

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Board 'Budget Consultation'

Wednesday 5 January 2011

## PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Ball, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Browne, McDonald, Nicholson, Ricketts, Stevens, Thompson and Wildy.

Apologies: Doug Fletcher, Co-opted Representative.

Co-opted Representatives: Jake Paget and Kevin Willis.

Also in attendance: John Richards, NHS Plymouth, George Plenderleith, Plymouth Third Sector Consortium, Viv Gillespie, City College, Giles Perritt, Lead Officer, Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer and Gemma Pearce, Democratic Support Team Leader.

The meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.15 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

Name	Minute No. and Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Thompson	80 Budget Scrutiny – Consultation	Trustee of Citizens' Advice Bureau	Personal
Councillor Stevens	80 Budget Scrutiny – Consultation	Employed by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	Personal

## 79. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

## 80. BUDGET SCRUTINY - CONSULTATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board heard from representatives of the Council's partner organisations on its budget proposals for 2011/12, verbally and in writing. Highlights of the points raised verbally are set out below -

## NHS Plymouth

- (a) there was a lack of clarity on the impact of 'back office' reductions on frontline services;
- (b) there was a lack of clarity on resources available to be spent on communities most in need to address reducing the gap in life expectancy;
- (c) concern was expressed over the proposed standstill budget for Adult Social Care given that there will be a 17 per cent increase in the number of people aged over 65 and a 12 per cent increase in those over 85 by 2015;
- (d) with regard to (c) above, clarity was required on what mitigation measures would be implemented to address this differential highlighted in the Equalities Impact Assessment;
- (e) in noting that there had been 11 budget delivery groups, the opportunity for partners to have been involved, particularly in those which impacted upon health and wellbeing, would have been welcomed;
- (f) with regard to programmes of transformation, concern was expressed that whilst an organisation-wide approach was required the starting point was to target savings by department (effectively a tax) which was not quite the same as a fully prioritised approach to delivery budget savings;
- (g) lessons should be learned from closure of the Wellby and Frank Cowl residential units where the impact on services provided by partner agencies such as in-patient and domiciliary care was not clear;
- (h) whilst focus on better commissioning and procurement was understandable, consideration needed to be given to the impact of any decisions on the market and that a consequence of lost income could be to put charges to other buyers up;
- (i) the potential to transfer the care of children in need to other agencies was noted, although, it was hoped that this move would not be an excuse to shunt costs on to those agencies;
- (j) clarification was needed on how savings were going to be achieved and to what extent those savings would be rolled forward. In addition, to what extent were the savings rolled forward non-recurrent;
- (k) there had been a number of Government announcements of further funding being released to support the NHS, including –
  - £70m nationally (£359,000 locally) for investment in social care for re-enablement services

- £62m nationally (£882,000 locally) winter pressures money
- (l) NHS Plymouth was in the process of finalising its budget operation plans for submission to its Board in March, following a consultation period with partners;
- (m) there were benefits to be gained from joining up services, premises and resources, including staff and IT, and further exploration of these possibilities was continuing.

#### Plymouth Third Sector Consortium

- (n) over 20 of the Plymouth Third Sector Consortium member organisations had attended the Council's workshop on City and partnership priorities on 7 December 2010 which had very much been welcomed;
- (o) it still remained unclear how personalisation (adult social care) was going to work in practice with questions remaining about who could be a registered provider and capacity to meet standards;
- (p) an example of an unintended consequence was that by cutting the highways and infrastructure budget the Council could inadvertently affect its equalities agenda – e.g. reducing the number of dropped kerbs provided across the city and preventing those with mobility issues from having safe access to independence;
- (q) there were currently 3,000 people working in 300 organisations or environmental projects on a voluntary basis across the City and, at present, all of this was at risk;
- (r) the Consortium had access to a wide range of funding streams and better ways of capturing this had to be found;
- (s) small grant funds could get tied up in the contract process. Discussions needed to be had about this and about procurement in general;
- (t) concerns were voiced about the potential impact of savings cuts to voluntary organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau who would find themselves under even more pressure given that the number of unemployed will rise and the withdrawal of legal aid.

#### City College

- (u) it was acknowledged and appreciated that the Council had a very difficult job to do in trying to find a balance in delivering services such as waste collections and safeguarding whilst working with constrained resources;

- (v) concern was expressed that there was not enough detail about how the priorities were to be delivered. One of the actions for the Wise Theme Group was to take forward the science, technology and maths skills agenda but how could this be done without the detail.

The written submissions from the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, Plymouth, Third Sector Consortium, Chamber of Commerce and Culture Board were noted with thanks.

The Board welcomed all the contributions made and advised that these would be most helpful when questioning Cabinet Members on 12 and 17 January, 2011, following which a detailed report would be produced setting out the Board's findings and recommendations.

(Councillors Stevens and Thompson declared personal interests in respect of the above item).

81. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.