

**EXTRACT FROM RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL –  
5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2007.**

**The following resolution is supported by relevant minutes and summary of minutes of all Overview and Scrutiny Panel service plan discussions.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Resources O&S Panel request that the Executive on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007 consider the following changes to the 2007/08 Budget proposals set out in the report “Revenue and Capital Budget and Council Tax 2007/08”, in particular to the service cash limits as set out Appendix 1, Annex 1 of the report:

1. An increase of £150k in the cash limit for Children’s Services (Youth & Community) to protect funding for face to face youth workers on the front line.
2. A transfer of £60k from the Drug Action and Community Safety Team cash limit to Children’s Services (Youth and Community) to protect funding for face to face youth workers on the front line.
3. A reduction of £100k in the cash limit for Housing Services to be achieved through management restructuring and an increased focus on statutory functions.
4. A reduction of £50k in the Drug Action and Community Safety Team cash limit to be achieved through vacancy management pending a review of the whole budget.

It was also **RESOLVED** that

- The Resources O&S Panel ask the Executive Member for Sustainability & Environment to ensure, that in agreeing the service plans within his portfolio in line with the proposed cash limits, he ensures that night time street cleaning in the centre of Bath is maintained to current service standards, and that no charge is made for composting at allotments.
- There should be no reduction in the Council’s own hanging baskets in Bath.
- The Resources O&S Panel ask the Executive Member for Children’s Services to continue to rigorously review expenditure on home to school transport, and that any further savings achieved in 2007/08 (beyond that already assumed in the proposed cash limits) be treated as a contribution to the Corporate efficiency savings target.
- The Resources O&S Panel support the re-organisation in Children’s Services to achieve savings in the Youth Service.

- The Resources O&S Panel request the Executive to consider the Pension Fund deficit and if the option of re-phasing the final year of our 3 year arrangement is possible then it should be pursued.
- The Resources O&S Panel request that the Executive recognises there needs to be a process to scrutinise the Bath Spa claims management. The figure of 2.2m currently being set aside to deal with Bath Spa Claims Management is substantial.
- The Resources O&S Panel have highlighted their support for Vacancy Management, the school meals and healthy eating initiative (and the role of EYCL) and the speeding up of zero based budgeting.
- The remaining efficiency savings of 1.3 million are considerable and the Executive are asked to ensure that a) a proper process for consideration of the efficiency savings is put in place and b) that every effort is made to ensure that these do not substantially affect front line services.

78      **2007/08 SERVICE PLANS – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
PANEL COMMENTS**

The Chairman agreed to take this item before the budget item so the comments from these service plans could be discussed and any comments added to the panels recommendations to the Executive.

Following the debate between Members of the Panel and questions to Officers, these points were highlighted:

Planning, Transportation and Sustainability O&S Panel

The issue of reducing hanging baskets and public toilets was discussed. Matthew Smith (Assistant Director of Environmental Services) had given reassurances that the cuts in the Council's own flowers could be absorbed. The Chair stated there would still be an increase in charges by the Council to companies which buy flowers.

A Panel Member queried whether the sponsorship of roundabouts had been pursued and why hadn't this been pursued before. The Directors replied that this was now going through the planning process and there was a limited number of schemes which is why it hadn't been pursued before.

A Panel Member highlighted that the whole of Bath and North East Somerset should be considered, as Keynsham and Radstock also had floral displays.

A Panel Member asked about the additional income achieved from the sale of flowers to businesses and what would happen if we did not receive this income. The Chair replied he was satisfied that Matthew Smith had a realistic target for the level of income he expected from this.

Housing and Community Safety O&S Panel

The Panel were happy that the service plans in this area had been adequately addressed.

Health and Social Services O&S Panel

The Panel were pleased that members had been more involved in developing the budget.

A Panel Member commented that there had not been sufficient consultation with the public about budget issues. The Executive Member for Resources replied that he agreed there should be more consultation with users and staff but it was hard to consult on the overall budget until it was put together at this meeting, although it should happen at service level.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note these comments and attach the comments on service plans for all of the O&S panels as an appendix to the Executive meeting for their consideration.

