

**SUBMISSION to CABINET 03-Feb-10**  
**Extract from Draft Minutes of the recent CPR O&S Panel 01-Feb**

**CABINET AGENDA ITEM 14:**

**BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN  
REFRESH 2010 / 11**

David Trethewey introduced the report.

The Panel asked the following questions and made the following points:

Councillor Macrae congratulated the officers on the report. He asked the origin of the figure of 56,883 local bus and light rail passenger journeys originating in the area (under examples of what the Council will deliver up to year 2011). He also asked how the officers knew that there was a low level of hate crime reporting.

David Trethewey explained that the figure of 56,883 is the local stretch target used as indicator for this issue. Some of the evidence used for the low level of hate crime reporting was received from agencies and the Council would need to understand why that crime was not reported.

Councillor Appleyard commented that the first of the priority actions on pg 18 of the Plan sounds a bit misleading. Instead of saying 'at least of 35% affordable housing requirement' it should say 'desirable level of 35% affordable housing requirement'.

Councillor Appleyard also commented that 'Promoting the independence of older people' on pg 19 of the Plan would fit well with free bus travel.

Councillor Gilchrist commented that it would be helpful to have relevant National Indicator numbers along with the performance indicators from the Local Area Agreement.

The Panel thanked David Trethewey for the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Plan and provide comments to the Cabinet on the draft refreshed Corporate Plan.

**CABINET AGENDA ITEM 16:**

**MEDIUM TERM SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2010/11 –  
2012/13 AND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2010/11**

The Chairman informed the meeting that recommendations from the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels on Medium Term Plans and Service Action Plans were given to the Panel in advance of the meeting (attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to these minutes).

He also informed the meeting that the Panel received a full set of the minutes from each Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Service Action Plans.

Tim Richens drew the Panel's attention to the briefing sheet on Budget 2010/2011 that was circulated to the Panel at the meeting (attached as Appendix 3 to these minutes).

The Chairman questioned the car parking charges increase. He said that on one spot-check the Southgate car park had only 30 spaces occupied whilst the Avon Street car park was full. His view was that the Avon Street car park was being used by Council staff and the Council should introduce a restriction on staff using that car park rather than hiking up the car parking charges.

Councillor Hanney replied that the forecast for car parking charges is not an easy issue. Parking generates a considerable income for the Council. He felt that it was an overstatement from the Chairman that the Avon Street car park had been mainly used by staff.

Councillor Macrae asked if the £250k allocated for the 2012 Olympics is one-off or annual funding.

Councillor Hanney replied that it is one-off funding.

Councillor Gilchrist asked if the average Council Tax increase of 3%, which is the Government expectation, is the actual cap.

Councillor Hanney replied that 3% is seen as the actual cap for practical purposes, yet the proposed increase in Council Tax for Bath and North East Somerset Council is 2.5%.

Councillor Appleyard asked about the plan behind the additional £3m of one-off funding for affordable housing.

Councillor Hanney replied that this funding would be used for the schemes that have to be done and for which there was already a Council commitment (i.e. Bath Western Riverside).

The Chairman asked about the money yet to be allocated: £372k remaining headroom and £96k remaining of the use of collection fund surplus.

Councillor Hanney replied that he had recently meet with the business community who, through a series of presentations, were providing him with the feedback which he would use to help the Council decide where the money would be invested.

Councillor Appleyard asked about the use of Collection Fund Surplus and, in particular, the use of £400k for the early introduction of separate Food Waste Collection from October 2010, the grant of between £50k and £100k to support the £3m refurbishment and development plans for the Theatre Royal. He felt that some of that funding could be used for the Fairer Charges Policy.

Councillor Hanney replied that Collection Fund Surplus is one-off funding that can be applied as part of the 2010/2011 budget. If a one-off reserve is used to cover recurring expenditure it would create a burden on the Council. Councillor Hanney also said that £400k revenue and £400k capital was allocated for the early introduction of Food Waste Collection.

Councillor Haeberling concurred with Councillor Hanney and said that the proposed grant for the Theatre Royal would be used for some building refurbishments and help with access for disabled people.

