

Service and Resource Planning

Comments from Strategy & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on behalf of Scrutiny Committees

The Strategy and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee met on 13 January 2011 to consider the comments made by scrutiny committees on the budget proposals at their meetings on 20 December 2010. The committee wishes to forward the comments of the individual committees along with their own set out here for consideration by Cabinet in making budget decisions.

Growth and Infrastructure

- Emphasised preference that any additional available capital funding should be used for Highways maintenance
- Wish to remind cabinet of the Bus Champion, Cllr Lilly
- Support for reintroduction of charges at park and ride sites and explore opportunities for retail at these sites
- S106 developer contributions wish to make best use of new arrangements when these are announced by government

Safer and Stronger Communities

- Noted that support in the scrutiny committee for the proposals was broad but not unanimous
- Importance of the mobile library service was emphasised

Adult Services

- Budget pressures from delayed transfers of care were noted as a concern

Children's Services

- The importance of encouraging registration of eligibility for the pupil premium was emphasised to maximise funding to schools.
- The importance and success of the youth offending service that will be part of the Early Intervention Service was raised.

Strategy and Partnerships

- Property – the committee wished to emphasise the potential interest of parish and town councils to take over property.

Comments made by scrutiny committees on 20 December

Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee
The Committee supported in principle the Park and Ride charging proposals, and recommend that that any parking charge system introduced is easy to implement and understand but also spreads charges fairly across user groups, in particular bearing in mind those who Park and cycle and those who park and do not go into the City.
There is a need to ensure we are achieving maximum savings from

contractual arrangements with Partners
It is important that we realise opportunities to explore retail opportunities at Park and Ride sites for future income generation
Any changes to levels of bus subsidy need to be very carefully considered, particularly taking into account subsidies needed for new bus routes
It was agreed that any energy saving proposals need to have sound business cases sitting behind them.
The impact of changes to waste recycling centres on present and likely future communities need to be carefully considered.
Opportunities for working with partners on some Council services should be explored for future budget proposals
The committee was in general agreement that any additional Capital funding should be used for Highways Maintenance
Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee
There was overall support for the proposals put forward – locality and partnership working were seen as key to the future provision of services covered by this committee’s remit
Discussion took place to reassure the future capability of the fire service
The potential of further and future partnership working arrangements were seen as critical in terms of Trading Standards and Safer Communities.
Noted concerns over the library proposals in terms of the continued free provision of internet services, rotation of books and loss of staff with professional library skills
Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
The proposals set out in this business strategy are acceptable to this committee Vote carried with 6 in agreement (2 disagreed, and 1 abstained).
The chairman summarised the key policy areas as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An emphasis on finding alternatives to residential care for older people • with a focus on providing domiciliary care, with a greater reliance on extra • care housing. • The introduction of all who qualify to self directed support, with efficiency • savings implemented using the resource allocation system. • Moving to the voluntary and community provision of transport for those • who use day services or choose alternative day opportunities with a • personal budget. • Community development team reducing and a refocus on supporting • community based services such as the currently funded Good Neighbour • Scheme • Reduction in funding for Supporting People services of 5% per annum • Moving from internally provided support to agency or self purchased • domiciliary care. • Limits on contract inflation allowances

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of services for those with mental health needs • Review the Contract with the Oxfordshire Care Partnership
There were no comments on the capital proposals set out in the strategy.
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
The Committee considered the savings proposals line by line and agreed (by 10 votes to 3) to support in principle the proposals for CYP&F. They also supported the proposal for the Music Service.
In giving their support, members stated that they would wish to be briefed regularly on the roll out of the Early Intervention Centres
Further, members would wish to be part of any review that would consider charging families for respite care for disabled children. Members expressed a hope that this could be avoided if possible
The committee would wish to monitor closely proposals for changes to the funding of the Equality and Diversity Achievement Service (EDAS) and to be given an opportunity to scrutinise the business plan for Outdoor Centres at some time in spring 2011
Strategy & Partnership Scrutiny Committee
Proposals supported (by 8 votes in favour and 1 against)
Overall the proposals were supported. It was noted that the areas discussed largely represent staffing restructures to reflect the changing shape and size of the organisation in the coming years.
The proposal to explore opportunities to 'sell' services such as internal audit to others organisations was supported
It was noted that the consultation on terms and conditions reflects staff suggestions and is proceeding positively with unions.