



AGENDA

For a meeting of the
RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL
to be held on
THURSDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2006
at
2.30 PM
in
THE CHAIRMAN'S ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST. PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM
Duncan Kerr, Chief Executive

Panel Members:	Councillor David Brailsford, Councillor Robert Conboy, Councillor Dorrien Dexter, Councillor Brian Fines, Councillor Kenneth Joynson, Councillor John Kirkman (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Reg Lovelock M.B.E. (Chairman), Councillor Gerald Taylor and Councillor John Wilks
Scrutiny Officer:	Paul Morrison 01476 406512 p.morrison@southkesteven.gov.uk
Scrutiny Support Officer:	Rebecca Chadwick 01476 406297 r.chadwick@southkesteven.gov.uk

Members of the Panel are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed below.

- 1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**
To receive comments or views from members of the public at the Panel's discretion.
- 2. MEMBERSHIP**
The Panel to be notified of any substitute members.
- 3. APOLOGIES**
- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Members are asked to declare any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 5. ACTION NOTES**
The notes of the meeting held on 19th January 2006 are attached for information.

(Enclosure)

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

7. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2006/07 ONWARDS

The DSP to make its final recommendations to Cabinet on the 2006/07 budget and onwards.

The notes from the meeting of the Budget Working Group on 2nd February 2006 will be circulated at the meeting.

(Documents to Follow)

8. WORK PROGRAMME

(Enclosure)

9. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(Enclosure)

10. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Representatives on outside bodies to give update reports.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, which the Chairman, by reasons of special circumstance, decides is urgent.



MEETING OF THE RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 2006 2.30 PM

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

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 24th November and 22nd December 2005 were noted with the following amendments:

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

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

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

4th paragraph, 2nd and 3rd 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.

DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANELS (DSPs) WORK PROGRAMME 2005/6

Agenda Item 8

INTRODUCTION

This Work Programme is partly derived from the Cabinet's Forward Plan, but also contains items that have been brought forward by the DSPs themselves. Such items are in *italics*.

Where the item has appeared on the Forward Plan, the anticipated date of the key decision is listed in the second column. The third column shows the last available date that the full DSP can consider this item before the key decision is due to be taken (unless a special meeting is called). This does NOT necessarily mean that the item will appear on the DSP agenda, this will only happen if this is requested by the Chairman or members of the DSP. There will also be instances where there is no DSP meeting before a decision is due to be taken; in these cases the next meeting date after the decision date is shown.

As Cabinet meets monthly and the DSPs meet bi-monthly it is not possible within the current timetable of meetings for the DSPs to consider every single Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision. Scrutiny members are therefore encouraged to read this Work Programme and bring forward items for consideration where they think that an item should be considered by the DSP.

**DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANELS (DSPs)
WORK PROGRAMME 2005/6**

RESOURCES DSP

<u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	<u>DATE OF KEY DECISION (IF APPROPRIATE)</u>	<u>DSP MEETING</u>
Grants to Outside Organisations	N/A	Identified as an issue for consideration by Scrutiny Liaison Group on 8.11.04
Budget 2006/7 – setting of Council Tax base	05.12.05	19.01.06 Cross DSP Working Group is meeting
LSVT – financial aspects	Ongoing until May 2006	Ongoing
Council Tax on second homes – to decide on use of proceeds	January 2006	19.01.06
Revenue and Capital Budgets 2006/7 onwards and approval of service plans	January 2006	19.01.06
Rent setting and Scale of Charges	January 2006	19.01.06
Business Rate Relief Scheme – to review the criteria for awarding discretionary rate relief	January 2006	19.01.06

