

9<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>General Fund Revenue Budget – Council Tax 2012/13 – Extract from the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Commission Meeting held on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>9 February 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director: Resources</b>		
<b>Cabinet Member Responsible:</b>	<b>Councillor J. Kitcat, Cabinet Member for Finance &amp; Central Services</b>		
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Mitchell (Chair); Janio (Deputy Chair), Brown, Follett, Morgan, K Norman, Rufus, Summers, Sykes and MacCafferty

### **PART ONE**

#### **69. BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL**

- 69.1 Councillor Ken Norman Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Panel introduced the report of the review. He had enjoyed the process. He thanked the Members serving on the Panel – Councillors Mary Mears, Gill Mitchell, Anne Pissaridou, Christina Summers and Ollie Sykes and was pleased that Joanna Martindale had also been an active member as the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum co-optee.
- 69.2 This had been a challenging review and a more detailed budget scrutiny than before. The Panel had heard from all the Cabinet Members and had asked a wide range of questions in a series of five meetings. Councillor Norman thanked all the witnesses for providing information and for sending written replies afterwards where necessary.
- 69.3 The Panel had made 13 recommendations to refer to Cabinet; these related more to organisational issues for the future rather than to specific budget areas in this year's proposals. Councillor Norman looked forward to budget Council and meanwhile asked that the Commission approve the Panel's report.
- 69.4 Councillor Gill Mitchell, Chair of OSC and a Member of the Panel, said this had been the best budget scrutiny yet. It had focussed on individual areas of the budget as well as the general approach to the proposals.
- 69.5 Councillor Janio commented that the budget scrutiny process had been open and handled much better than previously. It was helpful that the Panel was able to question

Cabinet Members directly, for example. This approach should be used for future budget scrutiny he said.

- 69.6 Members felt that the Budget Panel had been an effective in-depth method of scrutiny, allowing consistent cross-party challenge and more constructive than previous alternatives (i.e. the whole budget presented to OSC; or relevant sections of the budget considered separately by each Overview and Scrutiny Committee). It was helpful that the papers had been published well in advance.
- 69.7 The background to recommendation 8 (funding to the third sector) and recommendation 9 (partnership approach) was discussed by the Commission. Councillor Norman explained that proposals to transfer public health funding to the Council had, in the event, been unavailable for scrutiny comment. He hoped there would be wider involvement and more information from health and other public sector partners to enable closer examination of proposals in future.
- 69.8 Councillor Morgan asked how proposals for savings via joint commissioning would be coordinated. He said that the process needed to be clear and timescales should be agreed in good time to meet future budget deadlines. [Richard Tuset] told Members a cross-partnership group had been set up by the PSB and an update on this work would be provided for OSC Members.
- 69.9 On behalf of the Commission, Councillor Mitchell put on record thanks to Cabinet Members and officers for giving information and answering questions and to Councillor Norman and the other Panel Members for their work on the scrutiny review.
- 69.10 RESOLVED:** that the Budget Scrutiny Panel report be endorsed and referred to the Cabinet.