

**COUNCIL RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION
(FURTHER MEETING)
HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2006
(FROM 5.30 PM TO 6.10 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Andrew Jones in the Chair. Councillors Broadbank, Galloway, Harrison, Elwyn Hinchcliffe, Phillips and Simms.

Also in attendance: Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Alan Skidmore).

Late Arrivals: Councillor Hinchcliffe at 5.55 pm.
Councillor Simms at 6.00 pm.

Early Departures: None.

71/05 - **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES:** Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Fox and Theakston. and Notification had been received that Councillor Galloway was to act as a substitute for Councillor Jim Clark.

(5.36 pm)

72/05 - **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were no such declarations.

(5.36 pm)

73/05 - **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meetings of the Commission held on 12 December 2005 and 9 January 2006 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

(Four Members voted for the motion and there was one abstention).

(5.37 pm)

74/05 - **EXEMPT INFORMATION:** There were no exempt information items.

(5.37 pm)

75/05 - **PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS – QUESTIONS:** There were no such questions to consider.

(5.37 pm)

**SCRUTINY MATTERS AND REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN BY THE
COMMISSION**

76/05 - **REQUESTS FOR INCLUSION OF ITEMS IN FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME:** There were no such requests to consider.

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77/05 - **DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2006/07:**

PART 1 – MINUTE

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Alan Skidmore), together with his Officer team who had attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions in relation to the Draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2006/07 and recent meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Commissions, which had considered elements of the budget which fell within their own remits. The Scrutiny Officer circulated a summary of the views expressed by each of the Council's Scrutiny Commissions in relation to the budget. The Chair of the Commission invited Members' comments in relation to the issues set out in the Scrutiny Officer's summary.

It was **agreed** that the summary be noted and that these comments be passed onto Cabinet for consideration at their meeting to be held on 1 February 2006.

(5.46 pm – 6.09 pm)

PART 2 - REVIEW

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Alan Skidmore), together with his Officer team who had attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions in relation to the Draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2006/07 and recent meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Commissions, which had considered elements of the budget which fell within their own remits.

The Scrutiny Officer circulated a summary of the views expressed by each of the Council's Scrutiny Commissions referring to the outline budget approach, actual budget/budget variations, growth items, efficiency savings (cash and non-cash), fees and charges, risk assessment and any other issues arising in relation to the various budget areas within each Scrutiny Commission's remit.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources referred to the meeting of the Community Services Commission held on 16 January 2006, which considered, amongst other issues, a request for a growth item in relation to the appointment of a Tree Inspector and the concern expressed by the Commission for the need to establish North Yorkshire County Council's approach to this particular concern. The Cabinet Member reiterated the Commission's view that North Yorkshire County Council should take the lead in relation to this particular issue. This matter was to be considered by the Leader at his meeting to be held on Wednesday 18 January 2006, where a view would be taken in advance of the next Cabinet meeting, and that was noted.

The Chair of the Commission invited Members' comments in relation to the issues set out in the Scrutiny Officer's summary. It was noted that a evaluation of the new process would be undertaken and that all portfolio holders and Scrutiny Members be thanked for their hard work in the preparation and consideration of the 2006/07 General Fund Revenue Budget.

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It was **agreed** that the summary be noted and that these comments be passed onto Cabinet for consideration at their meeting to be held on 1 February 2006.

The Director of Resources referred to the meeting of the Community Services Commission held on 16 January 2006, in particular the issue of the appointment of a Tree Inspector, which was considered a high priority and, indeed, it was noted that if this matter had not gone forward as a growth item, the Department of Community Services would have been expected to fund this appointment from any savings identified elsewhere within the Department. The Director advised Members that in his view, this matter was a legitimate growth item.

The Director of Resources also referred to the Community Services Commission reference to the practice of apportioning running costs to services such as the Turkish Baths, the Council's workplace nursery and the Brimhams Fitness Suite at Ripon Leisure Centre. The Director of Resources highlighted the reasons why overheads and central running costs were apportioned to each of these service areas in this way. The Community Services Commission had expressed concern in relation to the effect of these running costs on service budgets, and queried whether it was possible to apportion them in a different way to allow the services to show a profit year on year. The Council Resources Commission noted the Director's response.

(5.46 pm – 6.09 pm)

SCRUTINY CONSULTATION

78/05 - **COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07 – SECOND DRAFT:** The Performance Officer submitted the second draft of the Council's Performance Plan 2006/07. Any comments from the Commission would be considered by Cabinet on 9 February 2006 when the plan would be recommended to Council for adoption. Members were invited to pay attention to the performance targets detailed in the plan.

The Executive Director (Corporate Policy and Improvement) advised that the process for establishing a performance plan was being considered, and it was possible that next year, all three Scrutiny Commissions would receive the performance plan for consideration and comment and possibly as part of the budget setting process. The Performance Officer referred to the main changes between this draft and the previous performance plans, and the Chair and other Members of the Commission thanked the Performance Officer for the much improved structure of the document. The Chair then referred to the performance targets set out within the Performance Plan which had been agreed by the appropriate Director and Portfolio Holder in each case.

Any further views could be forwarded to the Performance Officer by 9 February 2006.

(5.38 pm – 5.46 pm)

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MATTERS HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

79/05 - **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS:** There were no forward plan of key decisions to report to the Commission meeting.

(6.09 pm)

80/05 - **CABINET AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS:** The list of decisions made and currently scheduled to be made since the last meeting of the Commission would now be circulated with the agenda for the meeting to be held on 6 March 2006.

(6.10 pm)