

To: All Members of the County Council  
All Chief Officers

From: COUNTY SECRETARY'S  
DEPARTMENT  
Ask for: Adrian Service  
Ext: 25564

**RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY 22 JANUARY 2004  
MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE**

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

D Clayton, G M Cook, P V Goggins, I H Laidlaw-Dickson (Chairman), D B Lloyd, S Pile, S Quilty, H M Saunders, R J Smith, W A Storey (Vice-Chairman).

**EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

D Beatty (Resources), R J M Ellis (Leader), R I N Gordon (Children, Schools & Families) A M R Searing (Efficiencies and IT).

Also in Attendance

G D Game, R A Mays

**MINUTES**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 October 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS**

None

**QUESTIONS**

None

**PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS**

**1 COUNTY COUNCIL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET  
MONITOR**

[Officer contact: Andrew Nightingale [Tel: 01992 555331]

- 1.1 The Committee noted a report detailing the projected revenue and capital outturn position as at 31 October 2003.

- 1.2 The Finance Director advised of the following two typographical errors that appeared in the submitted report :-
- a) Page 4 – sixth line down Change from previous monitor figure should be **£747,000 underspend** [not £517,000 underspend]
  - b) Page 11 – para 4.2.2 last sentence to be completed and to read ‘The items slipping are those which may be deferred until after the SHARP programme goes live on 1 April 2004.’
- 1.3 In response to questions, the Finance Director stated that it was likely the net underspend of currently £3m for 2003 / 2004 would be based on the pressures to the Children School & Families Budget reduce by the end of the financial year to approximately £0.5 m.

#### 1.4 Conclusions

- 1.4.1 The Committee noted the submitted report.
- 1.4.2 The Chief Executive be requested to submit a briefing note on the progress made with producing a balanced scorecard reflecting the Council’s performance of its activities and services.

Caroline  
Tapster

## 2 CORPORATE SERVICES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROPOSED RESOURCE BUDGET 2004 / 2005 – 2007 / 2008

[Officer contact: [Alison Cannur Tel: 01992 555457]

- 2.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the proposals made by Cabinet on 15 December 2003 for the revenue budget and capital programme for Corporate Services.
- 2.2 It was felt that budgetary provision for Police Community Support Officer Teams should be included within the Community Services Scrutiny Committee’s Budget and scrutinised by that Committee.

#### 2.3 Conclusions:

- 2.3.1 The Committee noted the report and;
- 2.3.2 requested that officers consider reporting the budgetary provision for Police Community Support Officers through the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3.3 noted that a significant portion of future savings will come through the SHARP project. There was concern that this aspect of the budget should be carefully monitored to ensure savings are realised.

Andrew  
Nightingale

Chris  
Sweeney

### 3 COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSED RESOURCE BUDGET 2004 / 2005 – 2007 / 2008

[Officer contact: [Lorraine Allen Tel: 01992 555313]

3.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the proposals made by Cabinet on 15 December 2003 and the addendum report containing supplementary information received for the revenue budget and capital programme for the County Council. The addendum report also contained the recommendations and comments made by the Community Services, Adult Care Services, Environment and Children Schools & Families Scrutiny Committees on their respective Budgets at their meetings in January 2004.

3.2 The Finance Director gave a presentation summarising the main issues taken into account in formulating the proposed budget, updating information received since the Cabinet put forward the draft Budget on 15 December 2003.

3.3 He advised that there was still outstanding information required to enable a fully informed decision on the Council Tax level to be made. The outstanding information concerned the final taxbase and collection fund surplus; the levies to be made by the Environment Agency; whether the Council's proposed tax rise would be capped and the report on the adequacy of the Council's Reserves

#### 3.4 **Conclusions:**

3.4.1 That the Cabinet be advised that : -

- a) That the Committee have explored the options and issues around the balance between borrowing and revenue for financing capital spending.
- b) It was recognised that circumstances have changed and the Committee welcomed the Executive Members' intention to review the capital strategy. It was noted that this review should include consideration of revenue contribution to future capital needs.
- c) A report on the draft capital strategy to the November 2004 meeting, or earlier meeting if this is possible, was requested.
- d) The Resources Scrutiny Committee welcomed the Executive Members commitment to review the balance between revenue funding and borrowing in the short term.
- e) The Committee welcomed the increase in Police Community Support Officers which links directly to the highest concerns raised in public consultation on the budget. They urged careful thought on the principles on which the distribution of officers in the county would be based.

