

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
11th February, 2011

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Gilding, Jack, License, Steele, Swift and Whysall.

Also in attendance were Councillors Akhtar, Atkin, Dodson, Doyle, Fenoughty, Gosling, Lakin, Nightingale, Pickering, St. John, Sharman, Smith, Thirlwall and Wootton.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor McNeely) and Councillors J. Hamilton, N. Hamilton, Middleton, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell and R. S. Russell.

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

121. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

122. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th January, 2011 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

123. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Jack reported that yesterday's meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel had considered:-

- update on assistive technology review
- 2011 Health and Social Care Bill
- Healthy Lives, Healthy People : Public Health White Paper Consultation

(b) Councillor Austen reported that the latest meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel held on 3rd February had considered :-

- scrutiny review of the Council's website, incorporating a practical demonstration
- review of overview and scrutiny in a focus group session

(c) Councillor Whysall reported that the latest meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel held on 12th January, 2011 had considered a comprehensive report on the response to snow events in November/December, 2010

The Panel was to look at issues regarding the provision of pedestrian crossings.

124. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.

125. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 [staffing/business affairs].

126. BUDGET 2011/12

Andrew Bedford, Strategic Director of Finance, gave a presentation relating to the above entitled :

“Rotherham’s Budget 2011/12 Onwards- Principles and Challenges”

The presentation covered:-

- Budget Proposals

- developed to :
 - address the unprecedented financial challenge ahead
 - address the priorities of elected members
 - protect front line services
 - ensure a focus on the customer
 - safeguard the most vulnerable
 - deliver key investment priorities across the borough
- developed having regard for:
 - severe funding constraints within which the Council must operate
 - statutory v discretionary services provided by the Council
 - service performance compared to similar councils
 - current service spending pressures
 - unavoidable costs and demographic pressures
 - budget consultation outcomes
 - risk, impact and deliverability of proposals
- developed with the aims of :
 - reducing bureaucracy
 - joining up services
 - achieving economies of scale
 - emphasising early intervention and prevention
 - making “up-stream” investments and investing to save
 - protecting services rather than structures

- The Challenge : Funding Gap
- Other Savings Opportunities
- Directorate – specific Savings Proposals
- Budget Proposals Provision
- Revenue Budget 2010/11 – 2011/12
- 2011/2012 Savings as a percentage of Present Policies Budget
- Budget Timetable

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- comparisons with other councils
- risks on delivering the proposals
- library provision
- the future of Area Assemblies
- requirement for savings beyond 2011/12
- cost to the Council of newly arrived people
- figures behind the headline figures
- reduced provision for liabilities - good risk management
- capital investment in schools
- Building Schools for the Future funding
- proportion of the revenue budget for schools delegated budget, RBT and PFI schemes
- PFI value
- Independent Remuneration Panel recommendations and elected Member budget savings proposals
- Housing Revenue Account
- Council Tax levels and resultant eligibility for grant funding
- job losses over the next four years
- status of proposals regarding staff pay

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That the presentation be sent to all Members of the Council.

(3) That the requested information regarding the PFI value be sent to all Members of the Council.