

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference 2, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover
on Wednesday 4 November 2015 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor C Lynn (Chairman)	(P)	Councillor A Finlay (Vice Chairman)	(P)
Councillor N Adams-King	(P)	Councillor D Baverstock	(P)
Councillor S Cosier	(P)	Councillor J Cockaday	(P)
Councillor B Few Brown	(P)	Councillor D Drew	(A)
Councillor I Jeffrey	(A)	Councillor K Hamilton	(P)
Councillor J Neal	(P)	Councillor J Lovell	(A)
Councillor T Preston	(A)	Councillor B Page	(A)
Councillor K Tilling	(P)	Councillor J Ray	(-)
		Vacancy	

Also in attendance:

Councillor S Hawke
Councillor P Giddings

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Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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Budget Panel Report

The Budget Panel Lead Member presented her report which requested the Committee to give consideration to the Budget Panel's recommendations on two aspects of the Council's financial matters, which had been considered at its meeting on 14 October.

The first was the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the 3-year period 2016-18. It had not been possible to consider this due to the Chancellor's recent announcement that he intended to Councils to retain 100% of their business rates in future. There was insufficient detail regarding timings and expectations for our council to determine how it's strategy should take account of this.

The Head of Finance explained current and possible changes to the collection of Business Rates. A Government announcement about significant changes to funding was proposed to be disclosed on 25 November 2016.

With respect to the Budget Gap, the Head of Finance informed the Committee that the Corporate Challenge was a useful exercise for Heads of Service to scrutinise their budgets to determine where savings might be made. These are being targeted on the least risky areas within services. Even so, one of the risks identified was a lack of resources to carry out their service

Resolved:

In light of the uncertainty presented by the recent Government announcement regarding Business Rates and Grants, that consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be deferred until after the Chancellor's Autumn Statement has been made on 25 November. Thereafter, consideration be given to the ways in which a resulting budget gap could be closed.

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Draft Budget Fees and Charges

The Budget Panel Lead Member presented her report which requested the Committee to give consideration to the Budget Panel's recommendations made at its meeting on 14 October, on the on the proposed Fees and Charges for 2016/17, where the panel agreed that subject to final scrutiny by Cabinet they were content with the proposals. The schedule of proposed Fees and Charges for 2016/17 were attached as an Annex to the report.

Members raised the same concerns as the Budget Panel and the Head of Finance addressed these.

Questions were asked about the charging for shopping trolley returns and Licensing fees. The Head of Finance undertook to investigate with relevant officers and circulate the information to Members.

The Head of Finance would seek further clarification on the increases for the Andover Sports Academy where it appeared that some of the Junior rates had increased more than the Adult Rates.

It was felt by some Members that the Committee should have had an opportunity to comment on the Fees and Charges prior to this being approved by Cabinet* and that in future the panel and the Committee might want to provide its views in the summer prior to officers making their recommendations. The timing of OSCOM panel and Committee input and its' scrutiny and approval of Fees and Charges for 2017/18 would be looked at and scheduled accordingly.

Resolved:

That the proposed Fees and Charges be endorsed.

175 **Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered and updated the Work Programme as follows:

- Audit Plan moved from 4 November to 13 April 2016
- Annual Audit Report moved to 2 December 2015
- Schedule and questioning for overview of Portfolios for 2 December 2015
- Date incorrect for January should be 20 January 2016 in Andover
- Add Internal Audit Universe to 20 January 2016
- Add Community and Leisure Portfolio Overview for 20 January 2016
- Add Romsey Town Centre Manager presentation for 13 April 2016
- Add Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group presentation re hospital for Basingstoke area for 13 April 2016
- Add Budget Panel consideration on Fees and Charges for 6 July 2016
- Add OSCOM Away Day for 3 August 2016
- Add Andover Town Centre Manager report on progress for 12 October 2016
- Housing Strategy (including Homelessness Strategy and Homes Energy Conservation Act Action Plan) date TBA.
- Briefing on Devolution date TBA

Resolved:

That the future work programme, as amended, be approved.

(Meeting terminated at 7.10pm)