Adrian Service /  
David Roberts

Chris  
Sweeney

Chris  
Sweeney

- f) The Committee again noted their concern about Children Schools & Families Department overspend.
- g) The Committee supported the provision of a central contingency and recognise the distinction between this and reserves.

#### **4 BEST VALUE REVIEW MONITORING UPDATE**

[Officer contact: Clare Kaye [Tel: 01992 555]

- 4.1 The Chief Executive advised that whilst the Council had achieved 'Excellent' status under the CPA and did not necessarily have to undertake Best Value Reviews in the coming years it nonetheless would identify services that needed to be reviewed. A possible programme of future reviews would be prepared and submitted to the Cabinet in Spring 2004
- 4.2 The Chief Executive stated that the comment made in the sixth column of Table 1 relating to Libraries was inappropriate and meaningless for this exercise and should not be taken into account.
- 4.3 David Humby advised in respect of Planning and Transportation Policy that as a consequence of legislation changes no non cashable savings had yet been achieved.
- 4.4 David Robinson advised that revised services to older people would lead to people being more self reliant in the long term with savings of upto £284,000 being achieved in 5 years time.
- 4.5 It was concurred that future monitoring reports on Best Value Reviews should be stand alone reports containing a short precise of what the review entailed and state the actual additional costs and savings already incurred / arising matched against those projected over 5 years.
- 4.6 Conclusions :**
  - 4.6.1 The Committee noted the report and thanked the officers who attended and presented the information.
  - 4.6.2 That a report be presented to a subsequent meeting setting out a future programme of reviews that would be undertaken.

Caroline  
Tapster /  
Geoff Brown

## 5 COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT [CPA] FOR 2003

[Officer contact: Geoff Brown Tel: 01992 555370]

- 5.1 A table giving details of the Council's Performance Indicators of services / activities which were in the bottom half of all Local Authorities were circulated at the meeting.

### 5.2 Conclusion:

- 5.2.1 The Committee noted the report.

## 6 DELEGATED FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE AUTHORITY – THE ROLES OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS IN COUNTY COUNCIL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

[Officer contact: Chris Sweeney [Tel: 01992 555303]

### 6.1 Conclusion:

- 6.1.1 The Committee noted the report.

## 7 SCRUTINY UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMMES FOR 2003 / 04 AND 2004 / 05

[Officer contact: Adrian Service Tel: 01992 555564]

- 7.1 An update report on the work of the Simply Done Efficiencies Panel was circulated at the meeting.

### 7.2 Conclusions:

- 7.2.1 It was agreed that a report on Capital Strategy be submitted to the November 2004 meeting.
- 7.2.2 The Committee agreed with the work programme and timetable set out in the submitted report.
- 7.2.3 It was agreed that the following items be added to the Work Programme :-

- Use of Publications - the best way of getting our messages out to our customers, alternatives to hardcopy information
- Completion of the Local Public Service Agreement [LPSA]
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Risk Management

Chris  
Sweeney

James  
Odling –Smee  
Geoff Brown /  
Keith Shephard  
Anne Fisher  
Paul Dudley

**8. ITEM REFERRED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL**

No item was selected to be reported to the County Council at its next meeting.

**9. CABINET CHANGES**

The Leader of the Council advised that due to the workload for the Executive Member for Children Schools & Families being too much for one Member to handle, it had decided that changes should be made. He stated that this workload would be split with Robert Gordon becoming the Executive Member for Education and Jane Pitman becoming the Executive Member for Children's Services. Consequently David Lloyd would become the new Executive Member for Adult Care Services. These changes would come into effect immediately

**Andrew Laycock**  
**County Secretary**