

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 13 November 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor J A Gray – Chairman.
Councillors M G Baker, K M Baker,
Mrs M Banerjee, P J Downes,
P M D Godfrey, J A Gray, M F Newman,
J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K J Churchill, J W Davies and D Harty and T V Rogers.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor I C Bates

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

18. DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN

(Councillor I C Bates, Leader of the Council, was in attendance for this Item).

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the draft 2008/09 budget and the 2012/13 Medium Term Plan within the context of a long-term financial forecast covering the period up to 2018/2019, in advance of its consideration by the Cabinet and final determination by the Council.

The Director of Commerce and Technology and the Head of Financial Services informed the Panel of the current uncertainty created by the awaited announcement of the level of revenue support grant for the ensuing three years and of the variables where further information was awaited. Members' attention was drawn to variations proposed by the Chief Officers Management Team, additional expenditure of £1,284,000 in 2008/09 which arose from inflation, interest rate fluctuations, forecast income and the planned changes. Other MTP bids had been proposed but only if they could be met from within the existing budgets. Arising from a question by a Member, the Panel was assured that Executive Councillors had been fully involved in the process of examining any proposals which affected their portfolios

and that other Members' contributions were welcome before the budget was finalised for submission to Council.

The Panel reviewed the target spending adjustments set out in the report and noted the savings which had yet to be identified to achieve the financial strategy. In addition, the Government had introduced a requirement for authorities to reach cashable savings targets of 3% per annum from 2008/09 to 2010/11.

In reply to concern expressed by a Member as to the Panel's ability to scrutinise the detailed proposals contained in the report, the Chairman suggested that the Panel should concentrate on the budget in broad terms at this stage, with any detailed consideration dealt with by the individual Panels as part of their normal scrutiny role throughout the year.

The Panel were informed that a further report would be submitted when the outstanding information became available at their meeting on 29th January 2008. The Panel therefore expressed its support for the recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet on 22nd November prior to consideration by the Council on 5th December 2007.

Chairman