

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

26th January 2009

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Harrison (Chairman), Councillor Wheeler (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Bladen, Mrs. Coyle, Ford, Grant, Roberts and Mrs. Wheeler.

Labour Group

Councillor Richards.

In attendance

Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group) and Councillor Dunn (Labour Group).

Derbyshire Police Authority

Mrs. J. Birkin and M. Creedon (Chief Constable).

Consultees

Supt. A. Hough (Derbyshire Constabulary), G. Royall (South Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau) and Mrs. J. Smith (South Derbyshire CVS).

APOLOGY

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Southerd (Labour Group).

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/85. **PRESENTATION FROM THE POLICE AUTHORITY**

Mrs. Janet Birkin, Chair of the Derbyshire Police Authority introduced herself and Mick Creedon, the Chief Constable. She spoke of the programme of visits throughout Derbyshire to update on policing matters, together with the budget setting and precept process.

Mr. Creedon had circulated a document 'Policing for the Future – Preventing Harm in Our Communities', on which he gave a presentation. Initially, the document looked at the Derbyshire Constabulary's performance and the reduction in crime statistics. Mr. Creedon referred to the partnership work undertaken and the South Derbyshire Partnership was an exemplar. He spoke about the improving crime detection rates and the statistics for the period April to November 2008. With regard to finance, he compared the level of funding that the Constabulary received to the risk rating of Derbyshire and he spoke about the funding formula. The document included a number of graphs and tables to provide statistical data. Mr. Creedon touched on the use of previous years' budgets and the Constabulary's future spending plans. The document then looked at risk and threat, the citizens'

focus and the local commitment to deliver a high quality policing service for the County.

Mrs. Birkin concluded the presentation, referring to the budget setting process for the previous year and the need to achieve the correct balance between threat and risk priorities and the use of resources. She explained the different funding streams available and ultimately the precept on local Council Tax payers.

A number of questions were submitted and comments made, to which the Chief Constable responded. These included the rate of arrests, release times for offenders, the reduction in reported crime levels and concerns about the percentage of people not reporting crimes.

Note: At 6.30 p.m. Councillors Dunn and Richards left the Meeting.

Reference was made to efficiency savings, the use of reserves and perceptions about the lack of Officers “on the beat”. Statistics were provided on the number of frontline Officers and those other Officers that were not visible, but provided vital services. There was discussion about the rise in terrorism activity statistics, the funding shortfall for the Constabulary and the ongoing lobbying that sought to address this. A question was asked about the indicative level of precept. It was noted that one of the Council’s performance indicators related to the fear of crime and it was questioned how the Police would help the District Council achieve its targets. Communication issues were recognised as a key area. The likelihood of police force mergers was questioned. The Council’s Chief Executive made a statement about the joint work with the Constabulary, the budget being proposed and financial pressures for the future, which might require re-prioritising some police services. This was acknowledged by the Chief Constable, who also spoke about the risks associated with the economic downturn. Mrs. Birkin and Mr. Creedon were thanked for the presentation and their responses to the questions submitted.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation from the Police Authority be noted.

FM/86. **CONSOLIDATED BUDGET PROPOSALS 2009/10 AND FINANCIAL PLAN TO 2014**

Under Minute No. FM/84 of 15th January 2009, the Finance and Management Committee had considered this item. A copy of the report had been provided to consultees and a presentation was given by the Director of Corporate Services. The report looked in turn at the Council’s financial settlement, the General Fund 5 year financial projection, including the position on projected balances, before considering the Council Tax and capital investment and financing. The Chief Executive provided a context, confirming South Derbyshire’s position relative to other local authorities.

Questions were invited and Mrs. Smith of the Council for Voluntary Services sought further information on the support for the voluntary and community sector. The Officer agreed to provide this outside the Meeting. Mr. Royall of the Citizens Advice Bureau referred to an earlier budget presentation, which had provided a breakdown of the various elements of Council finance.

Officers provided a response and it was subsequently suggested that a similar presentation be made to the Voluntary Sector Forum. Finally, there was a discussion about future funding arrangements for the Community Partnerships Scheme.

J. HARRISON

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 7.20 p.m.