

## **Executive Councillor Records of Decision and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Minutes**

**17:00 – 18:04**

### **PRESENT:**

#### **Executive Councillors:**

The Leader: Ian Nimmo-Smith

Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources: Rod Cantrill

#### **Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillors Bick, Blackhurst, Boyce, Herbert, Shah, Taylor (Chair) and Ward

#### **Also present:**

Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health: Blair

Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services: Pitt

Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation: Smith

Labour Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Blencowe

#### **Officers present:**

Chief Executive

Director of Finance

Director of Community Services

Director of City Services

Director of Environment and Planning

Principal Accountant

### **10/SR/13 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Dryden and Howell.

### **10/SR/14 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **10/SR/15 Public Questions**

None.

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The Chair ruled that under section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, items 4 and 5 of the published agenda, and the additional report titled 'Amendments to Budget Setting Report 2010/11 – Housing Revenue Account following final subsidy determination' be considered despite not being made publicly available for five clear working days prior to this meeting.

The reason that these documents could not be deferred was that they formed an integral part of the budget-setting framework of the council.

The Committee was required to consider the items at this meeting prior to further discussion and decision at the full council meeting on 25 February.

**10/SR/16            The Executive's Budget: Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets – revised 2009/10, proposed 2010/11, 2011/12**  
*(Agenda Item 4)*

The Director of Finance introduced the item to Members. He explained that this report updated the position reported to the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 18 January 2010.

A general introduction was also given on the details of the Final Housing Revenue (HRA) Subsidy Determination for 2010/11.

Members raised no questions.

**10/SR/17            LABOUR AMENDMENT TO: Revenue and Capital Budgets 2009/10 (Revised), 2010/11 (Budget) and 2011/12 (Forecast)**  
*(Agenda Item 5)*

Councillor Herbert introduced the item.

The following questions were put by Members on the items in the Labour amendment and answered (A) as listed:

Appendix 1 LS21 (A&R Portfolio) – further detail was requested on the suggestion to create additional lettings.

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A) Councillor Herbert stated that, after viewing a breakdown of existing lettings at Mill Road, he felt there were further commercial opportunities that could be explored.

Regarding the granting of concessions on council parks and land, he felt that there could be more activity on these areas. This was felt especially important in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation commented that an Olympics Group had already been set up and included representatives from local schools and the County Council. It was felt important that the council also looked at longer-term need, and not just the run up to 2012. Councillors were invited to feed ideas into this group.

Appendix 1 LB9 (CDH Portfolio) – further detail was requested on the amalgamation of the many city small funds.

A) Councillor Herbert stated that there would be benefits to integrating the management of the smaller funding streams and advertising them in a standard way. This would also result in the funds being better utilised.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health agreed that there was scope for efficiencies to be made in some areas, and joint management of grants was being looked at. She did however note the importance of the small funding streams and the benefits of local grants through the Area Committee process.

Appendix 1 LB19 (E&WS Portfolio) – Councillor Taylor asked that as there had already been public disquiet about car parking prices on Sundays, how would the Labour Group handle this?

A) Councillor Herbert stated that, in order to tackle traffic congestion, the pattern of charging needed to be reviewed. Sunday had now become a normal shopping day and prices needed to reflect this.

Councillor Ward commented that the lack of buses on a Sunday and the subsequent effect on residents' parking could cause a problem.

Appendix 1 LB18 (E&WS Portfolio) – it was questioned whether this should be a budget item. The Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services requested that any specific issues be raised with him, so they could be addressed.

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Appendix 1 LB11 (E&WS Portfolio) – the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services commented that discussions were ongoing with the County Council regarding this issue. Salt bins were not always the best solution and an appropriate way forward was being worked on.

Councillor Herbert noted this comment.

Appendix 1 LS6 (S&R Portfolio) – further detail was requested on which consultancy costs could be reduced.

Councillor Herbert stated that specific examples would be provided for discussion at the full Council meeting on 25 February.

Councillor Blencowe stated that the North West Cambridge Retail Study conducted by the council was a good example. This was conducted in parallel to a study already being undertaken by the developer, and was just duplication.

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources commented that consultancy accounting codes included such areas as external Audit and Legal services, and this needed to be taken into account.

Appendix 1 LS1 (S&R Portfolio) – if the number of Committee Managers were reduced, which meetings would the Labour Group suggest did not happen?

Councillor Herbert suggested that the full Planning Committee determine all planning items and this could then mean a reduction in the number of Area Committees. The vast number of sub-groups and working parties was also highlighted as an area where efficiencies could be made.

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources commented that 50-60% of meeting covered by Committee Services were regulatory and therefore budgets could not be reduced.

A reduction of Area Committees would also go against what the public and central government had identified as important. There was a need for more local decision-making and Area Committees catered for this need.

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Appendix 1 LS2 (S&R Portfolio) – Councillor Taylor asked how the Labour group would replace Cambridge Matters as a communications tool?

Councillor Herbert stated that there was no longer a need for ‘Cambridge Matters’ and the council should engage more with local newspapers.

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources commented that in a recent survey 51% of residents saw ‘Cambridge Matters’ as an important way for the council to communicate with the public.

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