



# MEETING OF THE RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 2006 2.30 PM

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## PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Brailsford  
Councillor Mrs Dexter  
Councillor Kirkman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Lovelock M.B.E. (Chairman)  
Councillor G Taylor  
Councillor Wilks

## OFFICERS

Scrutiny Officer  
Director of Finance and Strategic Resources  
Scrutiny Support Officer

## OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Bryant  
Councillor Mrs Cartwright

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## 59. MEMBERSHIP

The Panel was informed that Councillor Brailsford was replacing Councillor Moore until the next Annual General Meeting of the Council.

## 60. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Conboy, Joynson and Fines, and Councillor Craft from the Budget Working Group.

## 61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared.

## 62. ACTION NOTES

The action notes for 24<sup>th</sup> November and 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2005 were noted with the following amendments:

24<sup>th</sup> November 2005, note 46: 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence be amended to read:  
"Organisations not registered as charities could receive up to **£500 or 75%, whichever is the lower**, discretionary rate relief.

22<sup>nd</sup> December 2005, note 57, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph to include: "**Councillors Bryant and Mrs Cartwright, as requested by the Panel, were also present.**"

2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to include: "**, although this was refuted by members of the panel.**"

4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sentences be amended to read: “A proposal to support the call-in was made and seconded. On being put to the vote, **two** members supported the proposal and **five** against.”

### **63. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Scrutiny Officer reported that although the Panel’s recommendations on cash collection were directed to Council (note 43), this had not been necessary and the recommendations had been approved by Cabinet in December.

The Resources and Assets Portfolio Holder explained how impressed and pleased he was with the input from officers and members involved in the service plan gateway reviews currently underway. He was disappointed, however, that a large number of members had not taken this opportunity to review the progress of the services plans.

The Portfolio Holder also explained that although the panel had requested that they review any subsequent application for funding from the Citizens’ Advice Bureau (note 47), this had been considered by Cabinet first because of timescales. He then explained the decision of the Cabinet.

The Scrutiny Officer informed members that their recommendation concerning appeals under the Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme had not been accepted by Cabinet. The Portfolio Holder explained that this recommendation had been accidentally overlooked at the meeting and he would raise this at the next Cabinet meeting.

### **64. BUDGET UPDATE**

The Panel considered the Director of Finance and Strategic Resources’ report number FIN254 to Cabinet. This covered the provisional Local Government Settlement for 2006/07 and indicative settlement for 2007/08; budget requirement and reserves; housing rents; and other budget issues.

The Director explained the historical significance of the Settlement Grant:

- This was the first time a two-year settlement had been given;
- A new grant system had been used;
- The East Midlands had received the highest level of grant
- Funding for education was now a separate grant.

The Government had also agreed to work with the Local Government Association on managing pressures on pay, waste and adult social care. This was very promising, especially as representations had been made on waste services.

Further details were given on the national position, special grants, comparison with increases in other Lincolnshire districts, consultation and Government proposals for rent restructure. Capping for Council tax was likely to be enforced

at increases above 5%. The Director added that the services in the Scale of Charges table at the end of the report would be addressed during service plan gateway reviews.

All the issues raised in the report were discussed by the Panel and the finance staff praised for their hard work. Clarification on a number of points was sought. In response, the Director explained that non-domestic rates were distributed to districts per capita; charges for special expense areas were to be added to the budget requirement and so Council tax charges may need to be amended accordingly in view of capping.

The Director also reported on present feedback from parish councils on their estimated precepts. General and specific issues relating to parish precepts were discussed.

### **Conclusion**

**That the Resources DSP recommends to Cabinet that:**

- 1) Council tax for 2006/07 does not exceed a 5% increase.**
- 2) The Council moves to a two-year cycle of budget setting.**
- 3) The proposed rent restructuring be adopted.**

### Capital Programme

A working draft of the Programme was circulated. All of the 2006/07 and most of the later projects had already been approved by Cabinet. Waste management projects were the most significant as there were considerable changes required to the service with major capital and revenue implications. Work was underway to ensure that the service would be sustainable.

### **Conclusion**

**That the Resources DSP supports in principle the Capital Programme, subject to further information being submitted.**

## **65. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

These were noted. It was suggested that the target relating to % Council tax payers paying by direct debit or self serve should be increased in light of the recent Cabinet decision to increase the number of direct debit dates. This was supported by the Panel.

A member also pointed out that the figures given for Performance Indicator 15 may be incorrect. The Portfolio Holder said that as the Best Value Performance Indicators were on the next Cabinet briefing agenda, he would enquire on this.

### **Conclusion**

**That the Resources DSP recommends to Cabinet that**

- 1) The target for “% Council tax payers paying by direct debit or self serve” should be increased in light of the Cash Collection Review.
- 2) “Number of leavers from SKDC in month” should be changed to “...in year”.
- 3) The figures given for Performance Indicator 15, which may be incorrect, be considered.

**The Resources DSP to consider Performance Indicator 15 at its next meeting.**

## **66. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the work programme. He reported that the Chief Executive had recently received a paper on the Government’s proposed local government reorganisation. These proposals would have significant financial implications that the DSP may want to scrutinise. This would also be discussed at the next Scrutiny Coordinating Group and Scrutiny/Cabinet Liaison meetings.

### **Conclusion**

**To include on the agenda for the next meeting the Government’s proposals for local government reorganisation. The Chief Executive be asked to report and the Chairmen of the other DSPs be invited to attend and participate in the meeting for that item.**

## **67. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 3.30p.m.