

**BUDGET AND
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

6.00 P.M.

12TH JUNE 2012

PRESENT:- Councillors Susan Sykes (Chairman), Tony Anderson, Dave Brookes, Janet Hall, Alycia James, Richard Newman-Thompson, Elizabeth Scott and Keith Sowden

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillor Richard Rollins

Officers in attendance:-

Richard Tulej	Head of Community Engagement Service
Nadine Muschamp	Head of Resources
Simon Kirby	Assistant Head (Wellbeing), Community Engagement Service
Anne Marie Harrison	Assistant Head (Partnerships), Community Engagement Service
Andrew Clarke	Accountancy Services Manager
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer, Democratic Services
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer, Democratic Services

1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Liz Scott declared a personal interest in respect of agenda items 8 – Quarter 4 Corporate Performance Monitoring Report and item 9 – Work Programme Report, as she was employed by the Department for Work and Pensions (Minute numbers 5 and 7 refer).

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Sykes, seconded by Councillor Scott and unanimously agreed :

That Councillor Alycia James be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Budget and Performance Panel for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

Resolved :

That Councillor Alycia James be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Budget and Performance Panel for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2012 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR EILEEN BLAMIRE - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Eileen Blamire to the meeting.

Councillor Blamire gave the Panel an update on the Council's financial situation for 2012/13.

It was reported that the Council faced a number of challenges within the forthcoming year such as the cost implications of Lancaster market, Morecambe's West End and the land at South Lancaster. There would also be difficulties to face in the next few years with changes in legislation for the collection of business rates and welfare reforms that were to be introduced by the Government and had huge implications for local authorities.

It was noted that the Council reserves were on a solid footing in case of any emergencies.

Members of the Panel questioned the Icelandic Bank situation and were advised that this was progressing well. It was agreed that further details of the recoveries would be circulated to the Panel.

Resolved :

- (1) That Councillor Blamire be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That further details of the Icelandic Bank money recoveries be circulated to the Panel.

5 QUARTER 4 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Assistant Head – Partnerships presented a reporting detailing the quarter 4 performance monitoring for 2011/12.

Members were advised that there were 3 areas that had been highlighted as not achieving their expected outcomes, reducing sickness absence, average time to re-let empty Council houses and invest to save secondary glazing.

The Panel discussed these areas at length. It was agreed that a briefing note would be requested on the average time to re-let empty Council houses including the percentage of empty houses, voids and why the properties are in need of repairing.

It was noted that sickness absence had now been reduced to an amber indicator. It was agreed that this should be reviewed regularly.

Members were advised that the Invest to Save secondary glazing project had not been taken forward as it did not offer sufficient return on investment.

It was reported that a new performance management system was being introduced which was interactive and dynamic and it was suggested that performance management monitoring could be reduced to twice yearly rather than quarterly.

The Panel discussed this suggestion and agreed that quarterly reporting would continue for this Municipal year but the Panel would consider reducing to twice yearly in 2013/14 with exceptional reporting if needed on any issues arising in the interim.

Resolved :

- (1) That a briefing note be drafted by officers providing information on the percentage of empty houses, voids and why the properties are in need of repairing.
- (2) That reducing sickness absence be kept under regular review with reports being provided to the Panel.
- (3) That quarterly performance monitoring reporting continue for this Municipal year but the Panel consider reducing to twice yearly in 2013/14, with exceptional reporting if needed on any issues arising in the interim.

6 SALT AYRE SPORTS CENTRE

The Assistant Head – Well Being and Head of Community Engagement presented a report on Salt Ayre Sports Centre including performance and an overview of specific areas of work planned for the future.

Members were given details of the improvements that had been undertaken regarding energy consumption with a 42% reduction being achieved and 54% reduction in energy costs as well as increases in gym membership.

Details of partnership work that was taking place was discussed which included the GP Exercise Referral Scheme, the MEND referral programme for clinically obese children and the County Council's Youth Services.

It was reported that the future of the sports centre was under constant review as exercise trends changed. Discussions had taken place with neighbouring authorities in relation to their sports and leisure management contracts. It was clear that there were different management models in place and some favourable comments were received as to how the City Council integrates its sports centre and swimming pools with other significant agencies such as Primary Care Trust and County Council Young Peoples Service. It was noted that further dialogue would be maintained.

