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Policy and Resources Committee

Held at Council Chamber, Ryedale House, Malton
on Thursday 4 February 2010

Present

Councillors Acomb, Arnold, Bailey, Knaggs, Legard (Vice-Chair), Maud, Wainwright (Chairman) and Woodward

Substitutes: Councillor Mrs P J De Wend Fenton and Councillor H L Keal

By Invitation of the Chairman:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Observers: ObserverInAttendanceList

In Attendance

Trevor Anderson, Lynda Carter, Paul Cresswell and Janet Waggott

Minutes

62 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Burr and Mrs Hodgson.

63 **Announcement**

The Chairman reported that the awards presentation for the Royal Town Planning Institute 2009 Awards had been held that day. This was an annual event held to identify and celebrate quality planning achievements.

The Chairman reported that the 'Castle Howard Management Plan and Development Framework' had been announced joint winner of the 'Heritage' award.

Ryedale's Planning Officers had been closely involved in supporting the Estate throughout the preparation of the Plan, which in the words of the judges "breaks ground by dealing with the socio-economic realities of management and offers a model for other plans".

Members congratulated officers on the achievement.

64 **Urgent Business**

There were two items of urgent business to be considered by virtue of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

- An information report referred by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 10 December 2010
- An exempt report - Council Tax & Business Rates Arrears - Consideration of Write Offs

65 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were submitted.

66 **Financial Strategy 2010/2011**

The Corporate Director (s151) submitted a report, which set out the budget for 2010/11, a proposed Council Tax level, the Financial Strategy, details of balances and reserves and the indicators under the Prudential Code for capital finance as required by the Local Government Act 2003.

At its meeting on the 1 October 2009 the Policy & Resources Committee set the budget strategy for the Council with the following parameters:

- (i) Proposals be brought forward for a 0% increase in Council Tax with options to increase beyond this through investment services;
- (ii) Increases in non-statutory fees and charges to be not less than 4%; and
- (iii) Efficiencies to be identified to meet the shortfall in Council finances and presented to the Resources Working Party.

The Corporate Director (s151) reported that details of the action taken and savings proposals had been presented to Members through the Resources Working Party on 18 November 2009, 13 January 2010 and the Budget Briefing on 20 January 2010.

The Financial Strategy set out the Council's financial position in the medium term in detail, including issues around the Local Government Finance Settlement and efficiencies as well as the principles and procedures adopted by the Council to manage its finances to a high standard.

Monitoring of the 2009/2010 budget had taken place through the group leaders, Resources Working Party and the Policy & Resources Committee, which had received a Revenue Budget Monitoring report at the meeting on 3 December 2009.

The report detailed the following:

- Budget and Council Tax for 2009/10
- Capital Programme

- Special Expenses
- National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)
- Prudential Code
- Funds and Reserves
- Local Government Act 2003 - Section 25 Report

It was moved by Councillor Knaggs and seconded by Councillor Legard that the recommendations in the report be approved:

That the Council be recommended to approve:

- (i) The Council's Financial Strategy, detailed at Annex A of the report, which includes:
 - (a) The prudential indicators
 - (b) The revised capital programme
 - (c) Savings/efficiencies totalling £295,000
 - (d) Investment in priorities of £110,000
- (ii) a Revenue Budget for 2010/2011 of £8,280,060, which represents no increase in the Ryedale District Council Tax of £176.72 for a Band D property (note that total Council Tax, including the County Council, Fire and Police is covered within the separate Council Tax setting report to Full Council)
- (iii) approve the special expenses amounting to £51,980
- (iv) the Capital Contingency Fund balance of £150,000 be transferred to the General Reserve.

Members discussed the report in detail and considered the budget pressures and savings proposals for 2010/2011 as outlined in appendix A to the Financial Strategy 2010-2014.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Keal and seconded by Councillor Mrs De Wend Fenton that the savings and efficiencies totalling £295,000 be achieved as indicated in the report subject to the withdrawal of the proposal to cut the funding for the Festival of Fun and replacing it with:

- £5000 additional income identified in the budget
- £5000 saved by taking funding for North Yorkshire Credit Union from reserves
- A further £3000 saved by Members paying for teas.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Woodward and seconded by Councillor Keal that the provision of Members' teas before meetings be

abolished thereby saving £10,000 in total, a further £3000 on the proposals within the officer recommendation.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

Upon being put to the vote the motion to accept the recommendations as outlined in the report, as amended, was carried.

Resolved

That the Council be recommended to approve:

- (i) The Council's Financial Strategy, detailed at Annex A of the report, subject to the abolition of Members' teas, which includes:
 - (a) The prudential indicators
 - (b) The revised capital programme
 - (c) Savings/efficiencies totalling £295,000
 - (d) Investment in priorities of £110,000
- (ii) a Revenue Budget for 2010/2011 of £8,280,060, which represents no increase in the Ryedale District Council Tax of £176.72 for a Band D property (note that total Council Tax, including the County Council, Fire and Police is covered within the separate Council Tax setting report to Full Council)
- (iii) approve the special expenses amounting to £51,980
- (iv) the Capital Contingency Fund balance of £150,000 be transferred to the General Reserve.

NB Councillor Woodward recorded his vote against the above recommendations.

67 Urgent Business

In accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) the Chairman reported that there were two items of urgent business these related to:

- An information report referred from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in connection with the Council's One-11 programme
- Council Tax & Business Rates Arrears, Consideration for Write-Off (Exempt Report)

68 Item Referred from Overview & Scrutiny Committee (for information)

At the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2009, it was resolved that an information report be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee on the following points:

- What has activated the redundancy policy and why
- Who made the decision for One/11 and why
- What are the timescales

In accordance with the above request a report was circulated at the meeting.

69 **Exempt Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as there will be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as the information relates to an individual.

70 **Council Tax & Business Rates Arrears - Consideration for Write-Off**

The Corporate Director (s151) submitted a report, which presented for Members' approval a Schedule relating to Council Tax and Business Rates arrears for consideration for write-off.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Council all outstanding debts relating to Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debts above £500 (excluding bankruptcy, receivership, liquidations or voluntary arrangements) required a decision of this Committee to be written off.

All the debts included in the Schedule related to either Council Tax or Business Rates. Staff, external bailiffs, Experian and tracing agents had investigated all the items on the schedule extensively and made every effort to recover the debt.

Authority was sought to write-off the individual amounts of Council Tax in excess of £500 totalling £30,965.85 and the individual amounts of Business Rates in excess of £500 totalling £17,084.88.

Resolved

That authority be given to write-off the individual amounts of Council Tax in excess of £500 totalling £30,965.85 and the individual amounts of Business Rates in excess of £500 totalling £17,084.88 as detailed in the report.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm