

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SCRUTINY
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON THURSDAY 18 JANUARY 2007**

MEMBERS

* Cllr S M Fairman - Chairman

* Cllr B C Evans - Vice-Chairman

∅ Cllr G J Fielden

* Cllr P W Hitchins

* Cllr C M Pannell

* Cllr G Rothwell

* Cllr J W Squire

∅ Cllr J T Pennington

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

Agenda Item 6 (see SC.50/06 below) -

Strategic Director (Resources); Strategic Director (Operations); Head of Financial Services and Chief Accountant

Also in attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

Cllrs I Longrigg, D W May, S L Rankin, R Rowe, M F Saltern,
I P Steer and R O Yonge

SC.48/06 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny held on 18 December 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SC.49/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none was made.

SC.50/06 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2007/2008

Consideration was given to a report which updated Members on the budget position facing the Council. The report also outlined bids for additional expenditure and options available to address the funding shortfall.

The report concluded that the preparation of annual budgets became more challenging every year, and this trend would not change over the foreseeable future with uncertainty existing over the future funding and structure of local government. Central government was imposing costly recycling targets and extending the concessionary bus fare scheme, without any guarantee of underwriting the cost, whilst at the same time awarding the Council low increases in revenue support grant and insisting on low single figure increases in Council Tax levels.

Scrutiny proceeded to consider Appendix F (supported by Appendix E) of the report, deliberating each bid individually. Where a bid was supported without notable comment, no reference is made below).

B1. Tree Maintenance

Members made particular reference to the importance of continuing to fund tree maintenance especially with the recent high winds and any statutory obligations.

B2. Legal Team, Additional Resource

The Group noted that some additional costs of the Sherford Development would be borne by the Council, particularly in relation to staffing resources.

B8. Part-time Climate Change Resource

Members debated the need for a Climate Change Officer and expressed some differing views on climate change globally. By vote, Members agreed for the need of such an officer and that this post should be promoted to high priority. Members also expressed some differing opinions on the name of the post.

B13. Section 106 Officer

Members agreed that the Section 106 Officer post, which had no priority assigned, should be designated medium priority status.

Appendix G – Possible Options for Street Cleaning

In connection to street cleaning operations within Appendix G of the presented report, Members noted the contents of the Coleridge Report and received a report in the form of a response.

With regard to Option 4 (Introduction of ride-on mechanical sweepers), Members discussed the benefits of hiring or purchasing mechanical sweepers and felt that geographically the district did not lend itself easily to such sweepers. In addition, concerns were also raised about the value for money of such sweepers.

With regard to Option 2 (Improved two-tier joined-up working), the Group welcomed the prospect of talks with Devon County Council about street cleaning and looked forward to a more uniformed approach in conjunction with the County. The Group proceeded to agree that Option 2 of the proposed options for street cleaning was its preferred Option.

Members also wished to thank the authors of the Coleridge Report for their time and work involved in preparing and submitting the report.

RESOLVED

That Scrutiny endorses and recommends to the Executive the budget bids for 2007/2008, subject to any comments as outlined above.

SC.51/06 **AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF SCRUTINY**

Members considered the schedule of future items for consideration and in particular reference was made to:-

- (i) it being helpful if Members of the Group took part in a joint presentation concerning Primary Care Trusts with their colleagues at Teignbridge District Council;
- (ii) a letter being sent to the Police thanking them for the presentation delivered to the Group on 23 November 2006 (Minute SC.40/06 refers) concerning Community Policing in the South Hams and that the Group should consider any follow-up questions that it may wish to raise.

(Meeting commenced at 10.00 am and finished at 12.20 pm).

Chairman