

MINUTES of a meeting of the **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – RESOURCES** held at County Hall, Matlock on 18 December 2014

PRESENT

Councillor C R Moesby (in the Chair)

Councillors M Booth, P Dunn, S Freeborn, T A Kemp, D Lomax and S Marshall-Clarke

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor M V Longden

27/14 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Resources held on 25 September 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

28/14 **DISCUSSION WITH CABINET MEMBER** Councillor A Western attended the meeting to provide an update on her portfolio.

Councillor Western emphasised the importance of thinking how the Authority operated, provided services, and worked with partners. The bid for a Combined Authority was due to be submitted shortly, and this would allow greater access to funding streams at a local level. It was also noted that the Authority was diversifying its own income base, and was looking at things in a different way to achieve an income stream.

29/14 **FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN** A presentation was received from P Handford, Director of Finance, on the five year financial plan for the County Council. This was prepared annually for the four years after the current budget year, and took into account funding, known pressures, inflation and reserves projections. The 2015/16 funding had been based on an indicative allocation announced in December 2013, and the Council had been able to plan for the known reductions.

It was stated that there were risks and challenges, as the cuts beyond 2015/16 were unknown, and there was the potential to not meet the budget reduction targets. Further demographic growth was predicted, along with business rates growth being less than predicted. The budget cuts proposed were unprecedented, and by 2019, the Council would have reduced its 2010 budget by over a third with services having been cut by over £250m. Cuts of £159m were required over the five years to 2018/19, and £30m savings had been identified in 2014/15, with £23m in 2015/16. There were further potential reductions of £70m in the five year financial plan, and if all the proposals could be achieved, the shortfall remaining over the previous planning period would be £15m of the £157m target.

The Committee thanked Mr Handford and his team for the work that had been undertaken to ensure the Authority was where it was currently.

30/14 REVIEW OF NON-OPERATIONAL PROPERTY Mr S West, County Property Division, attended the meeting to provide an update on progress on the recommendations arising from the review of non-operational property.

The Committee was informed that there were a number of properties for sale, but there was a resource issue as comments had not been received for a number of properties. The Chair would raise this with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, but it was the intention for Councillor Collins to attend the next meeting. It was also proposed that the Chair write to the relevant department expressing disappointment that it had not responded to the properties/pieces of land for sale, and to ask for comments. It was asked that the list of properties be sent to all members to allow for any comments by a specified deadline. Mr West would attend the next meeting of the Committee to provide a further update.

RESOLVED that progress be noted and a further update be presented to the next meeting.

31/14 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY REVIEW Mr W Bexton attended the meeting to provide an update on the progress made in response to the outcome of the review of sustainable energy.

A site feasibility study had now been undertaken, and 17 sites had been identified. A meeting had taken place with the District Network Operator regarding the sites and the cost of connection to the grid, and this had narrowed the number of suitable sites to six. There could be further sites identified in phase 2 of the feasibility study, and these would be visited in January/February 2015.

A tender exercise had been undertaken for phase 2, and a company called APSE had been successful. A report was due to be presented to Cabinet in March 2015, and this would include the financial modelling. A working group was in place to oversee the work, and it was the intention to deliver the project in March 2016. An update would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee, prior to the Cabinet report being presented.

RESOLVED that progress be noted and a further update be presented to the next meeting.

32/14 CREDIT UNION REVIEW The Committee was provided with an update of progress made by the working group on the review of Credit Unions.

The working group had made a site visit to observe an outreach session of the Manchester Credit Union in Gamesley, and had met with representatives of the regional Illegal Money Lending Team, North East Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau, Financial Action and Advice Derbyshire and the County Council's Welfare Rights Team. The outcomes of these meetings were detailed.

It was also reported that the County Council had introduced a scheme to enable employees to save with their local credit union through payslip contributions. The working group had been keen to explore the potential for large private sector employers in the county to offer a similar facility, and a number of local companies had been contacted.

The working group was now starting to pull recommendations together, and the final report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee. This would also incorporate additional research which had been proposed.

RESOLVED to note the work undertaken by the review working group and the proposed additional research which will inform the final report.

33/14 WORK PROGRAMME It was noted that, for the next meeting, Councillor D Collins needed to be invited to attend as well as Councillor A Botham.

Councillor Moesby asked members to submit ideas for reviews to be undertaken in 2015/16.

RESOLVED to note progress on the Committee's work programme.