

**INTEGRATED PLAN 2012/2013 – REPORT OF THE
RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To: County Council

Date: 21 February 2012

From: Resources and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Electoral Division(s) All

Purpose: To report the outcome of the Committee's scrutiny of the Cabinet's proposals for the overall Council Integrated Plan for 2012/13.

Recommendations: The Council is asked to consider the Committee's report in its deliberations on the Integrated Plan 2012/13.

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1. SCRUTINY OF INTEGRATED PLAN 2012/13

1.1 The Committee met on Monday 6th February 2012 and questioned the following Members and officers about the Cabinet's proposals for the Council's Integrated Plan 2012/13:

- Councillor Nick Clarke, Leader of the Council
- Councillor Steve Count, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance
- Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive
- Nick Dawe, Local Government Shared Services (LGSS); Director of Finance
- Pat Harding, Corporate Director: Customer Service and Transformation

1.2 The Committee's comments need to be read in conjunction with the Council's Integrated Plan 2012/13, which provides both the context and detail on the proposals. The following commentary is restricted to those issues on which the Committee has specific concerns or comments to make or that they consider should be highlighted for the Council's attention. The minutes of the meeting provide a full record of the deliberations.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

2.1 The Committee focussed on the priority to develop the local economy for the benefit of all and were advised by the Leader of the Council about a range of initiatives designed to encourage business growth, for example through the introduction of superfast broadband, improved roads and a new station at Chesterton.

2.2 However, some Members noted that the Integrated Plan demonstrated significant levels of inequality across Cambridgeshire (e.g. in skills and employment levels) and felt that the current proposals, whilst welcome as means of facilitating economic growth, would not address the underlying inequalities. These Members therefore recommended that the Council should develop a more strategic approach to tackling inequalities, including an action plan and staff resource to lead the changes required.

3. ALLOCATION OF STAFF ACROSS THE COUNCIL

3.1 Members noted that a number of staff vacancies across the Council had not been filled, which had contributed to saving requirements. The Chief Executive explained that forced redundancies had been made where required, and that vacant posts were subject to review by senior officers, and often by Members. There had been many occasions where these vacant posts were considered to be critical and had therefore been filled. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance commented that he was confident that the process was well planned and managed.

3.2 However, some Members were concerned that staffing levels in some services could be unduly affected by posts becoming vacant, and that staffing

levels could therefore be determined more by chance than design. These Members had reservations about the current approach, as they felt that there could be negative repercussions for services that experienced a number of staff departures over a short period of time. They therefore recommended a more planned approach to staff allocations. This is an issue that the Committee agreed to review further at their meeting in May 2012.

4. FORECASTING DEMAND

- 4.1 Members noted the difficulties in preparing budgets for services such as highways gritting and adult social care, where it is difficult to predict the level of demand on the service over the year. Some Members felt that budgets should therefore show the core costs of the service, and the funding set aside as contingency for 'known unknowns' (e.g. worse than expected weather conditions). This would enable more transparent budgetary planning and more effective appraisal of budgetary performance throughout the year.
- 4.2 The Committee agreed to allocate this issue to their work programme for further investigation later in the year.

Source Documents	Location
Agenda and reports of the Resources and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 6 February 2012	Room 116, Shire Hall Cambridge