## 79 COUNCIL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2007 – 2008

The Chair invited Paul Fox (Assistant Director of Support Services – Finance) to introduce the Report and Giles Oliver (Operations Finance Manager) was present to answer any questions from the panel.

Following the debate between Members of the Panel and questions to Officers, these points were highlighted:

The Chair highlighted that the Planning, Transportation and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel Call-in on the parking charges increase review had been dismissed earlier in the day, therefore that would make an impact on the transport budget

A Panel Member asked what the expected figure of revenue from the Bath Spa might be. The Executive Member for Resources and Strategic Director of Support Services answered that it was unlikely that there would be any revenue from this yet as costs still needed to be covered. This had been expected and planned for.

A Panel Member expressed concern about the £2.2 million set aside for the Bath Spa Claims against the Council. The Chair agreed that this was a concern. This figure had not been substantiated or scrutinised. This should be included as an area to be highlighted to the Executive.

A Panel Member asked how cuts would be made to the Youth Service. The Chair confirmed that following conversations with Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director of Children's Services) he had confidence that a staff restructure, reducing the number of managers, could be beneficial in achieving a £150K saving. The Chair also highlighted that it would become an integrated service with Connexions, like it is in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. In order to save all face to face Youth work cuts £150K would need to be added back to the budget and also transfers made from the Community Safety Budget.

The Chair stated that pensions was also an area where the Panel could make a recommendation to the Executive. The budget seemed to be heading for a 1.3 million deficit so efficiency savings need to be made. Re-phasing of the pension payment deficit should be considered as an option if this is possible.

The Chair highlighted that in the Drug Action and Community Safety Team, there was a need for Vacancy management and review, as he was not convinced value for money had been achieved.

The Executive Member for Resources responded to these comments as follows:

### Spa Claims management process

Due to legal constraints there was limited opportunity for a full scrutiny of this matter at this stage, however, some further details would be available to all members in the budget briefings. The figure indicated in the budget papers is

reasonable but has the potential to vary according to how the matter progresses.

### Pensions

Although there is an appearance of increase in the portfolio value due to recent stock market performance, there are issues around longevity. To make short-term decisions could be delaying the problem, and possibly cause future under-cover. Subject to legal advice this requires further discussion and consideration.

### Youth Services

The Executive Member understands the concerns about front-line service implications, but at this time, discussions will not have taken place between the relevant Executive Member and officers about the implications of the Panel's proposals.

The Executive Member suggested that transfers from the Community Safety budget should be discussed with the appropriate Executive Member.

### In general

The Executive member felt it was a good process for Overview and Scrutiny to examine the budget and service plans, particularly in the light of the current £1.3m deficit for the 2007/08 budget. They need to satisfy themselves about the detail of proposals, control required to achieve them, and to challenge potential impacts on reserves.

There needs to be clarity within the Executive and Strategic Directors Group about where any changes to the budget could be achieved, as it would be inappropriate to agree to fund the changes proposed if that was then reversed to find the required £1.3m deficit.

The Panel's resolution should also recognise that all budget decisions are subject to the satisfaction of Council, and within its policies and agreed direction.

In response, the Chair highlighted that the Pension fund was currently rising in value and also that rising obesity levels should be taken into account around longevity issues.

The Strategic Director for Support Services stated there would be a review of the Pension fund later in 2007 and a formal report would go to the Executive on this including the need for scrutiny. When decisions were made around the Pension fund in 2004, the process didn't include formal means of scrutinising these.

The Chair suggested that all these points be referred to the Executive as a series of suggestions and comments for the Executive to consider and this was agreed.

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>		
MEETING:	Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2007	<b>AGENDA ITEM NUMBER  13</b>
TITLE:	2007/08 Service Plans – Overview and Scrutiny Panel Comments	
WARD:	ALL	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<p><b>List of attachments to this report:</b></p> <p><u>Overview and Scrutiny Panel comments (Service Plans listed in brackets):</u></p> <p>Housing &amp; Community Safety (Adult and Health Services/Environmental Services)</p> <p>Health &amp; Social Services (Adult and Health Services)</p> <p>Major Projects &amp; External Bodies (Major Projects)</p> <p>Education, Youth, Culture &amp; Leisure (Children’s Services/Tourism, Leisure &amp; Culture)</p> <p>Resources (Finance/Property/Policy &amp; Partnerships/Audit &amp; Risk Management/Legal &amp; Democratic Services/HR, Performance, Culture Development, Marketing and Communications)</p> <p>Corporate Issues and Partnerships (Policy and Partnerships/HR, Performance, Culture Development, Marketing and Communications/Customer Services and Libraries)</p> <p>Planning, Transportation &amp; Sustainability (Environmental Services/Planning and Transport Development)</p>		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have considered and commented on the above Service Plans. Attached are extracts from the minutes of these meetings which detail the Panel’s comments on the Service Plan/s within their area (*some minutes will be sent out ‘to follow’ due to the dates of the meetings*). This is to enable the Resources Panel to receive these comments before passing their submission to the Council Executive.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To note the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the Service Plans in this Panel's submission to the Council Executive.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Michaela Gay 01225 394411</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<i>Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meetings (January/February 2007)</i>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

### **Housing and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Panel 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007 – comments on Service Plans**

#### Adult and Health Services

The Director for Adult and Health Services introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that the Panel had previously seen the plan and that it was now before them should they wish to pass on any comments to the Executive Member.

The Panel considered the plan and felt that with the resources available to the department it adequately addressed the intended savings targets for 2007/08.

#### Environmental Services Service Plan

The Assistant Director for Environmental Services introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that his department were required to make a saving of £90,000 in the area of Environment & Consumer Services and that this would be achieved through a review of the staff structure and legal charges along with an increase to income through raising fees for Licensing and Hackney Carriages.

The Panel considered the plan and having been assured that the proposed actions would not adversely affect frontline services agreed the plan as presented to them.

### **Health and Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007 – comments on the Adult and Health Services Service Plan**

The Assistant Director for Adult Care, Housing and Health informed the Panel that the appendix 3 attached to the main report summarised the items of growth and savings for 2007/08.

Following the debate between Members of the Panel and the Officers, these points were highlighted:

- Members of the Council should be more involved in developing the Budget in the context of the Council's Corporate and Financial Plan.
- Targets set in Key Service Standards and Targets for the Adult Social Care and Health Services for Older people helped to live at home were set to be realistic and achievable. This was a huge challenge and part of the big national picture and not only Council's statutory issue. This issue would be highlighted in one of the Local Area Agreements targets, once they get finalised.
- Absolute numbers of People with Learning Difficulties were expected to rise by total of 11% in the next 15 years.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Financial Plan and pass the above comments to the Executive.

### **Major Projects Overview and Scrutiny Panel (informal) 16<sup>th</sup> January 2007 – comments on the Major Projects Service Plan**

The Major Projects Team Manager introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the plan had not changed since it had been viewed by them in November 2006.

The Panel wished for the role this service provides to other areas of the Council to be highlighted as it manages projects that are of a statutory need (Schools and Elderly Persons Homes etc.).

The Panel would like the £19,000 shortfall in salary allocation within Economic Development to be addressed. This sum of money was 20% of a salary and was transferred to the Operations budget for work involved on the Tourism contract. The Panel feels that this sum is excessive.

The Panel approved the remainder of the plan.

### **Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel 22nd January 2007 – comments on Service Plans**

#### **Children's Services Service Plan**

The Assistant Director – Learning and Inclusion introduced this item to the Panel. The Assistant Director – Strategic Planning explained the proposed options to attempt to balance the budget, these included a possible Youth Services restructure, alternative use of transport to schools, use of grants and possible reduction in support to the music service.



He also talked them through the some of the proposed growth in the service required to address legislation and increased volume, these included transport, child legislation (Every Child Matters), child placements and pension / redundancy costs in schools.

The Panel asked him to then further elaborate on the proposed Youth Services restructure.

