



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the
Council Offices, Stornoway,
on Thursday 18 February
2010 at 4.00pm

PRESENT

Mr Angus Campbell (Chairman)
Mr Norman A MacDonald (Vice-Chairman)
Mr Alex A MacDonald
Mrs Morag Munro
Mr Archie K Campbell
Mr Donald Manford

Mrs Agnes Rennie
Mr John A Maciver
Mr Norman M Macleod
Mr Roddie Mackay
Mr Charlie Nicolson
Mrs Annie Macdonald

FINANCE

Budget and Council 1
Tax Setting 2010/11

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources submitted a Report seeking approval of the draft budget for 2010/11 and Council Tax for 2010/11. The Report indicated that 2010/11 was the third and final year of the current three year settlement announced by Scottish Government in December 2007. The Report stated that an important part of this settlement was the Concordat between COSLA and the Scottish Government which included the following provisions:

- a three year funding package;
- a Single Outcome Agreement for each council;
- an annual target of 2% efficiencies but with councils being allowed to retain savings; and
- a reduction in ringfenced funding and the freezing of council tax at 2007/08 rates.

The Report indicated that the Comhairle's draft Business Plans and Budget had been prepared in accordance with the strategy initially agreed by the Comhairle in August 2009 and updated in November and December 2009.

Budget and Council
Tax Setting 2010/11
Supplementary
Report on Balances

The Report suggested that in light of the current key financial risks as detailed in Appendix C to the Report the level of uncommitted balances be retained at £3M for 2010/11.

A supplementary Report on balances was submitted by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources. This Report indicated that while the budgetary pressures being encountered across the Comhairle had meant that at the time of preparation of the principal report that there had been a risk that balances could fall to £2.9M at 31 March 2010, the winter weather and consequent overspend on the Winter Maintenance Budget now indicated that with six weeks to go to the end of the financial year it was extremely likely that these balances would be substantially reduced and it was therefore considered appropriate to agree a strategy for retaining balances at £3M.

Recommendations
from Service
Committees

The Chief Executive submitted a Report in terms of Standing Order 62 outlining the recommendations from Service Committees.

A verbal update was provided in relation to the Policy and Resources Committee Service Budget which stated that Policy and Resources Committee had recommended approval of its budget subject to the addition of a further Report being submitted in relation to future service delivery to the June 2010 series of meetings and that that Report would address the value of an independent local area co-ordination service and explore options for potential funding.

Reinstatement of
School Swimming

A supplementary Report by the Director of Education and Children's Services in relation to schools swimming was submitted as requested at the meeting of Education and Children's Services Committee of 9 February 2010.

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The Chairman seconded by the Vice-Chairman moved as follows:

“that the Comhairle:

- (1) agree the Budget Strategy for 2010/11 as detailed in Appendix A to the Report;
- (2) approve the draft Business Plans as set out in Section 3 of the Budget Folder;
- (3) approve the draft Budgets as set out in Section 4 of the Budget Folder;
- (4) approve the efficiency and savings proposals as set out in Sections 5 and 6 of the Budget Folder subject to:
 - (i) the reinstatement of schools swimming with the savings shortfall to be addressed by a £10K cut to travel budgets in the Education and Children’s Services Department; and
 - (ii) a further Report in relation to future service delivery being submitted to the June 2010 series of meetings and that that Report would address the value of an independent Local Area Co-ordination service and explore options for potential funding;
- (5) agree to allocate £172K to community care from the provision for demographic change to meet growth from 2009/10 and that homecare provision be capped at 242K hours for 2010/11;
- (6) approve the recommendations for fees and charges as set out in the Reports in Sections 7 and 8 of the Budget Folder in relation to piers and harbours and community care;
- (7) agree to freeze 2010/11 council tax at the 2007/08 level of £1024 for Band D properties;
- (8) retain the level of uncommitted balances at the £3.0M for 2010/11;
- (9) agree the planning assumptions and timetable set out in Section 8 of the Report for the development of the 2011-14 Budgets;
- (10) agree that, if uncommitted balances stand below £3M at 31 March 2010, that up to £300K of the savings planned for 2011/12 and set out in Section 6 of the Budget Folder be implemented from 1 April 2010;
- (11) agree that where any savings set out in (10) could not be implemented from 1 April 2010 then the relevant Director would be required to submit alternative proposals to achieve the same level of savings during 2010/11 to the April 2010 series of meetings; and
- (12) agree that if (10) was insufficient to restore balances to £3M a further Report recommending how this could be achieved would be presented to the April 2010 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.”

Mr Donald Manford seconded by Mrs Annie Macdonald moved the following amendment:

- “(a) additional funding is allocated to Social and Community Services as follows: £24k to retain home care charges at £13 per hour; £8K to reinstate the 3.3% reduction in voluntary sector funding; £284K as the Comhairle’s share of the costs of extending the mobile overnight support service to all areas not currently covered; £63K for the LAC services; £25K funding to retain day care services at the existing level.

That this additional funding of £404K is found in the first instance through a reduction of £155K in the Ward Priority Fund; a reduction of £100K in the contingency budget; a reduction of £60K in the budget for industrial promotion; a reduction of £350K in the budget for arts grants; and the deletion of the vacant post of Development Officer (£40K).

- (b) that the Comhairle require the Chief Executive to report back to the first possible series of meetings following a review of the organisational structure with the aim of reducing the costs of senior management, including Directors and Heads of Service to be achieved as far as possible without compulsory redundancy, which once fully implemented would be used to reinstate the above reductions; and
- (c) that all homecare workers have a contract of employment specifying a minimum number of hours by 30 September 2010 and that a Report be submitted not later than the June 2010 series of meetings proposing an appropriate level of hours for permanent, temporary and casual employees respectively.”

Declaration of Interest Mrs Morag Munro declared an interest in the subject matter of the meeting as the amendment put forward at the meeting proposed reinstatement of funding to the voluntary sector and she was a Co-ordinator for Crossroads Harris. Mrs Munro did not participate in the debate nor vote on the matter.

On the matter being put to the vote the motion received the majority of the votes cast and therefore became the finding of the meeting.