

Overview & Scrutiny Budget Consultation 2015/16

Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 22 January, 2015

| Section | Issue/Question | Response |
|-----------------|---|---|
| OVERVIEW | | |
| | Given the reducing price of oil, and its impact on other prices less provision can be made for inflation. | Acknowledged. |
| | Interest rates for Housing Revenue national subsidy system | A briefing note can be prepared. |
| | The perceived unfairness at the allocation of the 'consequential' additional finance from the Autumn Statement. | Acknowledged |
| | Difficulties of local financial planning given that the provisional local government settlement provided no indication of funding for future years | Acknowledged |
| | The Co-dependency of Accident & Emergency services and the rest of the health and social care provision | Members urged to read the Cabinet report on the Intermediate Car fund. |
| | Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) and the proposed council tax increase level | Currently the proposed budget is below the SSA. The Council Tax income proposal is currently set at 3%. |
| | Could a letter be sent to the Police & Crime Commissioner urging restraint in the proposed increased levy, especially as the Fire & Rescue Authority have reduced their precept | This is a UK wide issue. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Police & Crime Commissioner. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | Could a Council Tax increase be capped? | In Wales, unlike that in England, there is no statutory power to cap. In England, there have to be local referenda to increase the Council tax beyond 2%. |
| PEOPLE & RESOURCES | | |
| | There is a need to demonstrate the reduction in the workforce to the public. Can figures indicating the number in the workforce, both as raw numbers and full time equivalents be provided, so that the reduction can actually be seen? | The way that the information is currently reported to this committee through the Workforce Information quarterly reports can be changed to reflect this better. |
| | The fact sheets are invaluable. Could the proposals therein have been ranked in some way so that those savings which could be realised soonest were apparent? | |
| | In relation to the software, how can we as Members get a better understanding of budget detail? | Appropriate reporting to O&S committees. |
| | Can training be provided for Members on using the new Collaborative Planning Software? | Yes, the intention is to provide training to Finance staff first, then managers, then Members. |
| GOVERNANCE | | |
| | Could more collaborative work with Wrexham CBC produce mutually beneficial savings? | Yes: there are already many examples of our excellent working relationship. A meeting has been requested. |
| | How can the loss of the principal solicitor posts be managed? | By a change in the skills mix amongst the remaining team, to enable them to work more effectively. |

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| | How can the number of meetings supported by Democratic Services be reduced? | By withdrawing support from non-core meetings such as SACRE, the Planning Strategy Group and FJTUC. |
| | Will the additional income in Legal be found by increasing existing charges or introducing new ones? | Both. We will increase our fees in line with other North Wales Authorities. The average income as a % of budget is 4% in FCC and 12% across Wales. |
| | There have been previous proposals to reduce the length of minutes, which were not supported | This issue will need to be considered by the Democratic Services Committee, which is to consider a report on webcasting at its next meeting and which could have implications for how we minute meetings. |
| ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE | | |
| | Does the figure for lease renewals include empty properties? | Yes. |
| | Is the CCTV service going to improve? | The current review project, which is not seeking to increase the levy paid by Town and Community Councils, is likely to produce a combination of peripatetic and fixed cameras. |
| | There was a proposal previously for the Council to have a development partner for our Assets: how has this developed. | It did not develop as originally envisaged, so we do not have one partner for all the assets, but have specific partners for specific assets. |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE | | |
| | Concern at the prospect of losing the staffed switchboard at the same time as the yellow pages information is being discontinued | The yellow pages entry appears to be little used. |
| | The impact on service users of discontinuing the registration out station service: more details should have been provided. | As there will be service provision from Flintshire Connects office, the impact on service users is mitigated. |
| | Discontinuation of the payment facility at post offices will cause problems for those in rural areas and where there is no Flintshire Connects or broadband provision. | The post office payment is the most expensive of our current provision. We offer other means, such as Payzone which is available in between 500-600 outlets in Flintshire which includes local shops and garages. |
| | Impact on staffing numbers within the Registration service | There is one vacant post and one staff member has put in for voluntary redundancy. |
| CLWYD THEATR CYMRU | | |
| | Could we pursue more funding from the Arts Council? | Clwyd Theatr Cymru (CTC) is already one of the Arts Council's top ten funded facilities. |
| | Popular touring productions seem to go to other venues, rather than to CTC. | The proposed reduction from 8 to 6 productions will release capacity which could be taken up by touring productions. |
| | Will the proposed changes affect the viability of the youth theatre? | The proposed changes will not affect the viability of the youth theatre. |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Not all of the premises are in use: there needs to be a more commercial approach. | The Board is aware of this and tone of the qualities sought in the new artistic director will be a greater commercial acumen. |
|--|---|---|