He informed the Panel that Youth Services has an annual budget of £1.34m. It is a successful service working throughout the authority. A restructure had been considered in recent years and it is felt that now would be a good time to implement. Options that are to be considered include a reduction in management, reorganisation of delivery at Local Area Partnership level, consolidated admin and reduction of the level of grants to voluntary organisations.

The Principal Youth Officer addressed the Panel to say that where possible frontline services should be protected and that any centre reorganisation should focus on quality as a priority. He also asked that if savings are to be made, that they are done over a longer period of time and that enough resources are kept in place to maximise any external funding.

The Panel were very concerned about this possible course of action and wished to make it very clear that all possibilities should be examined before making any significant cuts to Youth Services. Frontline staff and services must be defended as strongly as possible.

They therefore RESOLVED to ask the relevant officers to consult with the Executive Member for Children's Services in an attempt to formulate an alternative savings package and identify impact to frontline services.

### Tourism, Leisure & Culture Service Plan

The Finance and Resource Manager (Support and Cultural Services) introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that capital investment in the next year would allow a reduction in revenue investment in Heritage Services to be made. He also mentioned that the accounts for the Thermae Bath Spa closed in December and that the Council would assess these results in order to determine the profit share due to the Authority.

The Panel asked that when these figures were known they should be brought to their attention at a subsequent meeting.

The Chairman asked that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) be directly informed that the Passport to Health programme expansion requires funding to proceed. He also wished to encourage any attempts to gain external funding for support towards the Youth Games and Olympic preparation.

The Panel RESOLVED to approve the plan as printed having given their observations as above.

## **Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel 25th January 2007 – comments on Service Plans**

### Finance Service Plan

Paul Fox (Assistant Director – Finance) introduced the report, he stated that it included Revenues and Benefits, that it had been a difficult year, he wanted increased focus on value for money and cross Council working.

The Chairman stated that the progress was noted and that the Panel did not want to take any action that might reverse the process.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### Legal and Democratic Services Service Plan

Vernon Hitchman – Council Solicitor introduced the report. The Chairman noted that the Government recommendations mirrored a lot of the Panel recommendations in their Review of Members Services.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### Human Resources, Performance, Culture Development, Marketing and Communications Service Plan

William Harding – Human Resources Manager introduced the report. The Executive Member stated that there was a need to know what was needed as a core to be fit for purpose as an organisation in terms of Human Resources. He stated that it should be mainstream for management to deal with HR issues but for there to be a core of expertise at the centre.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that an informal briefing note be sent out to Panel members

### **Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007 – comments on Service Plans**

#### **74 2007/08 SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING: RESOURCES**

The Chair invited Jean Hinks, Strategic Director – Support Services to introduce the report and referred the Panel to Appendix 2 of the report which set out a breakdown of the pressures, savings and growth areas for each of the relevant service plans in the Resources portfolio.

Following the debate between Members of the Panel and questions to Officers, these points were highlighted:

#### Legal and Democratic Services

The Panel asked about the adequacy of the budget for Election processes in the light of the new statutory duties and were assured by the Council Solicitor that the budget proposals took this into account, including requirements for postal voting and staffing matters. A Panel Member requested that access requirements for Polling Stations should be considered, and the Council Solicitor agreed to follow this up.

The Panel also received an explanation of the proposed budget increase to

improve income for the Registration service. A Panel Member questioned the marketing budget to achieve this, and was assured by the Council Solicitor that effective marketing of the service took place directly and via partner organisations at the various registered venues for weddings. The Council Solicitor stated that it was possible to market further but it may not be cost effective.

#### Improvement and Performance (including Human Resources)

Following questions raised by the Panel, the Head of Human Resources explained that, although the information referred to the possibility of 4FTE vacancies to achieve the budget savings, since the papers were produced the position had changed and this was more likely to be budgetary pressures equivalent to 2FTE from 30 staff.

#### Audit and Risk Management

No questions were raised about this plan.

#### Finance

No questions were raised about this plan.

