



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

20 June 2012

-: Present :-

Councillors Barnby, Brooksbank, Darling, Hill, Pentney, Stockman,
Pountney and Thomas (J)

Co-opted Members
Penny Burnside, Diocese of Exeter

(Also in attendance: Councillors Cowell, Davies and Tyerman)

1. Election of Chairman

Councillor Thomas (J) was elected Chairman of the Board for the Municipal Year 2012/2013.

Councillor Thomas (J) in the Chair

2. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Bent. It was also reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, the membership of the Board had been amended for this meeting by including Councillor Brooksbank instead of Councillor Kingscote.

3. Appointment of Vice-chairman

Resolved: that Councillor Darling be appointed Vice-chairman of the Board for the Municipal Year.

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 24 April 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Revenue Budget Outturn 2011/2012

The Board considered the report on the Revenue Outturn for 2011/2012. It was noted that, despite pressures within Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Spatial Planning, a net surplus of £441,000 had been achieved.

The Executive Lead for Finance and Audit was in attendance to answer the Board's questions.

The Board were reminded that, in previous years, three Reserves had been created to assist the Council in meeting the financial challenges it faced over the period of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). It would be recommended to the Council that these three Reserve now be combined into a single CSR Reserve and that £0.136m of the surplus should be transferred to this Reserve. It would be recommended to the Council that the remaining £0.305m be transferred to an Employment Fund Reserve.

The Board asked for clarification about the delay in charging for rubble at the Civic Amenity Site and requested that further, detailed information on this issue be provided.

The Board also noted that an underspend of £0.431m within Community Safety had been reported. Questions were asked about the impact on frontline services as a result of this underspend and it was noted that a detailed written response would be supplied to members of the Board.

The Board asked that, in future reports, a more detailed explanation of the variances in the budget be provided.

6. Capital Plan Budget Outturn 2011/2012

The Chief Accountant presented his final Capital Monitoring report for 2011/2012 which provided high level information on the Council's capital expenditure and income for the year. The Executive Lead for Finance and Audit was also in attendance to answer the Board's questions.

The Board asked questions in relation to the expected capital receipts, the re-profiling of projects and the debt profile of the Council.

7. Impact of Welfare Reform in Torbay

The Board considered a briefing note which had been prepared at its request in relation to the impact of Welfare Reform in Torbay. It was noted that the Guardian newspaper had published, on 19 June 2012, an article based on research it had commissioned which placed Torbay at the top of the list of local authorities whose residents were most at risk of slipping into poverty.

With this in mind, the Board gave consideration to the work which was currently underway in preparing a Local Council Tax Support Scheme to replace the current system of Council Tax Benefit. Under the local scheme, it was expected that those on low income would be required to pay a proportion of their Council Tax liability.

Resolved: (i) that further consideration be given to the emerging Local Council Tax Support scheme at a future meeting of the Board; and

(ii) that, in the meantime, the briefing note be shared with the Mayor and/or relevant Executive Lead and that they be asked for their response to the challenges identified within the note especially in light of the research commissioned by the Guardian newspaper.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Board considered a report on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme which had been prepared following a consultation exercise with all Members of the Council, senior officers and health partners.

Resolved: (i) that the Work Programme set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report be agreed; and

(ii) that the following Review Panels be established:

Political Governance Review Panel – comprising 4 members of the Conservative Group, 2 members of the Liberal Democrat Group and either 1 member of the Non-Coalition Group or the Labour councillor

Priorities and Resources Review Panel – comprising the councillors who make up the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Value for Money (External Contracts) Review Panel – comprising the councillors who make up the Overview and Scrutiny Board

9. Appointment of Health Scrutiny Board

Resolved: that the Health Scrutiny Board be appointed with terms of reference:

“To consider all matters and issues arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Board’s power of scrutinising local health services in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2011”

and the membership:

5 Members of the Conservative Group (Councillors Barnby, Thomas (J), James, McPhail and Bent)

2 Members of the Liberal Democrat Group (Councillors Doggett and Davies)

1 Member of the Non-Coalition Group (Councillor Parrott)