

Finances, Resources and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Report to Council (meeting 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014)

Meeting held 5th November 2014.

The first item for consideration was a report from the Constitution Review Working Group which has been reviewing a number of areas of the Constitution and was looking for feedback in relation to the following recommendations:

1. To incorporate a revised and updated code of conduct for members, to replace the current version from 2012 and provide more clarity.
2. The Protocol for Conferring the title of Honorary Alderman. This was discussed in some detail as members felt that there needed to be an element of flexibility in the selection criteria so that some former members would not be unfairly disadvantaged. Accordingly, some minor amendments were made to the wording.
3. To dispense with diarised meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs and for them to called on an ad-hoc basis.
4. To replace the two current sections of the Constitution relating to Urgency Provisions with a single, clearer and more simple section. Members felt that this was a significant improvement on the existing wording and considerably easier for members to understand.

It was agreed that, subject to a few minor amendments, members were happy to accept these recommendations.

Cllr Stringer then presented a report into the review of Concurrent Funding provisions from the Task and Finish group set up for this purpose. There was considerable discussion about the contents of the report and many opinions expressed relating to aspects of the current policy. The report will now be presented to Cabinet.

The Executive Director – Resources and Support, Kelvin Turner , presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2019/20. Various questions were asked about cost controls and efficiency savings but generally members felt comfortable with the strategy whilst being mindful of the significant reductions in funding expected over the coming years and the potential resultant consequences of these cuts.

Following a short presentation from Simon Sowerby, **Officer Title**, members reviewed the Financial and Performance Management report to the end of Quarter Two. It was noted by members that the method of reporting by exception is more efficient, whilst some still lament the removal of the “Smiley Faces”. Members expressed concerns in relation to the apparent difficulty experienced by

the Planning Department in meeting it's targets and the difficulties surrounding the availability and use of recreational facilities.

From a financial perspective, members expressed concerns that the current budget shortfall would continue and increase over the second half on the Financial year. However, it was reported that one of the main factors leading to the shortfall was expected to be resolved imminently and this would considerably reduce any overspend for the second half of the year.

The meeting scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> December has been moved to 16<sup>th</sup> December, to follow on from the joint meeting of this committee and the Economic Development Committee.

Paul Waring

(Chair)