

MATTERS REFERRED BY PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AND/OR SELECT COMMITTEES

a) 2013/14 Budget and Review of Service Plans

(Environment Select Committee – 23 October 2012, Minute 25)

Members considered a report setting out proposals for updates to the 2013/14 budget within the existing framework of the 10 year budget and 4 year savings plan. The report presented some service changes that had been identified by managers and the changes needed to be considered before the budget for 2013/14 was finalised.

The Group Manager – Financial Services introduced the report and explained that consultation with the Select Committees was the second stage of the budget setting process. The Committee was informed that due to the uncertainties in the budget, specifically the Government settlement and levels of Council Tax, it was possible that further reports would be presented to the Select Committees in January asking Members for their ideas of where further savings could be achieved.

In response to a question about the use of barristers for planning appeals, the Finance Manager reported that if appellants instructed a barrister, Sevenoaks District Council would normally also instruct a barrister.

Resolved: That the views of the Committee be put forward to Cabinet at its meeting on 6 December 2012.

(Social Affairs Select Committee – 30 October 2012, Minute 12)

The Committee considered a report which set out proposals for updates to the 2013/14 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and four year savings plan. The report presented some service changes that had been identified by managers and that needed to be considered before finalising the budget for 2013/14. At this stage the Committee was not being asked to find savings, but if needed a report may be brought back to the Committee in January 2013 asking Members to consider areas where savings could be made.

Members considered Appendix D to the report and agreed with Officer comments. It was noted that there was an error on page 25 of the report, and that the figure should read £50k not £50.

Action 1: That any future proposals concerning the maintenance of White Oak Leisure Centre, be reported, as soon as known.

In response to a question concerning the Police contribution to running the CCTV Control Room, the Head of Community Development advised that this had always been a one off contribution when the Police had funding available. The Director of Community Development and Deputy Chief Executive reported that an assumption of £16k had been made as part of the annual discussions with the Police on this matter, but in reality funding had not been received for a few years.

The Chairman commented that a possible future saving might be to have the CCTV Control Room unmanned during the day.

Action 2: That Members consider between now and the next meeting, any areas within the Committee's remit where savings could potentially be made.

Resolved: That the comments above be noted and referred to the Cabinet meeting on 6 December 2012.

(Services Select Committee – 1 November 2012, Minute 29)

The Committee considered a report which set out proposals for updates to the 2013/14 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and four year savings plan. The report presented some service changes that had been identified by managers and that needed to be considered before finalising the budget for 2013/14. At this stage the Committee was not being asked to find savings, but if needed a report may be brought back to the Committee in January 2013 asking Members to consider areas where savings could be made.

Members noted the additional tabled information in relation to Appendix C, and considered Appendix D to the report. In response to Members' questions concerning Human Resources (HR) (SCIA31), the Director of Corporate Resources, Deputy Chief Executive, reported that it had been the intention that shared staff would have access to the HR staff where they were situated. In effect this had not happened as the HR for the two Councils were arranged in different ways, Dartford Borough Council's (DBC) being outsourced.

With reference to Property Services (SCIA6,7) the Head of Property Services advised that there was an element of possible unrealised additional income not provided for as there were six desks available. However without substantial redesign of the layout, it could only be let to a public or quasi public body.

It was also noted that the growth item for Housing Homeless (SCIA2) was no longer required following additional work by officers.

Resolved: That the comments above be noted and referred to the Cabinet meeting on 6 December 2012.

b) Property Review – Cobden Road Centre, Cobden Road, Sevenoaks
(Performance and Governance Committee – 13 November 2012, Minute ?)

The Committee considered a report recommending to Cabinet that the Cobden Road Centre in Sevenoaks be sold on the open market by auction.

The Professional Services Manager introduced the report and explained to the Committee that the cost of the property to the Council in terms of maintenance and security was increasing each year. It was unlikely that voluntary organisations

would be able to afford the level of rent that would be required and putting the property on the market opened it up to a much wider market.

Following discussions Members agreed that that the most appropriate way forward was to sell the property on the open market as soon as possible. The Committee was told that a reserve price would be placed on the property and that the legal pack for auction would details any constrains imposed as a result of the conservation area.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Cobden Road Centre, Sevenoaks be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and sold on the open market by auction.

c) Treasury Management Update

(Performance and Governance Committee – 13 November 2012, Minute ?)

The Committee considered a report which provided details of recent developments in the financial markets and changes to credit ratings. In February 2012, Members approved the Investment Strategy as part of the budget setting process. During consideration of the Strategy Members were advised that, given the economic climate, the Strategy would need to be monitored and reviewed during the year.

The Portfolio Holder for Value for Money asked the Committee to consider widening the database of counterparties to include building societies as this would widen the investment opportunities open to the Council. Following discussion the Committee agreed that Officers should be asked to investigate widening the database of counterparties to include leading Building Societies.

A Member noted that the report covered the period to the end of September 2012 and that seven of the investments had matured since September. The Member asked if an updated list of investments could be circulated to the Committee with the minutes.

Action 3: That an updated investment list be circulated to the Committee with the minutes.

The Chairman thanked the Management Team for overachieving and contributing favourably to the Councils revenue budget position.

Resolved: That

- a) the report be noted;
- b) the use of Money Market Funds as outlined in paragraphs 17 to 20 of the report be increased;
- c) when setting the investment strategy for 2013/14, consideration be given to increasing the counterparty limits for Lloyds Banking Group and the Royal Bank of Scotland Group to £8 million each; and
- d) the possibility of widening the database of counterparties to include leading Building Societies, be investigated.