

**Minutes of: MEETING OF THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
(CORPORATE) (Budget)**

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 9 February 2016

Present: Councillors; M Connolly, E FitzGerald, T. Holt, Isherwood, J Mallon, R Shori and J. Smith.

Representing Unison

E Entwistle, M Fulham (Chair), S Gibson, K Mather, S. Morton, R. Pakeman, A Seed

In attendance:

N. Dernley - HR Manager, Resources & Regulation
P. Jones-Greenhalgh – Executive Director of Communities and Wellbeing
J. Gonda – Assistant Director of Strategy, Procurement & Finance - Communities and Wellbeing
S. Kenyon – Interim Director of Resources & Regulation
P. Lowe – Education Finance Manager
T Murphy – Assistant Director of Resources (HR & OD)
M. Owen – Chief Executive
J. Simms – HR, Children, Young People & Culture
A Tomlinson – Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors; R Caserta, I Gartside, D Jones and Walmsley

Unison asked that their disappointment be recorded at the lack of Conservative Members in attendance at the meeting.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Connolly declared a personal interest in any item which related to staffing as his partner is an employee of Persona.

Councillor Mallon declared a personal interest in any item related to schools as his wife was employed in a Bury School.

2. BUDGET PROPOSALS

Councillor Shori explained that the budget report would be presented to Full Council at its meeting on 24 February 2016.

Prior to the report being prepared there had been consultation with staff, Unison, service users and residents in relation to service provision, proposed savings and cuts.

Steve Kenyon, Interim Director of Resources & Regulation gave a presentation setting out the 2016/2017 programme of cuts that would be required to balance the budget.

It was explained that the Council had calculated a cuts requirement of £11.6m. This had been calculated as follows:-

- Rollover budget - £128.6m
- Standstill Pressures - £5.8m
- Standstill budget - £134.4m
- Resources £122.8m
- Gap in funding of £11.6m

The Council has taken a priority led approach which recognised council priorities and applied weightings to safeguard these.

The targets had been given to the three departments. Directors and portfolio holders had met to identify options prior to the consultation programme that had been carried out.

Following the priority led approach, the following cuts requirements were identified:-

Communities and Wellbeing -	£6.021m
Children, Young People & Culture -	£3.053m
Resources & Regulation -	£2.505m

9 headings had been identified:-

Alternative Service Delivery Models
Grant Optimisation
Grants to the Voluntary Sector

Income Generation
Better Use of Buildings/Assets
Procurement Savings
Service Redesign
Staff Restructuring
Use of New Technology

The risks and challenges were highlighted:-

- Business Rates where the council is now liable for 49% of the impact of appeals. This will increase to 100% by 2020.
- The localisation of Council Tax Support means that the Council will have to bear the risk of any increase in claimant numbers and demand.
- Increasing demand Vs reducing resources affecting.
- Economic conditions still impacting upon income generation.
- Funding reductions continue through to 2020 when will have to move to self sufficiency.
- Growth and Investment
- Renegotiate the "contract" with residents

Margaret Fulham invited those present to ask questions or make comments and the following points were raised:-

Steve Morton referred to the fact that Unison had not had sight of any papers prior to the meeting so were not in a position to prepare any questions.

Councillor Shori stated that the presentation would be shared with all of those wishing to receive a copy and that he, Mike Connolly and Mike Owen would be more than happy to answer questions at any time that the Unions may have.

The Corporate Joint Consultative Committee considered a verbal presentation from the Executive Director of Resources and Regulation the presentation contained the following information:

The cut requirement to Resources and Regulation had been calculated as £2.505m.

Staffing restructures were being reviewed and it was anticipated that there would be no compulsory redundancies. There was a rolling programme offering voluntary retirement, flexible retirement and voluntary severance and a mutual settlement option had also been offered. There would be no savings made in relation to staff Terms and Conditions.

Work had already commenced on income generation including: - Treasury Management, Property Investment and private payroll work.

Procurement savings in IT.

Better use of buildings and assets and more agile working.

- Steve Morton referred to the business rates appeals and asked what the average figure was for successful appeals and how much this equated to.

Steve Kenyon reported that the business rated yield was £50m per year with 5% lost through successful appeals.

- Steve Morton referred to the statement made regarding nothing being done to staff terms and conditions and asked whether that meant there would be something next year.

Steve Kenyon explained that he couldn't anticipate what would be considered for future years.

The Corporate Joint Consultative Committee considered a verbal presentation from the Executive Director of Communities and Wellbeing the presentation contained the following information:

The cut requirement to Communities and Wellbeing had been calculated as £6.021m

It was explained that following the establishment of Persona arrange of services would be reviewed for feasibility of different service models.

Options for commissioning were being reviewed and a wide range of grants were being explored.

There had been some VER applications and a number of flexible retirements approved which had allowed for some restructures and a move towards becoming more customer focussed.

The Corporate Joint Consultative Committee considered a verbal presentation from Peter Lowe, Head of Financial Services, Children Young People and Culture; the presentation contained the following information:

The savings requirement to Children, Young People and Culture has been determined through the Priority Led Approach to be £3.053m.

It was explained that work had been undertaken to develop and invest in in-house services which had streamlined costs and joint working arrangements with Rochdale Council in relation to Youth Offending Services had been working well.

The development of professional foster carers would lead to reduction in the need for specialist support and an Adolescent Support Unit was being established which would provide early intervention and lead to a reduction in costs.

All vacant posts of over 6 months had been reviewed to establish their need and a review of practices had been undertaken to ensure value for money.

A recruitment campaign had been undertaken which had seen a reduction in the use of agency staff.

Buildings were being used more effectively.

Questions and comments were invited:-

- Kay Mather referred to schools becoming academies and being in a position where they buy in their own services. Kay asked what was being done to ensure that the Council was the preferred option for provision of these services.

It was explained that the Council were aware of the need to be the best option and work was being done to ensure that this happened. Different packages had been developed and work with schools was ongoing. A report had recently been presented to the SLT in relation to buy back.

- Steve Morton referred to the reduction of agency staff and asked what the difference in cost was.

It was explained that the cost could be up to 50% more for agency workers. It was also explained that the Council was at the forefront of developing a Social Worker Academy which would support and develop social workers in house.

It was agreed:

1. That the information be noted.
2. That a copy of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee minutes be forwarded to the Council budget meeting due to be held on the 24 February 2016

Steve Morton, representing Unison, stated that this sentiment was endorsed by Unison.

Councillor M Fulham (Chair)

The meeting started at 4pm and ended at 5.15pm