

**LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
19th January, 2004**

Present:- Councillor St. John (in the Chair); Councillors Barron, Boyes, Burke, Kaye and Thirlwall.

Mr. T. Brown, Mr. P. Eyre, Mr. P. Hawkridge, Mr. G. Lancashire, Mrs. E. Marsh, Mr. R. Newman, Mr. S. Radford and Mrs. S. Underwood.

134. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. B. Evans, Mrs. S. Birkin, Ms. J. Carroll and Councillor Dodson.

135. ECALS BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – NOVEMBER, 2003

Consideration was given to the content of a report presented by the Strategic Leader Resources and Information on the performance against budget of the Education, Culture and Leisure Services Programme Area for the period April to November, 2003.

At this stage in the financial year the Programme Area has identified a number of issues which, if not addressed, will result in an overspend of £174,250 against the Programme Area's budget – a reduction of £29,000 from the position reported last month. The potential overspend is made up of £51,250 for Education Services and £123,000 for Culture and Leisure Services. However, action is being taken to address this position, with a view to returning the budget to a balanced position.

Appendices 1 and 2 provided details of the projected spend on the Education Services and Culture, Leisure and Lifelong Learning areas of the Programme Area, action being taken to address the identified budget pressures and consequent estimated overspends.

A question was raised on the future of Grange Park golf course in terms of the impact of a projected overspend of £27,000 on this facility on the present budget process.

An assurance was given that considerable progress was being made on this matter. A Consultant had been appointed to offer specialist advice on the best way forward, based on which Expressions of Interest were presently being compiled in order to attract suitable managers of the golf course. In this event, it was anticipated that the projected overspend would not be carried into the next financial year.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following item in order to process the matter referred to without delay).

**136. NOMINATION – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S BOARD
SCRUTINY WORKING PARTY**

Further to Minute No. 121 of a meeting of the Lifelong Learning Opportunities Scrutiny Panel held on 12th January, 2004 consideration was given to the need for a fourth nomination on the working group.

Resolved:- That Councillor Thirlwall be nominated onto the working party.

137. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information proposed to be incurred by the Authority for the supply of goods or services).

138. BUDGET PROCESS 2004/05

Consideration was given to the content of a report submitted by the Executive Director Resources setting out a proposal for the 2004/05 budget as part of the ongoing budget process in order to achieve a balanced position. The report includes a 4.9% Council tax level, the funding of the Council’s key priorities and investment proposals for other key imperatives.

The report set out the position both prior to and since the notification of additional grant from the Government on 11th December, 2003.

Appendix A of the report set out a number of funding proposals for redistribution of the total budget available to spend, together with a number of Scrutiny Reviews which had been requested for consideration as part of the budget process.

In the case of this Programme Area, the Scrutiny Reviews had been on the Allotments and Theatres.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

(The Chairman agreed to move the following item from the open to the exempt section of the meeting).

139. IMPLICATIONS OF THE BUDGET FOR THE ECALS PROGRAMME AREA

Further to Minute No. 138 of this meeting, the Acting Executive Director, Education, Culture and Leisure Services gave a verbal report on the budget position and redistribution proposals in respect of the implications for this Service Area, set against the financial recommendations, arising out of Scrutiny Reviews.

The presentation on the Education Budget was based on an assumption of no change to the Education FSS (Funding Spending Shares) factor.

The presentation gave a breakdown of budget savings in order to achieve the required savings recommended by The Cabinet.

A presentation on the Culture and Leisure Services budget was given.

Funding had been earmarked to enhance the Ranger Service in Clifton Park which had been very successful, and in order to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Rotherham Show.

The meeting debated the importance of Culture and Leisure facilities in terms of the benefits gained by service users, staffing issues, and specific responsibilities to deliver, and balanced the implications of the examples against these factors, whilst taking into account recent pool closures at Sheffield Road and Herringthorpe Leisure Centre.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposals for savings on the Education Service totalling £115,000, as proposed by The Cabinet, be supported.

(2) That the proposals for savings on the Culture and Leisure Services budget totalling £350,000, as required by The Cabinet, be not supported, this being a unanimous decision.

(3) That consideration be given to the present savings of £650,000, due to the recent closures of Sheffield Road Pool and Herringthorpe Leisure Centre pool, being used to off-set the required 3% savings (£350,000) on the Culture and Leisure Service budget, and that further ways of achieving savings on other aspects of work across this Service area be explored.