Budget Task Group Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Budget Task Group held on Tuesday 4 October 2011 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Members present:

- Councillor Anderson
- Councillor E Anderton
- Councillor Balmain
- Councillor Brooks (Chairman)
- Councillor M Gandhi
- Councillor R Gandhi
- Councillor Hodgkinson
- Councillor Lawrenson
- Councillor McCann
- Councillor MacNaughton
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor M Vincent

Officers present:

- Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources
- Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

BTG. 01 Election of Chairman

Councillor Brooks was elected as Chairman of the task group.

BTG. 02 Apologies

None received

BTG. 03 Declarations of interest

None

BTG. 04 Public involvement

Members agreed that meetings of the Budget Task Group would be held in public. It was acknowledged that there might be some confidential or commercially sensitive issues discussed, in which case the task group reserved the right to exclude the public on those occasions.

BTG. 05 Introduction – Medium Term Financial Plan

Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources, presented details of the council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), September 2011.

The aim of the presentation was to increase members’ understanding of the council’s current and projected financial position.
It was intended that by the end of the meeting members would be able to:

(i) Identify the key issues in 2010/11 which impact on the council’s future spending plans  
(ii) Recognise the financial assumptions contained within the Medium term Financial Plan  
(iii) Apply the knowledge gained to contribute to the tax setting/estimate process

Ms Davies advised that the MTFP was a financial forecast that reflected the current ‘best guess’, taking account of all that was currently known. It included known commitments, certain assumptions and identified any funding gaps at the earliest opportunity in order that corrective action could be taken.

The presentation had been made previously to Management Board, senior managers and a wider group of councillors in one of their pre-Council briefings.

The projection indicated that 2014/15 was a key year in terms of the balancing the budget, with a gap between expenditure and income of £2.3m, with plans in place to address only £1m.

A transformation strategy was being developed to identify a number of actions that had the potential for delivering further efficiency savings.

A question was asked about the way in which members could best contribute to the council’s transformation programme, particularly in relation to the areas in which there were potentially significant savings to be made, such as the Marine Hall and the commissioning of leisure services. Members were reminded that the quarterly performance reports contained up to date information about all of those areas, and questions could be asked of the relevant portfolio holders in the appropriate forums. The individual projects contained within the council’s Business Plan included milestones by which the delivery of projects could be monitored.

Ms Davies was thanked for her presentation, which had provided a very clear context within which the rest of the task group’s work would be carried out.

**BTG. 06**

**Next Steps**

Ms Davies reported that no Capital Growth Bids had been received by the deadline, although there were two bids that were likely to be proposed shortly, both of which should also be considered by the task group. They were:

(i) New replacement public conveniences, and  
(ii) Link road through Hardhorn car park, Poulton

Michael Ryan, Corporate Director of People and Places would be invited to the meeting on 25 October to discuss both of those bids.

There were also a number of issues related to increases in fees and charges
that would be referred to the task group.

**BTG. Date and time of next meetings**

For a combination of reasons it was necessary to revise the list of previously arranged meetings of the task group. The following was agreed:

- Tuesday 11 October – meeting CANCELLED
- Tuesday 18 October – meeting CANCELLED
- Tuesday 25 October at 6pm – Capital Growth Bids
- Tuesday 1 November at 6pm – Fees and Charges
- Tuesday 15 November at 6pm – Fees and Charges