Councillor Appleyard said that, although the Council has grant funding of £2.5m below the Government's assessed level of need, the Government funded a lot of other benefits for Bath and North East Somerset area.

Councillor Hanney commented that the Council should get those £2.5m of grants. The Council would continue to run its services in the best interest of the community, but that should be funded at the next level to enable it to do so.

The Chairman asked if the early introduction of the Food Waste Collection is because the Council did not achieve its recycling targets.

Councillor Hanney replied that the early introduction of the Food Waste Collection is just one part of the plan to maximise the amount of recycling in the area.

Councillor Gilchrist asked if the proposed increase of £850k in the annual resource allocation into Children's Services and the proposed increase of £150k in the resource allocation for Adult Social Care is a one-off or recurring cost. Councillor Hanney replied that this would be a recurring cost and both involved rebasing the budget.

Councillor Appleyard commented that the home to school transport for children with special needs should be restored.

Councillor Hanney commented that Councillor Chris Watt (Cabinet Member for Children Services) would provide an answer to this proposal at the Cabinet meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010.

Councillor Macrae expressed his disappointment with the level of comments from the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. He said that the other Panels expressed their concerns without any alternatives on where the funding should come from.

The Chairman said that the process is for this Panel to receive comments from the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members of this Panel also had detailed minutes from each meeting. He also said that other Panels had links with partnership organisations whilst this Panel is primarily involved with Council services.

Councillor Cray asked, as part of the review of all Council offices, if it is possible to cost a bus service that would bring Council staff to work. He also asked how many spaces are taken by Council staff in car parks.

David Trethewey responded that there is new work on a corporate green travel plan which would take into account these points.

Councillor Hanney added that the Council would have to think how to organise such a plan with the BANES NHS as well in order to make sure that the staff are not blocking car parks.

The Chairman asked if £600k for Disabled Facilities Grant in Adult Care and Health Commissioning is new money.

Councillor Hanney replied that it is not new money but more appropriate treatment of the existing funds being a move from capital to revenue.

Andrew Pate added that if the money was not allocated then Adult Care and Health Commissioning would be under more stress. This was a rebasing of the budget.

The Chairman asked why the saving of £200k on street lighting hadn't been achieved.

Andrew Pate responded that he would check on this issue and provide an answer but that he was aware that this saving proposal had been put back.

Councillor Appleyard asked what had changed in terms of the revenue generated through applications in Planning Services that resulted in proposed cuts.

Councillor Hanney responded that if 65-70% of funding would go to education and social services then other services would have to suffer if the savings were not shared. The Council will train and re-train its staff to redeploy, if possible, for work in other areas/services of the Council. The objective has to be to re-train employees and, as best as possible, reduce redundancies. The Customer Services savings relate to efficiencies and not just reduced demand.

Councillor Cray expressed his concern that people who would be made redundant might come back and work as consultants.

Councillor Hanney agreed with Councillor Cray on this issue and said that consultants would be only recruited when necessary.

Councillor Cray said that Trade Unions are concerned that the Council is making cuts from junior staff and not in management.

Councillor Hanney replied that the Council would have to look how to streamline the right management structure in all services.

The Chairman asked what the percentage target is for the Council Tax Collection Fund.

Andrew Pate responded that the collection fund assumption is 97.75%. The service that does Council Tax Collection had worked well during the recession. However, the assumption might not be the same in the next financial year. In comparison to other authorities, this authority is performing well in this area.

The Chairman asked Councillor Hanney and Andrew Pate to review the assumption for the level of funding for the Council Tax Collection Fund next year.

The Chairman said that he recognised Councillor Hanney did his best to protect vulnerable and old people with this budget.

Councillor Cray said that people want to see fair cuts across the whole area.

The Panel, together with Councillor Hanney, thanked Andrew Pate and Tim Richens for the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1) Note the feedback from the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels on Medium Term Plans and Service Action Plans
- 2) Submit the debate from the Panel to the Cabinet meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February.