The Panel asked a number of questions relating to the operation of the sports centre and congratulations were offered to the officers on the significant improvements made.

It was agreed that a more detailed report on the finances of the sports centre be requested including the income and expenditure for the last year and this be timetabled for autumn, with a verbal update at the July meeting as to the progress being made.

Resolved:

That a more detailed report on the finances of the sports centre be requested including the income and expenditure for the last year and this be timetabled for autumn, with a verbal update at the July meeting as to the progress being made.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.45pm

The meeting was reconvened at 7.50pm

7 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Panel considered a briefing note that had been provided relating to Building Control.

It was agreed that a further update would be requested in view of some of the issues referred to in the briefing note being anticipated to be completed by the end of April 2012.

Members discussed a briefing note on Housing Benefit Debt which gave details of outstanding debt owed to the Council and the introduction of universal credit which would have an impact on people's benefit. It was agreed that the Panel should receive regular updates on the situation.

Consideration was given to an issue raised by Councillor Scott on damage to Council houses by tenants and the implications for the Council.

It was noted that the report referred to Councillor Scott suggesting that Tenancy Deposits be considered in the Panel's Work Programme. This was an error in the report. It was agreed that a briefing note would be requested for the July meeting on the issues originally requested by Councillor Scott.

The Panel considered the monitoring of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and agreed that this should remain on the Work Programme. It was agreed that the Panel should also consider second homes funding and how this will be implemented and monitored.

With regard to Partnerships, it was agreed that the Panel should include and consider at future meetings the performance of the shared Revenues and Benefits Service with Preston City Council.

Members were advised that the Affordable Housing Task Group that had been included in the Work Programme for some time, had been removed to avoid duplication as a Cabinet Liaison Group had been established to consider the same topic.

The Panel considered a suggestion for the Work Programme regarding lettings of Council buildings. This would include the percentage of empty offices/buildings, condition, the income generated and revenue implications for the Council. It was agreed that a briefing note be requested on this issue.

Members went on to discuss the Storey Creative Industries Centre and possible issues that had arisen particularly regarding any financial implications for the Council. It was agreed that a briefing note be requested.

A further suggestion for the Panel's Work Programme was discussed, that of Section 106 monies collected by the Council. It was agreed that a briefing note be requested on the issue including how much the Council held and what it was allocated for. It was also noted that recent legislation had made provision for Community Infrastructure Levy regulations (CIL) and it was requested that more detail be provided on this legislation.

It was suggested that the relevant Cabinet Member should be invited to attend meetings when their portfolio was being discussed.

The Chairman reminded Members that a briefing had been arranged on the Budget Book on Tuesday 24th July and all Panel Members should attend.

Members were reminded that the date of the July meeting was to be rearranged.

Resolved :

- (1) That an update on Building Control be requested in view of some of the issues referred to in the briefing note being anticipated to be completed by the end of April 2012.
- (2) That the Panel receive regular updates on Housing Benefit Debt.
- (3) That a briefing note be requested for the July meeting on damage to Council houses by tenants and the implications for the Council.
- (4) That the monitoring of Service Level Agreements remain on the Work Programme.
- (5) That the implementation and monitoring of second homes funding be included in the Panel's Work Programme and a report be provided to the Panel.
- (6) That the Panel include the monitoring of Partnerships including the shared Revenues and Benefits Service with Preston City Council in its Work Programme and a report be provided to the Panel.
- (7) That a briefing note be requested on the letting of Council buildings including the percentage of empty offices/buildings, condition, the income generated and revenue implications for the Council.
- (8) That a briefing note on the Storey Creative Industries Centre, particularly regarding any financial implications for the Council, be requested.
- (9) That a briefing note on Section 106 monies collected by the Council be requested including the amount held by the Council and what it was allocated for.
- (10) That further details on the provision for Community Infrastructure Levy regulations (CIL) be requested.
- (11) That the relevant Cabinet Member be invited to attend future meetings when their portfolio is being discussed.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.33 a.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Jenny Kay, Democratic Services - telephone 01524 582065,
or email jkay@lancaster.gov.uk**