

EXTRACT

THE EXECUTIVE

MEETING, 1ST OCTOBER, 2007

Councillor Morris	Leader of the Council – Corporate Strategy and Finance
Councillor Mrs. Thomas	Children's Services
Councillor Adia	Development
Councillor J Byrne	Young People and Sport
Councillor Peel	Environmental Services
Councillor Kay	Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor Ibrahim	Culture and Community Safety
Councillor Sherrington	Cleaner, Greener, Safer
Councillor Zaman	Regeneration

Non-Voting Members

Councillor A. N. Spencer
Councillor R. Allen
Councillor Mrs D . Brierley
Councillor A. Wilkinson
Councillor Hayes
Councillor D. Wilkinson
Councillor Mrs Rothwell

Officers

Mr. S. Harriss	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. A. Eastwood	Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Ms. S . Crossley	Assistant Director (Adult Services)
Ms . C. Forster	Albert Halls Manager
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Shaw ,J Walsh and White .

Councillor Morris in the Chair

23. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Executive held on 3rd September, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

24. CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS – INITIAL FINANCIAL GUIDANCE AND THREE YEAR FORECAST

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that set out current assumptions on expenditure for the next three years and the financial position likely to be facing the Council in 2008/09 and subsequent years in order to provide initial financial guidance to services and set the parameters for the production of Strategic Resource Options.

The Three Year Forecast outlined the overall expenditure position including inflation over the next three years. The figures at outturn prices were set out below (excluding any Budget savings):-

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Forecast	£388.2m	£403.9m	£417.9m
Annual Increase	5.3%	5.4%	4.9 %

The main expenditure headings for the next 3 years were set out in summary in Appendix A. This included the forecasted additional costs for the Town Centre Swimming Pool. It also included a provisional sum of £1M in 2009/10 in respect of Waste Disposal/Recycling which reflected the potential of the Council incurring LATS penalties if the amount of residual waste could not be reduced in line with the LATS target.

The Financial Forecast assumed that the Council would not repeat its use of balances this year in the future. Currently Balances stood at £6.3M following receipt of the Airport Dividend.

In order to set financial guidance it was necessary to estimate the likely level of resources which would be available to the Council. As in future years this was

a difficult exercise and there were even greater uncertainties as last year figures were only provided for one year, and Councils were awaiting the outcome of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). An announcement on the CSR was currently anticipated around mid October.

Members were reminded of the changes made in formula spending share (FSS) and the effect of the damping arrangements and it was noted that this ,together with the restricted FSS in social care and the reduced grant for schools , added to the pressure for savings to be found in the Council's overall budget for next year.

The position relating to capital and additional resources was also outlined .

The overall Financial Forecast detailed in Appendix A was based upon a stand still budget for most services and the full "passporting" of Direct Schools Grant to schools. At this stage it was assumed that the RSG/NNDR grant would increase by 1.5% and there was no release of the damping.

Also this forecast was for Bolton Council services only and did not allow for any higher or lower increases which may be agreed by the Police and Fire Authorities.

In setting guidance, Members needed to consider the potential Council Tax implications and the forecast in the Appendix was based upon a Council Tax increase of 4% in each year.

Consequently ,on the basis that there was no additional new growth and any demand growth was contained by services, savings of approximately £5.0M would be required in order to achieve a Council Tax level in 2008/09 (Council spend only) of 4%. In order to achieve a Council Tax level (for Council spend only) of 3% then savings of £5.9M would be required.

With respect to capital it was suggested at this stage that services plan on the basis of a similar level of Capital funding to that which they received in 2007/08. However, this would need to be reviewed in the light of the overall Grant Settlement.

Resolved – (i) That the financial forecast set out in the report be noted .

(ii) That services prepare budget options which contain any demand growth and deliver savings of 2% for Adult Services ; 4 % for Children's Services and Environmental Services and 5 % for Development and Regeneration and Corporate Resources .

(iii) That all services should plan on the basis of a tight financial position over the medium term and the likelihood that savings in the order of 3 % may be required in each of the following two years .

(iv) That capital bids be considered on the basis of likely allocations for the next three years similar to those in the current year .

25. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL – FINDINGS

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which responded to the recommendations from the Access to Council Services Scrutiny Panel and set out the progress made by the Council in delivering improved access to services.

The Executive was reminded that the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee had established an Access to Council Services Scrutiny Panel to examine access for people with a disability to Council services; and in the light of recent Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements, the accessibility of Council buildings.

The Panel's investigations took place between August ,2006 and April ,2007 and the Panel made 16 recommendations which were included in a report to the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee on 2nd April ,2007. These recommendations were grouped under five headings; Strategic, Buildings and Access Audits, Bolton One Stop Shop and Public Access Points, Communications and Parking.

The report detailed the responses to the Panel's 16 recommendations and described what actions and improvements had been delivered by the Council to improve access to council services. The report also highlighted further access improvement opportunities that the Council was progressing.

It was explained that the majority of resources deployed were within existing budgets but there were particular areas where further resource bids were being made as part of the Council's Corporate Business Planning Process, particularly additional bids for capital programme funding to enable further adaptations to buildings. These ,together with revenue budgets ,were being considered as part of the wider budget discussions and decisions by members.

The report would also be considered by the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15th October ,2007.

Resolved – That the responses to the findings and recommendations of the Access to Council Services Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and that the progress made by the Council to date in delivering improved access to services be noted .