

STRATEGY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6.00pm –6.20pm

PRESENT: Councillors Barrett-Payton, Boyce, Bradnack, Cantrill, Durrant, Hymans, Phillips, Ward (Chair).

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Ian Nimmo-Smith, The Leader and Councillor C Rosenstiel Deputy Leader.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

06/STR/11 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair ruled under 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 that three tabled reports from the Director of Finance ([i] amendment to the Executive's proposed budget and [ii] two amendments to the Labour Group budget) should be considered despite not being made publicly available for this scrutiny committee five clear days prior to the meeting. The reason why these were not available was because the Council was not notified until Wednesday 8th February of the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive funding for the year to 31 December 2005. The Chair stated that the reports must be considered by the Scrutiny Committee to enable any comments to be passed on to the Council on 23 February.

The Chair then asked the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to explain the purpose of the meeting, as this was the first time that this approach (to budget amendments) had been undertaken. The Scrutiny Committee noted that it was not the purpose of the meeting to support, amend or defeat amendments nor that the Leader make any recommendations, or take any decisions. The purpose of the meeting was for the Scrutiny Committee to examine and where appropriate to comment on the amendments.

The Scrutiny Committee noted that it would be helpful to respond to the tabled amendments by Tuesday, when the Council Agenda was being finalised for despatch.

06/STR/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adigun-Harris and Armstrong.

06/STR/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

06/STR/14 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

06/STR/15 AMENDMENT TO THE EXECUTIVE'S DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL

BUDGETS REVISED 05/06, PROPOSED 06/07 AND FORECAST 07/08

The Leader explained that the two amendments (item 4 and item 4-amendment) to the Executive's budget agreed on 26 January would be incorporated within the Executive's Recommendation to Council.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the two amendments. The first amendment took into account the final notification of Government Grant Settlement for 2006/07. The Leader introduced the tabled amendment (item 4 – amendment) which detailed the implications of the announcement of grant from Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) and the Executive's proposals for using that grant. The Scrutiny Committee noted the Executive's proposals (as set out in the report and copied below):

- not to agree saving S792 £1,000 pa (reduce funding to support voluntary sports clubs and coaches),
- not to agree saving S789 £2,000 pa (reduce funding for informal recreation activities (Energize) for young people;
- to agree PPF 654 £30,000 one year funding for waste/recycling outreach officer
- to agree net additional contribution to Capital of £450,520

Councillor Bradnack welcomed the proposals not to agree the two savings (these were also proposed in the Labour Amendment) and that he may respond before Tuesday on the PPF proposal.

06/STR/16 **DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS REVISED 05/06,
PROPOSED 06/07 AND FORECAST 07/08 -
LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT**

Councillor Bradnack explained that the three amendments (item 5, item 5-amendment and item 5-second amendment) would be incorporated as one Budget Amendment within the Council Agenda.

Councillor Bradnack introduced the two amendments (tabled), to the Labour Group budget amendment, which took into account the LABGI funding.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the proposals (as set out in the reports and copied below):

- S777 Energy Audit re-instatement of saving £4,700 in 2007/08 because of C773 Reinstatement of £20,000 to undertake Energy Audit capital works in 2006/07
- PPF913 Age Concern £17,000 in 2006/07 to develop proposals for an Older People's Centre
- C911 Additional lighting on housing land 2006/07 increase from £20,000 to £30,000
- C912 Purchase Howard Mallet site £400,000

Re. the proposal for Howard Mallet site, the Leader asked for information on the projections for community use and revenue funding. He said that it would also be helpful to know what the local community's aspirations were noting the planning consent granted on 8 February.

Councillor Bradnack introduced item 5-second amendment, which replaced C912 (Howard Mallet) with C914 Market Square resurfacing phase 1 (£400,000). The Scrutiny Committee noted that the Labour Budget amendment to Council would present these two capital bids as either/or.

The Deputy Leader stated that the Council was expecting to make a contribution toward improvements to Lion Yard (as landlord), but was still awaiting the detailed proposals from Arlington (the tenant). It had been hoped that this information would have been available earlier on in the budget process, but as it had not, the most sensible approach was to make a substantial contribution to the Capital Budget. He reminded members that if the Lion Yard proposals did not materialise, the Council may then wish to consider how to use the additional funding.

The meeting ended at 6.20pm

CHAIR