

## Appendix 5

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** **(EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2011)**

#### **2011/12 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Head of Finance informed Members that the Council was required to present a balanced budget in February 2011 and savings of £2.4m had to be made over the next 2 years. There was a need not to just focus on 2011/12 as there were implications of declining resources over the next 4 years.

Members discussed each of the appendices separately as follows:

#### **Appendix 1 – Review of Farm Collections**

Members were informed that Officers were going out to all remote properties to discuss the best way of collection of their waste.

The Council felt that the most cost effective way to deal with farm collections would be to allocate these properties a number of drop off and collections points near to the main roads, removing the need to operate smaller vehicles transferring waste and recyclates onto larger vehicles.

#### **Resolved:**

That the Council need to factor in the costs of these bins.

#### **Appendix 2 – Reduced Grass Cutting**

A number of ideas were provided by Members as follows:

- The need for more frequent cuts at the start of the Season
- Need for clear guidance to enable residents to cut their own grass if they wish to do so – What they can and cannot do
- Alternatives to grass should be explored ie Stone
- Need for an examination on how to maintain green areas

#### **Appendix 3 – Changes to Capita Contract - No comments**

## **Appendix 4 – Rossendale Markets**

The Chair indicated that this item had been deferred as more evidence had been received on the day the Cabinet met. Members were still given the opportunity to comment.

A member clarified the situation regarding Haslingden Market and the fact that following investigation into the high water bills from Haslingden Market, United Utilities had identified a water leak. The Haslingden Market traders would look at productive ideas for the Market once the problem had been sorted.

Members made the following comments:

- Why the Council had not picked up the high water bill which was almost £2,000 more than each of Rawtenstall and Bacup Markets
- Possibility of a rebate from United Utilities for the leak
- People need the three markets to enable them to turn round their fresh food –as many stallholders have stalls on each of the markets
- Bacup Flea Market operates on a seasonal basis and if it is wasn't there on a Friday, other market traders would lose out
- Timescales not realistic for Haslingden market traders to do their development work due to hold-ups with water leaks

### **Resolved:**

That Cabinet agree that due to recent problems, a more realistic timescales be approved to enable Haslingden market traders to develop a social enterprise for the running of the Market.

## **Appendix 5 – Grant Funding**

Members were concerned over the timescales within the report and wanted organisations to be informed much earlier – possibly May

**Appendix 6 – Reduction in Repairs and Maintenance Budget – no comments**

## **Appendix 7 – Reduction in Training Budget**

Members agreed that there was a need to undertake more in-house training.

A member felt that whilst staff are asked to do more and more work, there was a limit as to how much the training budget could be cut without it having an impact on staff performance.

There was also a suggestion that there was a need to work in partnership with other local authorities, especially for Member training.

## **Appendix 8 – Alternative Arrangements for the Care of Animals**

No specific comments, other than the Council asking local people if they would like to home any of the animals.

## **Appendix 9 – Weekend Supervision of Sports Facilities**

No specific comments.

## **Appendix 10 – Introduction of a transaction fee for the use of credit cards when paying for Council Tax and other Council services**

A member of the public felt that customers were being victimised for charging the 1.8% fee for use of credit cards for payment of Council Tax. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources explained the reason for this indicating that Rossendale was the collection authority for LCC, Police and Fire and any charges made in the process of collection these funds fall to Rossendale Borough Council.

## **Appendix 11 – Ski Rossendale**

A number of comments were raised by Members as follows:

- The slopes are referred to as an iconic site and it would be a shame if we had to lose them
- They should have been monitoring some 8-10 years ago as to how the facility was being run
- If we had invested, the potential to be income generated would be there for all to see now
- Difficult for a local authority to give the focus it needed

The Head of Finance explained the costings for securing the site, making it safe and decommissioning. A member asked whether the costs for securing the site and other additional money needed for decommissioning etc, could be given to anyone submitting a viable proposal to sustain/support the Ski slope.

The Head of Finance responded to a question raised by a member of the public as to what the Council was putting into the Leisure Trust in 2011/12.

Members asked that the Council encourage dialogue with any interested social enterprise and also asked that there be clarification on a proposed closure date.

## **Appendix 12 – Communications Strategy**

Members indicated that as the Rossendale Alive had ceased production, there was a need to look seriously as to how the Council business goes into the public domain. Better use of the area notice boards was important.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy Report (MTFS)**

A member commented on the size of the cuts and whilst some of the efficiencies had improved systems ie the telephony system, some were invariably linked to individual members of staff.

A number of questions were raised as follows, to which the Head of Finance responded.

- Where does the Council stand with the Capital Programme?
- Will there be any member input on the Capital Programme and will this be presented to Overview and Scrutiny prior to Cabinet?
- Top up for Disabled Facilities Grants
- Does the £137k cover the one year loss of Council Tax?
- What is Plan B regarding area based funding by LCC
- Members need to know the extent to which LCC cuts would affect Rossendale

Concern was expressed that the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy had been presented to Cabinet prior to Scrutiny.