#### Property Services

Following questions raised by the Panel, the Strategic Director – Support Services provided a brief explanation of the implications of the fire risk assessments for the commercial estate budgetary position. The cost would be contained in the commercial estate budget.

### **Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Panel 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007 – comments on Service Plans**

#### Customer Services, Libraries And Information

The Chairman invited Julia Fieldhouse (Head of Customer Services, Libraries and Information) to introduce the report.

Following the debate between the Panel Members and the Head of Customer Services, Libraries and Information, these points were highlighted:

- Business warehouse would be used for improved management reporting and data sharing with the partnership organisations in order to provide better public services. It would be expected that the data would be updated and run on weekly basis. The Council would be looking to update those data, once the business warehouse is up and running, even more regularly, on daily basis.
- There was no target set for the appropriate waiting time for the face to face service of the public. However, Panel felt strongly that the

average waiting time should be set in order to measure the success of the service delivery.

- The Head of Customer Services, Libraries and Information explained to the Panel that the cost per head would be always higher in the libraries than it would be in Council Connect. Face to face service would be always higher in cost than telephone or web service.
- The Panel Members questioned about value for money for static libraries. Even though mobile libraries proved more effective in delivery than static libraries, static libraries do not pay rent as buildings were owned by the Council.
- The Head of Customer Services, Libraries and Information explained that the community profile would be always matched with the book profile in every library.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and send the highlighted points to the Leader of the Council and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

#### Policy And Partnerships Service

The Chairman invited David Trethewey (Head of Policy and Partnerships) to introduce the report.

Following the debate between the Panel Members and the Head of Policy and Partnerships, these points were highlighted:

- The Head of Policy and Partnerships explained that the teams within his service were not new but were being pulled together to deliver the objectives set out in the paper.
- Policy and Partnerships targets were set to be realistic and achievable and measurable. A number of the targets under the Safer communities headings were measured by perceptions surveys.
- Members of the Panel were aware that more than half of the budget allocated to the Policy and Partnerships was spent on commissioned services. Members welcomed that these were to be pulled together and where possible aligned to allow clearer financial planning in future.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and send the highlighted points to the Leader of the Council and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

#### Improvement And Performance

The Chairman invited William Harding (Head of Human Resources) and Fiona Venton-Harvey (Strategic Performance Manager) to introduce the report.

Following the debate between the Panel Members and the Officers, these points were highlighted:

- Members of the Panel were informed that the Communications and Marketing Team were short-staffed for some time and used contracted staff in that time. Some Panel Members felt that, in order to save £50k from the Communications and Marketing Team, this team should have only 8 members of the staff instead of 10 that were currently in place.
- The Chairman felt that the performance monitoring process should be having closer scrutiny from the Council Members in order that the reporting be more up to date. He added that this could be done in a way of asking questions to different Officers on performance of their services and not to be seen micromanaging the authority.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and send the highlighted points to the Leader of the Council and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

### **Planning, Transportation and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel 29<sup>th</sup> January 2007 – comments on Service Plans**

#### Environmental Services – Service And Financial Plan 2007-2008

The Chairman invited Matthew Smith – Assistant Director Environmental Services to introduce the item.

The Panel asked the following questions and made the following points on each section of the Environmental Services Service and Financial Plan:

#### Service reductions/reprioritisation

A Panel member stated that he did not support the item on reducing hanging baskets as the flower displays were a large attraction for people visiting the city. Other Panel members agreed that they did not support reducing hanging baskets. The Assistant Director stated that he had to balance the budget and cuts in other areas would impact on statutory obligations or areas such as safety checks. He stated that he would consider any suggestions from members on how to balance the budget if they did not support a reduction in hanging baskets. Some suggestions were made by Panel members including not planting in the winter – the officer stated that this had been suggested before but was seen as unpalatable as tubs would stay empty until May/June and that tourism was all year round. A Panel member suggested getting sponsors for roundabouts, the officer stated that this was with the planning service at present and was being pursued. A suggestion of getting sponsors for parks was raised, also setting up 'friends' groups for parks.

The Chairman concluded that the Panel wished the reduction in hanging baskets item to be reconsidered but that the Panel was not against the cut in the allotments service.

