabinet to recommend to Council a revenue budget for 2017/18 and a capital programme for 2017/18 to 2021/22. The Medium Term Financial Plan was included, which provided details of the forward budget model for the next five years. The report also recommended the prudential indicators to be set by the Council in accordance with 'the Prudential Code', introduced as part of the Local Government Act 2003.

Councillor Robert Sharp, the Cabinet member for finance, introduced the report. Also present to answer questions were Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader, William Jacobs, head of finance and Simon Hewings, chief accountant (Capita).

The budget preparation had brought a number of challenges around new homes bonus and the new operating environment. The budget included a £5 increase in council tax per Band D property, in line with government expectation. This would allow the council to be more prudent in the medium term financial plan. This would be the first council tax increase it had recommended in the past six years.

In response to questions and issues raised by the committee, it was reported that:

- When the 2016/17 budget was set, the contracting process for the Five Councils' Partnership was still ongoing and only estimates of savings were available, based on future costs being smoothed on an annual basis. However, it was now clear that there would be a greater realisation of savings in the later years of the contract. Accordingly, the savings estimate arising from the contact costs had been re-profiled over the medium term financial plan.
- Although Hart, Havant and Mendip Councils would be joining the Five Councils' Partnership at a later date, the same contract costs profiles would apply.
- Although the final settlement funding assessment would not be received from government until 20 February, it was not anticipated that this would differ significantly from the provisional figures.

RESOLVED

To agree that cabinet recommend to council that it:

- (a) set the revenue budget for 2017/18 as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 3 February 2017;
- (b) approve the capital programme for 2017/18 to 2021/22 as set out in appendix D.1 to the head of finance's report, together with the capital growth bids set out in appendix D.2 of the head of finance's report;
- (c) set the council's prudential limits as listed in appendix E to the head of finance's report; and
- (d) approve the medium term financial plan to 2021/22 as set out in appendix F.1 to the head of finance's report.

Sc.48 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The committee was advised that, since the publication of the work programme, a member workshop to draw up a longlist of future items had been arranged for Monday 27 February.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm