

Minutes of the meeting of the **Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee** held on **3 January 2001** when there were present:

Cllr G Fox (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs J Helson

Cllr R E Vingoe
Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C R Morgan

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren – Chief Executive
R Crofts – Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
D Deeks – Head of Financial Services
G. Brazendale – Committee Administrator

118. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

119. BUDGET STRATEGY

The Sub-Committee had, at its last Meeting, considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which outlined the revenue estimates for 2000/01 and 2001/02; a suggested forward revenue budget strategy; fees and charges; structure of the revenue accounts for the budget book; the housing revenue account; and the capital programme.

Members had requested a further report concerning Private Sector Renewal Grants and the potential for further capital receipts.

The Head of Financial Services circulated an update report providing additional information, and summarising the key elements to be considered at the Council's Budget meeting on 23 January. The report provided detail on the following areas:-

- Budget Preparation Timetable

The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) informed Members that a meeting of Corporate Resources Sub-Committee had been arranged for 17 January, to which the Chambers of Trade

would be invited for consultation concerning the National Non-Domestic Rate setting process. Their views would be reported to the Council's Budget Meeting.

- Council – 23 January: items to be covered/key information.

In relation to the costs of the Best Value inspection, the Sub-Committee noted that the provision in the draft estimates had been reduced from £69,000 to £20,000 on the basis of provisional guidance from Central Government, which suggested that the Government would support the Audit Commission's costs and "protect" smaller Councils. Applying this reduction across the three year strategy would result in a reduction in the recommended Council Tax increase from 9% to 8%.

Members requested that the financial models presented to Council should include one showing an overall increase in Council Tax of 6.25% for each of the next three years.

It was noted that £96,300 for recycling had been included within the Committee supported bids.

- Other Issues

The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) reported that the external auditors had indicated their unqualified approval of the Council's accounts but had expressed concern about the declining level of balances. Action to address this issue would need to be taken.

The Sub-Committee was informed of the timetable for the public consultation concerning recycling, from which it was hoped that responses would be received no later than 13 February 2001.

The strategy update and proposed content of the report to the Council's Budget Meeting was agreed.

120. LEISURE CONTRACT

The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) sought the Sub-Committee's views regarding the use of the current leisure consultants (PMP Consultancy) to conduct the tender process for the renewal of the leisure contract. Members were informed of the likely costs of the tender's preparation and evaluation, together with legal advice from the consultants' Solicitors. It was recognised that savings on the cost of the contract would depend upon its length and the extent to which the Council would require operational restraints.

The Sub-Committee noted that the cost of engaging PMP Consultancy to conduct the tendering process could be met from within existing budgetary provision, and was therefore agreeable to the proposal. Members requested, however, that they be informed of the cost of legal advice should this be required

A report outlining the proposal in more detail would be presented to the forthcoming Meeting of Leisure Sub-Committee, for recommendation to Community Services Committee.

The meeting opened at 5.45pm and closed at 6.20pm

Chairman:

Date: