FINANCE & ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee held onTuesday, 19 January 2016 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room G3/4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

PRESENT: Councillors S A W Reynolds (Chair), S Bentley, S Burrell, N Dugmore, R Evans, R Sloan, C Smith, D Wright and Co-optees R Williams and C Mason-Morris.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors A Eade and A Lawrence.

IN ATTENDANCE: F Bottrill, Scrutiny Group Specialist; S Jones, Scrutiny Officer.

FESC-09 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on the 6th and 13th January 2016 were deferred until the next meeting.

FESC-10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

The Committee noted the apologies submitted by the Council's Chief Financial Officer due to attendance at a public consultation meeting on the budget proposals.

FESC-11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Evans declared an interest as an employee of a care provider contracted by the Council for discussion about the adult care budget.

Cllr. S. Burrell declared an interest as a Director of an Adult Social Care Company.

Cllr. C. Smith declared an interest as a Member of the Board of the Shropshire Pension Fund.

Cllr. Bentley declared an interest as a landlord in relation to any discussions relating to housing business rates.

FESC-12 ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS OF THE MAIN OPPOSITION GROUP

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked the members to introduce themselves. The Chair invited the Leader of the Main Opposition Group and Cllr. Lawrence to present the alternative budget proposals and confirmed that questions could be taken during the presentation.

Cllr. Lawrence thanked the Committee for looking at the report and the officers for their support in producing the proposals. He explained that there are limitations on the extent to which an opposition group can develop budget proposals due to time and resource constraints.

Cllr. Lawrence provided an overview of the alternative budget proposals which included freezing council tax as, in the current fragile economic climate, it was important to retain the 0% increase. However, the Main Opposition group recognised that Adult Social Care is a special case and in previous budgets had supported putting additional funding into adult care and the current proposal supported the inclusion of the proposed 2% increase in Council Tax for the adult care precept.

He explained that the key policy difference between the administration's budget proposals and the Main Opposition's alternative budget was on debt and the opposition group did not support the rapid increase in debt. The increase was illustrated in the graphs on page 4 of the report. It was recognised that some of the debt started when the Main Opposition had been in control. He explained that the more debt that is taken on the more difficult it would be to manage and debt amounts to deferred taxation for Council Tax payers as more of the budget is used to service debt. The current debt approved by Cabinet was £261.6 million which had been used to fund projects such as the solar farm and Nu Place with more projects in the pipeline and was felt to be too high and the Main Opposition group recommended the disposal of assets to reduce the level of debt. There was nothing intrinsically wrong with the projects but the issue was that the Council could not carry this amount of debt. If the Council were a different type of organisation, for example a private company land to sell, it may be different but the model was to borrow and spend on speculative projects. There is a risk issue – the Council is not a private company so is not at risk of insolvency but as it takes on more debt it exposes the Council to greater risk. It was agreed that there was a need to find alternative income streams but the Main Opposition's recommended approach was to 'stick to the knitting' i.e. develop services in areas where the Council has expertise, for example children's services, adult care, ICT, planning or to develop services already traded with schools. The Government had talked about high performing local authorities taking over low performing authorities and there could be opportunities for Telford & Wrekin to take over failing services in other areas or provide services to other organisations – payroll services for example. The approach would be to market services on a national basis to the wider public sector or to private businesses as had happened locally in the past. To kick start this, the proposals included £750k for marketing to break into other areas. It was noted that the proposals presented did not include any income that would be generated.

On Single Status, a percentage of payroll costs had been set aside for a number of years. This had been a sensible approach in the past but the steady reduction in the size of the workforce meant they had calculated that the same level of provision was not needed and the some of the money in the pot could be withdrawn and allocated to services. The recommendation was to resolve Single Status over the next 12 months and to use the residual money in the pot to support front line services.

Other proposals included bringing forward the implementation of the living wage, setting aside money to revisit the housing development targets in the Local Plan which were considered too high and a commitment to investment in highways without increasing debt levels. The objective was to improve highways standards, although further detailed modelling by officers would be required.

Cllr. Lawrence referred to the graph on page 4 of the report which showed the net debt and was concerned that Telford & Wrekin was moving up the graph and the exposure to risk was increasing. The individual risk for each project funded by borrowing was not great – but they added up to a toxic mix. Local government will become more free standing and in the future will not receive Revenue Support Grant which is a share of the national economy and spreads the risk. In future local authorities will generate income linked to the performance of the local economy (for example business rates) which would be susceptible to down turns in the local or national economy. The local government final salary pension will have a growing deficit as pension holders live longer. There is a legal obligation to fund pensions and this will have to continue with a shrinking workforce so the burden will be a greater percentage.

The commercial Property Investment Portfolio as a legacy of the Telford Development Corporation was used to fund liabilities for maintaining open space inherited from TDC but there were concerns about the risks associated with the volatility of the property market which had led to the collapse of investors in commercial property, building societies and banks during the financial crisis. The minutes of the Boards of Northern Rock, Royal Bank of Scotland would show that before the financial crash that their investments were thought to be wonderful but in reality they were bust.

Residential property had historically done well but the Council has no recent experience in residential property development and management and has no experience in solar farms and as the current guaranteed tariffs could end in future these were considered risky investments.

The alternative budget supported the revised approach to the calculation of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) but recognised the risks of implementing the change at the same time as the projects discussed and the impact on the budget over the longer-term. Taking HLC as an example the change in MRP would mean that the Council would be paying interest for 20-30 years when there was nothing left on the lease whereas the lease would have been paid off under the current MRP calculation. There was some accounting logic and Cllr. Lawrence was supportive of the innovative approach but concerned about the impact on future budgets.

The level of debt was a worry. Cheap borrowing on capital markets to invest in commercial property had led to the downfall of institutions such as Northern Rock who had borrowed cheaply and the value of property had fallen. A report before Christmas gave the example of an organisation that had been unable to let properties and the organisation had gone down. The Growth Agenda was the right approach but it was felt the administration was moving into risky areas which the opposition group was not comfortable with. It was difficult find proper external advice on what level of debt the Council could sustain. It was also problematic to measure. The Council has assets on the balance sheet but they cannot be realised to pay off debt, for example school buildings and highways, and there are liabilities in the pension scheme so assets on the balance sheet are weak.

The recommendation going forward was for the Council to take a ‘stress testing’ approach to the level of debt, similar to the Bank of England, to assess the potential impact of set-backs in the economy such as the recent down turn in China. The report set out some ideas for metrics which could be used to measure the level of debt which had been suggested by the Council’s treasury advisors, Arlington Close, for example, debt per property in the council area or debt net revenue. The metrics would help understand the impact of any loss of income. Modelling the impact of a 10% loss of income increased the debt burden to what was considered a worrying level. The amount of current debt per property currently stands at £3,605 but under the savings proposed by the alternative budget this would reduce to £2,610.

The Main Opposition proposed that £1million of the fund set aside for Single Status should be released and that the Council finances would still be comfortable.

Partnering with other authorities would save money and the development of Centres of Excellence within the authority (e.g. land stability at the Gorge and flooding) could be marketed to public bodies to generate income. Children’s services was highlighted as an area with potential to provide expertise to failing services in other authorities.

Cllr. Lawrence explained that the main opposition was supportive of the work to reduce youth unemployment but more could be done. An additional investment of £0.5m from the Invest to Save / Capacity Fund pot was proposed to build on this work and to launch an initiative for adults. The extra funding would equate to 78 apprenticeships or a smaller number of adult training roles. 78 apprentices would reduce youth unemployment in the borough by 5%. Rights of way would also have more money.

Regarding education, Cllr. Lawrence said that a weakness in the administration’s strategy was that secondary education had not been expanded to match increased demand from demographics and housing development and £0.075m had been proposed for an urgent review of secondary places.

The opposition group supported union membership but not financial support - the £100k subsidised by Council Tax payers to support union membership should be used for other purposes.

There was fundamental disagreement with the Administration’s proposals for the closure of libraries which were unnecessary. Other saving could be made so that the cuts were not required. The alternative budget would cancel the closures. The four year grant settlement from government implied that additional savings will need to be identified for future years and the approach would be to work with officers now to identify additional savings and bring them forward to 2016/17 and 2017/18 so that the library closures and an increase in Council Tax were not needed. Balances would be used to allow time for appropriate alternative savings to be identified. In particular the libraries in Newport and Madeley should be retained and alternative models such as a Public Service Mutual would be supported as a vehicle for library service provision. Other opportunities to generate income would be explored for example internet cafes. Devon had developed a good model.

A summary of the model for the next 2 years and the revised savings proposals was set out on pages 15/16 of the report and the figures stacked up. The key proposals would:

- Reduce Debt by £72.2m,
- Reduce the risks the council faces
- Propose a new strategy for incremental income generation.
- Reduce Union Subsidies
- Accelerate implementation of living wage
- Increase the number of Apprentices in the Council by 78 for 1 year
- Better planning for school places
- Review and Revise Shaping places
- Review rights of way
- Reduces the extent of service impacts and reductions

Pages 18-20 of the report set out the Chief Financial Officer's statement of robustness which concluded that the alternative budget for 2016/17 could be considered as robust enough to be viable.

Cllr. Eade commented on the Local Plan and questioned how the housing development target of 15,500 had been arrived at and that the Council's own survey had found 9,940 houses were required in the borough. The higher level of development would not only put a strain on the budget from the infrastructure required to support the development but would require a 40% increase in jobs over the national average for the period of the Local Plan and there were no proposals in the administration budget as to how that would be achieved. The number of secondary schools places was a worry and could not be resolved quickly; money had been invested in primary schools but there was no funding for secondary schools and in fact the funding had been cut. The only way to increase school places was to borrow and Cllr. Eade was concerned about the additional pressure of development on borrowing. The Chinese economy which had been built on debt was in the news and he was concerned about the effect of the economic cycle.

The Chair thanked Cllr. Eade and Cllr. Lawrence for the presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. R. Sloan said he had some sympathy with the views on Single Status but he would wait for the report to the Audit Committee before coming to a view on the way forward. Four members of the Finance and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee were also on the Audit Committee. On the Living Wage he asked how the figure of £8.10 had been calculated and if it was based on the figure used by government from the Living Wage Foundation of £8.25. Cllr. A. Lawrence replied that the main opposition group would like to go forward with the Living Wage as quickly as possible and officers had helped with modelling different scenarios. The figure was between the existing minimum wage and the Living Wage. Modelling had showed there would be an advantage to staff affected but no additional strain on the budget and he would ask the Administration to consider the proposal. As a better performing Council there are opportunities for Telford & Wrekin and these should be explored.

Referring to the move to local funding, Cllr. Sloan welcomed the Chancellor's announcement about the retention of 100% of business rates by local authorities, but said that the devil was in the detail and it would not be introduced until 2020 but he imagined that all Councillors would support local authorities standing on their own two feet. Cllr. Lawrence said that the alternative budget had been developed in the context of the move to local funding; money from the government could be seen as 'AAA' rated (i.e. low risk) but as the Council moves to managing on local NDR and was free standing there were greater risks associated with economic downturn and fewer businesses. Cllr. R. Sloan commented that this could also be considered in the context of the discussion regarding Britain's exit from the European Union. Cllr. Eade reflected that the local economy was based on manufacturing which made it more vulnerable to slowdowns.

Cllr. Eade said that Single Status had been going on for some time. It needed to be resolved and he wanted to share thinking. He wondered if the option of buying people's interest out should be considered which would leave more money in the pot for services. He knew that work was going on but that everyone should push to sort it out. He felt the public would not accept keeping £12 million in the pot when services were under pressure and the contingency should be dug into.

Cllr. Sloan said he agreed with the risks around the final salary pension scheme – this was not just an issue for Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire but affected a whole range of people – but the alternative budget had not offered a solution. Cllr. Lawrence compared the situation to personal finances –would you borrow more now to pay off your mortgage when you know you have to pay more into your pension and if interest rates go up you will have limited options for your budget. As the work force reduces the Council will have to fund the pension deficit for people who retired 10 years ago or more with fewer people. The key point was that the Council should be thinking ahead about what the contribution to the pension scheme means. Salaries and pensions have to be paid. A large and growing debt burden with an increase in interest rates would put pressure on the budget and perhaps there should be a cap on the level of debt. The proposed change to the MRP calculation is good now, but together with other things was concerning and future generations will have to carry the debt.

Cllr. Sloan asked if they saw the 7 regional funds as a threat or opportunity. Cllr. Lawrence said they did not change the dynamic. People were not retiring as quickly nowadays and we will need to put more into the pension fund for when they retire and to fund pensions for past employees. It was possible that the pension costs could increase to a colossal 25% of the salary budget.

Cllr. R. Sloan asked if the £500k capacity fund for youth and adult unemployment included the apprenticeship levy. Cllr. Lawrence said the levy had been built into both budgets. The scheme would help young people to gain experience for a year and enter the jobs market with the skills gained during that time.

Cllr. C. Smith asked about the sale of assets. The proposals to sell the solar farm and dispose of the Nu Place properties would reduce the Council's future income. How would the Council replace this income as assets can only be sold once? Cllr. Lawrence replied they would take a different approach by selling services based on the Council's core activities and expertise. The solar farm was good but not in the Council's area of expertise and is funded by debt. If the asset underperforms and the debt costs increase there is a risk that the Council will lose the profit margin. The Council should de-risk and sell more of what it knows.

Cllr. Smith said the Council was a pioneer in building the solar farm. Cllr. Lawrence replied that Northern Rock Board members may have said the same before the crash.

The Chair said that the solar farm had generated £180k income this year, above the £140k target. She wanted to know what the rationale for selling off income generating assets was, and where they would expect to get income growth. It would be difficult to generate income from the sale of Council services due to lack of capacity within the organisation. Cllr. Eade replied that figures in the alternative budget had come from Cabinet reports and that the tariff for electricity generated by the solar farm could change with new legislation and new technology. Cllr. Lawrence added that it was not the principle of the solar farm that was the problem – but the debt that this created for the Council. Interest rates were low now but they would go up. In the view of the Main Opposition this is not what the Council should be doing – instead the Council should concentrate on offering services where it could offer expertise that would benefit the national economy, bring income into the Council and create local employment at a lower cost base. Telford & Wrekin has better expertise in some areas than other authorities and should not be borrowing more to invest in risky activities. If income generation does not work the only other way to save money would be to reduce the size of the organisation.

Cllr. C. Smith said that the property portfolio of £50 million brought in an income of £5million which in his view was a good return and the Bank of England had indicated the interest rate would not increase this year so where was the risk? Cllr. Lawrence said interest rates would not rise because the economy was so weak and he hoped he was wrong but the opinion of the main opposition group was that a strategy of investment in risky projects was not right. Cllr. Smith relied that the manufacturing base in Telford and Wrekin was higher than in other West Midlands authority areas. Cllr. Lawrence said they would grow activities where the Council had experts and sell services to other authorities. The Chair asked if this meant they did not want to see growth and Cllr. Lawrence said they did but it would be achieved by investing in public sector activities – he said the Council had some very good staff whose skills could be provided to other authorities. Cllr. Bentley said he would support selling off the solar farm because he felt the Council did not have skills in that area but speculated as to who would be interested in taking it over when the big energy companies were not investing in solar and there would be an increase in tariffs. It would cost a lot to dismantle so that was not an option. The Chair said the solar farm would bring in £185k this year and other authorities were looking at going down the same route. Cllr. Dugmore commented it has been sunny in the summer and Cllr. Bentley said he doubted it would have been generating as much energy in the last few months.

Cllr. Dugmore said the Council should focus on what it does best. The solar farm or windmills are a brilliant idea if the money is there to invest in the first place and he had not seen other authorities queueing up to invest in solar farms. He commented on the previous investment in the ice rink which would now reduce its opening times and he questioned if the Council would get its money back from the investment. He referred to the Chief Finance Officer's comment on page 19 of the report which said that Nu Place, the solar farm and the Property Investment Portfolio represented a small percentage of the total Council budget. Cllr. Dugmore checked his understanding that the alternative budget was proposing the sale of these assets to avoid the future borrowing costs. Cllr. Lawrence said this was correct – they were not large amounts individually but were part of a growing pool of debt. When he had asked officers how the debt could be reduced, the only assets that could be realised were the solar farm, the PIP properties and Nu Place. There was nothing else that could be disposed of to realistically reduce the debt.

Mr Williams asked what figure would be deemed a 'sustainable level' of debt and if it was realistic or an aspiration? Cllr. Lawrence said that the level of debt would depend on the economic climate and interest rates. The worrying trend at the moment was that the level of debt was going up and this had implications for the revenue budget. The % of the debt as a proportion of the revenue budget should be the main metric to manage debt. His own opinion was that the level of debt should be no more than 10% of the revenue budget and he would be comfortable with reducing it by £70 million. This should be reviewed each year depending on the economy.

Mr Williams asked if the interest rate went up, would the priority be to pay down the debt or cut services. Cllr. Lawrence said interest rates tend to be fixed for a term but the problem comes when the term comes to an end and the project needs to be refinanced – this is managed by the Treasury Management team – but the main point was that the level of debt was worryingly high although it would vary from year to year.

C. Mason-Morris asked how viable the stress test metrics were, for example if debt per property was reduced from £3,600 to £2,600 it would reduce again if more houses were built without doing anything to reduce the debt. Cllr. Lawrence said no one had come up with a perfect measure but they had been trying to find indicators which would give a 'feel' for the level of indebtedness and the metrics suggested in the report for stress testing had been suggested by the external treasury advisors.

The Chair said she was still struggling with the ambition of the alternative budget to generate income and selling off income generating assets. She said that private sector developers has not wanted to develop the land used for Nu Place and that the Council would be providing 400 homes which would generate rental income year on year. The properties should only be sold at the right time to maximise the value and now was not the right time. She also questioned the proposals to cut the Growth Fund as this brought business to the Borough. Regarding the proposals for libraries she did not want to lose the libraries and the council would work with others to find an alternative way to continue to provide these services. She asked what the Main Opposition would do once the assets had been sold – there would be a short term gain but how would the continued library service be sustained?

Cllr. A. Lawrence said that savings could be brought forward now to save the libraries. Over the longer term he accepted the need to generate incremental income but the difference in approach was that there should not be further borrowing. Cabinet had already committed to £260 million of borrowing to finance the capital programme and in the view of the Main Opposition is that level of debt is not sustainable. The Chair responded that the level of Council debt was £130million and Cllr. Lawrence said that the figure of £260 million was what has already been committed by Cabinet.

Cllr. A. Eade noted that the Administration's budget report stated that 'the aim of the review was to close the following libraries. He suggested that Scrutiny should look at this and suggested the Public Service Mutual was a model should be explored and there were good models in York, Devon and Dudley. He said it was important to keep the service intact and not farm it out piecemeal to Town and Parish Councils. Cllr. Lawrence responded to a question from the Chair about long term sustainability of funding for the libraries that they would fund the core service and would look at a public service mutual model. Cllr. Sloan said that the Committee had taken evidence on the library service and had not yet come to a view. This would happen at the final meeting for the Finance and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee in this process. Cllr. Eade said the libraries in Newport and Madeley were well used and would have core funding but they would look at what other authorities had done. He highlighted the need to support the whole library service and suggested looking at the York model.

The Chair said that by highlighting this in the Administration's budget proposals now gave time to work with people to find a solution to ensure that libraries would not close if at all possible. There was some discussion between members about the wording of the libraries proposal in the administration budget.

Cllr. Lawrence said that the point he was trying to make was that, as all administrations do, they would ask officers to work up plans and proposals for savings and income. £750 was enough to put together a plan for the service. Officers were very good at coming up with innovative ideas and they would be asked to do this.

Cllr. S. Burrell said that 15,500 housing target in the Local Plan (although there were no indicative figures in the Service & Financial Strategy) would mean the employment base would need to grow by over 35% over national average employment projections to sustain that level of development. He said that as the housing target had been set as an aspiration, the budget should make sure that measures were in place to back up the required employment growth. If the alternative budget housing target of 9,940 were taken, employment growth of 5-18% over national average projections would be required. Telford & Wrekin had failed to have employment growth of even 12% above the budget should prioritise employment growth alongside aspirations for housing growth. He mentioned this in the context of the reinstatement of the 16+ transport funding in the alternative budget which was the intelligent thing to do to ensure the Council has the means, method and mode for developing a skilled local work force. He failed to see how this could be achieved by the solar farm or Nu Place and if investment has to be made it should be in skills for young people. Neither could he see how the closure of libraries would help, or the lack of investment in schools. He also said that Burton Borough school was projected to be over-subscribed by 2018 as a result of the number of homes that have been built. He could not see a sensible route in the administration's proposals to achieving the 40% above national average employment growth required by the level of housing in the Local Plan. He supported the creation of a fund to review the provision of secondary school places. Secondary school places had been planned to 2018 but 2020 was approaching.