#### Cashable efficiency savings

A Panel member asked about the saving of £100,000 regarding the waste collection service. The Assistant Director stated that this was an optimistic estimate as a result of the market testing. Panel member Councillor Cray asked to be kept informed on the market testing of the waste service.

#### Additional Income

A Panel member asked how First Bus calculates what the Council pays them. An officer (Giles Oliver – Operations Finance Manager) explained the model of charging (number of journeys by the number of passengers regardless of the length of the journey). It was explained that there is a government grant based on population and that there can be discrepancies between the grant and the Council's costs. A Panel member added that the government were reviewing the model for funding as a result of an appeal.

In response to a question about the item on charging for removal of fridges, the Assistant Director explained that the £40,000 was a net saving so the costs due to the increase in fly tipping will have been included in this figure.

The Chairman concluded that there was some concern on fridge collection charges and that the Panel encouraged the seeking of sponsorship of Victoria Park.

#### Proposals currently being revisited

The Assistant Director updated the Panel on the items in this section, the first two items could be disregarded (reduction in hanging baskets on non-park land and reduction in opening hours of Recycling Centres).

There was some debate on the third item in this section 'Public Toilet Closures' – A Panel member stated that services provided by this department were front line services and that without them, the Council would have nothing, he stated that the cuts in this area could not go on and that the issue must be addressed. The Assistant Director stated that a lot of the departments additional costs were out of their control (such as pensions and increments) and savings have to be made to offset these increased service costs. He stated that the department is rolling out projects over the next two years that may yield savings through efficiencies.

A Panel member asked for figures to be provided on the increase in on-cost overheads in this department.

The Chairman concluded that the Panel had serious concerns over public convenience closures and reminded Panel members that this would not be implemented without consultation.

The Chairman thanked Matthew Smith – Assistant Director Environmental Services and asked that their comments be taken on board.

#### Planning And Transportation Service – Service And Financial Plans 2007-2008

The Chairman invited David Trigwell – Assistant Director Transport and Planning Development to introduce the item.

The Panel asked the following questions and made the following points on each section of the Planning and Transportation Service and Financial Plan 2007-08:

#### Service reductions/reprioritisation

Regarding the review of the Development Control process, Panel members stated that there should be a review of the committee process in this area as there were some concerns over the format and length of meetings. The Assistant Director assured Panel members that he would be reviewing the way committees operate and the public perception of them. He stated the need for some member and officer training. Panel members were pleased with this approach.

#### Additional Income

A Panel member asked that if there was additional income, would it be fed back into this area. The Assistant Director stated that if this budget was accepted, this would be a target that he would be asked to fulfil.

#### Service Savings being revisited

The Assistant Director stated that there was a need to look the supported bus service as there was a need to make savings. Panel members had some concerns over any potential cuts on supported bus services. A Panel member stated that bus services should be funded by central government.

The Chairman concluded that this Panel would recommend that a review of 'Supported Bus Service' be carried out by this Panel in the future.

#### Changes in demand

The Assistant Director reported that this area had had the largest growth in bus use outside London in the last year and that this was a good thing but it has affected the budget. He felt that the Council had done the right thing and were being penalised for it and this concern was being raised with the Government.

A Panel member raised the issue of concessionary fares and stated that this authority should not take decisions on issues, such as the 9.30am start and cross boundary service, in isolation from surrounding authorities. The Assistant Director agreed that success would depend on co-operation with our neighbours. A Panel member asked which month of 2008 concessionary fares were going nationwide as this would affect budgets.

The Assistant Director raised the item on the 'mismatch on Planning budgets', he stated that the overspend in the past would not occur again. In response to a questions from the Panel, he reported that there was enough professional officers in the department and that they would 'learn on the job' and he did not want to rely on agency staff.

The Chairman concluded that the Panel were convinced that this service is heading in the right direction. The Panel wished to kept up to date on the planning service review.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Service and Financial Plans be noted; and
2. That officers and the Executive be recommended to consider the Panel comments.