



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
Telephone 01572 722577 Facsimile 01572 758307 DX 28340 Oakham

Record of a meeting of the **CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham at 7.00pm on **Thursday 29 July 2010**

PRESENT: Mr N Wainwright – Chairman (in the Chair)
Cpt V Dighé
Mr L J Duckham
Mr T C Ellis
Mr T G Lovell
Mr B W Roper

Also in Attendance: Mr R B Begy Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Mr T C King Portfolio Holder for Development and Finance

OFFICERS Mr M Baish Director of Corporate Services
PRESENT: Miss T D Stokes Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES: Mr P J W Golden
Mr P D Ind

291 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Regulations, Members were invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have and the nature of those interests in respect of items on the Agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Prior to consideration of the exempt item of business relating to Catmose College, Mr Wainwright declared a personal interest as a Governor of the College.

292 RECORD OF MEETING

The Record of the Meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel held on 24 June 2010, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

293 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputation or questions had been received from members of the public.

294 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received from members.

295 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion had been received from members.

296 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

No matter was referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

SCRUTINY

297 IMPACT OF NEW GOVERNMENT CHANGES

Report No 168/2010 from the Director of Corporate Services was circulated at the meeting. The report outlined the changes to local authority funding following the change of Government in May 2010 and their impact on Rutland.

Consideration was given to the recent funding reductions since the Authority set its budget in February 2010, and the subsequent impact on services for the current and future years. The following was noted:-

- i) £340K reduction in revenue grant funding had an immediate impact on the Authority's budget and more reductions were expected.
- ii) Significant capital grants had also been lost resulting in some schemes having to be deferred or reduced.
- iii) £660K had been cut from the primary capital strategy resulting in reduced allocations for the Little Build project and Post 16 education.
- iv) On a positive note, ring fencing had been removed from some revenue and capital grants which, although would have no direct consequence to the Authority, allowed flexibility and focus on Rutland's priorities.
- v) Any anticipated reward grant in respect of Local Area Agreements would be reduced by 50%; an estimated loss to Rutland of £250,000.
- vi) The freeze on Council Tax for 2011/12 and possibly 2012/13 would significantly impact on the Council's income at approximately £500K for each year.
- vii) Details of the new spending review to be announced by the Government would be known in October 2010. Current indications were that Rutland could lose £2.5M of Revenue Support Grant and other general grants in 2011/12.
- viii) Questions regarding the NNDR imbalance were ongoing.
- ix) Areas of "unknowns" at this stage related to schools seeking Academy status and what might be required from the LEA's central budget.
- x) The comparisons between the budget set in February 2010 and the position following the recent and anticipated changes in funding, were noted.
- xi) Further cuts in funding were frequently being announced.

Members expressed concern regarding the Authority's financial position. Suggestions and comments included:-

- i) More responsibility may be put on local councillors in balancing what the community wanted against available funding and priorities.
- ii) Public consultation would be crucial to inform members' decisions regarding the County's services.
- iii) Rutland's estimated loss in Government funding amounted to about 10% of its net budget which, it was thought, should be achievable with any reductions in statutory services or compulsory redundancies mitigated as far as possible.
- iv) The importance of ongoing lobbying regarding the funding formula was highlighted.
- v) The target of £3M savings was an initial estimate for 2010/11. It was believed that this figure was achievable from the work already undertaken by the Senior Management Board. Work would continue over the next few months in determining how savings could be achieved and the impact these would have on balancing council services and staff posts.
- vi) Public consultation on the options for savings would be undertaken to inform members' decisions.
- vii) Referring to the future of Rutland, it was clarified that the County would continue to have a unitary role although questions would be asked on the way services were delivered.
- viii) Social Care should continue to be delivered locally however, questions would be asked if the cost of providing the service increased.

In conclusion, members noted that a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan was anticipated at the end of the five year period.

AGREED:-

That contents of Report No 168/2010 and the impact of the changes on the Council's budget for 2010/11 and the Medium Term Financial Plan, be noted.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS

298 SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2010/11 AND REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the Panel's draft work programme for 2010/11. No amendments were made, although it was noted that some Human Resources policies may be presented to the Panel for deliberation, possibly at a special meeting in September.

299 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed to consider two items of urgent business relating to the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) – Local Enterprise Partnership Arrangements and the Catmose College.

Reasons for urgency:-

EMDA – Rutland’s proposal for local partnership arrangements had to be submitted by 6 September 2010.

Catmose College – to raise awareness of the position regarding contracts with the College (exempt item).

300 EAST MIDLANDS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY – LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Following the dissolution of the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) with effect from the forthcoming financial year, consideration was being given to forming business focussed local partnership arrangements for the future. Authorities were being asked to submit their proposals by 6 September 2010 indicating a preference for partnership working with neighbouring areas.

It was noted that Rutland’s businesses had indicated a preference for connections with the West which could provide more positive funding opportunities in the future.

301 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

- 1) That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following business in accordance with Procedure Rule 239 (Exclusion of Access by the Public and Press)
- 2) That any elected Members present who were not members of the scrutiny panel be allowed to remain during consideration of the following exempt business in accordance to the access to information provisions of Procedure Rule 239.

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Prior to consideration of the following item of business, Mr Wainwright declared a personal interest as a Governor of Catmose College.

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302 CATMOSE COLLEGE

The Portfolio Holder for Development, Mr King, updated members regarding the Catmose Campus project. He explained that issues were arising as the project approached completion within the next six months. In particular, Mr King referred to the position with Catmose College regarding the lease arrangement for some public facilities. Discussions were ongoing however, it appeared that mediation may be the way forward.

303 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 7 October 2010 at 7pm.

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

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