Cllr. A. Lawrence said that the alternative proposals included investing in highway infrastructure and that by having less housing growth there would be less strain on schools and services and less debt to carry.

The Chair asked now the investment in highways would be funded? Cllr. Lawrence said that this would be worked up with officers but it would not be funded through debt.

Cllr. R. Sloan asked about the approach to partnering with other local authorities and Scrutiny Committee's response to the Main Opposition Budget proposals from the previous year which highlighted that there were no figures or practical examples and the Committee was not convinced that the approach proposed would work, particularly as other authorities were facing the same budget pressures. Cllr. Lawrence said that Capita and other private sector organisation provide millions of pounds worth of services to authorities and other public sector organisations and he thought that Councils would prefer to buy from other local authorities. He gave the example of children's services which are failing and taken over in the same way that a school in special measures is taken over. He said that Telford & Wrekin Council should anticipate this market appearing and build an offer. Telford & Wrekin was a good authority and had services that could be sold. Where services are not so good we could buy from other authorities.

The Chair said that as a small authority the capacity to do this would be limited and there would be geographical restrictions. Cllr. Lawrence said that the difference was that the Main Opposition did not agree with the level of debt and if services were not sold to generate income then the Council would have to down scale.

The Chair said that without precise figures it was difficult to go further with these proposals. She said that if the number of houses was reduced this would also reduce income from Council Tax and New Homes Bonus which would be about £6 million.

Cllr. S. Bentley said he felt the Council had services and expertise that could be sold to other authorities and highlighted the good work of officers on the world Heritage Site and land stability in the Gorge. The Chair said that the Council may have expertise but she was not sure staff had the capacity. Cllr. A. Lawrence said that if the Main Opposition were in control they would have a team to work up these proposals.

Cllr. A. Eade said that this process could be a political bun fight but that they wanted to share the suggestions in the Main Opposition budget proposals and hoped they would be considered. He gave the example of proposals on essential car user allowance made two years ago which were dismissed at the time but had now been included as a savings proposal. If it had been implemented two years ago the Council would be £1million better off. These were genuine suggestions which he would like to work on with scrutiny. In hard times there are risks with borrowing and the right to buy may change the housing market and the committee should not take their eye off the ball in monitoring borrowing and he hoped scrutiny had ears for listening.

The Chair said that there was good borrowing and bad borrowing. The Council's borrowing was to generate income not to build civic offices.

Cllr. C. Smith said that he agreed with the Prime Minister and Chancellor that it is important to build more houses. He said he did not agree with selling off houses. Many people have bought houses as part of their 'pension' plans. Cllr. Eade said that the feasibility study found that there should be 5,000 fewer homes. Cllr. Smith said that some developers bought land but then did not build houses. Cllr. A. Eade said he would support a punitive tax to prevent land banking.

Cllr. Lawrence said that the level of indebtedness was high for a small organisation. He gave the examples of Iceland and Cyprus who had over borrowed. The Chair said that the level of borrowing was risk assessed and that she was more worried about the Main Opposition's proposals which set out a reserve of £1.2 million. Cllr. Eade replied that the proposals had been signed off as robust by the Chief Finance Officer. Cllr. Lawrence added that the if the Main Opposition were in control they would work with officers to find more savings but the resources had not been available for further work.

The Chair thanked Cllrs. A. Eade and A Lawrence for their presentation and the officers for their support in this process. She said that if Members had other questions after the meeting they could request a written response.

Cllrs. A. Eade and A. Lawrence left the meeting.

FESC- 13 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING STRATEGY 2016/17 – 2018/19 (DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS)

The Chair confirmed the arrangement for the following meeting on the 27th January.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed a table had been sent to committee members which set out the information that had been requested. She asked for Members to confirm that this reflected the information they wanted. She also confirmed that the Managing Director would attend the Committee meeting on the 3rd February to provide information about the impact of the Senior Management Team cuts, the approach to re-structuring, Single Status and changes to staff terms and conditions, the geographical impact of savings and consultation with partner organisations.

The meeting ended at 7.47pm.

Chairman: ....

Date: ....