

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**16<sup>TH</sup> December, 2004 at 6.00 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Shaw (Chair); Councillors McGarvey, Timoney, and Yasin.

### **90 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)**

Councillors Iqbal and Skepelhorn.

### **91 BUDGET 2005-2006 (REF: 7.1)**

Committee considered this report, which provided background information about the process of scrutinising the budget and which set out the information being provided at this stage of the process.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

### **92 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, PART VA (REF: 8)**

**Resolved:** That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as it is likely that if members of the public were present during the items remaining to be considered, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information falling within Paragraph [...] of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **93 BUDGET 2005-2006 (REF: 8.1)**

Committee considered the officers' list of options for changes to the base budget for those services that come within its remit.

The following proposals for exceptional and unavoidable growth were considered:-

Page 11 (HRA 809: The cost of providing NTL cable services to tenanted properties does not take into account the price review that takes place in April each year) – Councillor Shaw welcomed the continuation of the service provided by NTL as this would ensure that e-government is available to council tenants.

Page 16 (HRA 814: Design fees for consolidation of area offices) – the Head of Housing (Strategy & Private Sector) explained that the design fees form an integral part of the cost of providing the area offices.

Page 27 (HSS 016: Undertake a Private House Conditions Survey) – the Head of Housing (Strategy & Private Sector) explained that the funds will be sufficient to undertake the private housing sector stock condition survey. This survey is required every five years. He advised that a report was to be presented to the

Executive suggesting that the next survey be undertaken under a revised methodology, which requires a smaller sample and produces more robust data.

Page 29 (HSS 022: Continuation of growth bid from 2004/05 to maintain Supported Employment Services currently funded through SRB which terminated on 31 / 03 / 05) – Councillor Shaw was keen to ensure that, with the curtailment of SRB, funding for Supported Employment Services continues. The Head of Community Care Services explained that any money available from Objective 2 status will be less than is required, and it is unlikely that partnership funding will be forthcoming. This growth bid has therefore been introduced to ensure that the Supported Employment Services continue to be funded.

Page 30 (HSS 026: meeting the increasing temporary accommodation costs of homeless people) – the Head of Housing (Strategy & Private Sector) explained that the proposal assumes that the council will maintain the current level of homelessness acceptances and re-housing, throughout the period in question and that the level of income recovery improved year on year and that improved procurement rates were achieved through a tender exercise. He believed that a key factor in this would be preventative work and reported on proposals to convert some caseworker posts into preventative officer posts.

Page 31 (HSS 030: provision of additional services to carers through allocation of Carers' Grant increase for 2004/05) – the Head of Community Care Services explained that this growth was aimed to allocate more resources to support carers. He believed that this would result in a significant improvement in the service.

Page 32 (HSS 031: to expand the social work trainees scheme by 4 more posts) – the Head of Children and Family Services explained that this growth fits in with workforce development in the Children's Act. It also seeks to promote career development to encourage staff to remain with the council.

**Resolved:** (i) That all the officer proposals for exceptional and unavoidable growth be supported and (ii) that the list of potential reductions be noted by this committee.

**(Note: The meeting concluded at 6.40 p.m.)**