
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2012

ROSP.74/12 PROGRESS REPORT ON DELIVERY OF TRANSFORMATION SAVINGS TO DATE AND DRAFT SAVING PROPOSALS FOR 2013/2014

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder presented report RD.35/12 on the progress of delivering transformation savings to date and draft saving proposals for 2013/14. Report RD.35/12 had been considered by the Executive at their meeting on 3 September 2012. The Executive had decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted the savings achieved to date and had considered the planned savings for 2013/14 (£1.38 million) and future years;
2. Approved the savings of £306,452 which could be delivered immediately in 2012/13, for recommendation to Council on 13 November 2012;
3. Approved the savings plan for future years, noting that those would form part of the 2013/14 budget process and be approved formally as part of the 2013/14 budget in February 2013; and
4. Noted that proposals in respect of the Economic Development restructure, Claimed Rights and CCTV would be subject to further reports to the Executive prior to implementation.”

The Portfolio Holder advised that a saving of £4.311 million had already been made with a further £699,000 identified and due to be delivered by 2015/16. That would leave a balance of £1.819 million still to be delivered by 1 April 2016. In the current MTFP that balance was equally spread over the next three years. However the new administration had requested the Senior Management Team (SMT), in liaison with Portfolio Holders, to produce proposals to front load the savings in delivering a majority of the savings required by 1 April 2013. The new administration was also directing SMT in liaison with Portfolio Holders to minimise staff redundancies. The draft savings proposals identified would deliver £1.38 million in savings by 2013/14 and by promoting vacancy management, staff redeployment and TUPE transfer arrangements, and reducing overtime working and identifying no staffing efficiencies, staff redundancies would be minimised. By delivering that saving of £1.38 million £439,000 would still need to be identified in future years.

The report detailed a breakdown by Directorate of efficiency savings proposals agreed after detailed discussions between responsible Directors and Portfolio Holders that

amounted to £1,100,366. Many of the proposals could be progressed immediately while some would be subject to further reports to Members at the detailed planning stage. The report also included a breakdown of non staffing savings and reductions in overtime budgets. Those savings were considered as deliverable after close scrutiny of historic spending against such budgets by finance staff in liaison with the Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder. An assessment of which savings could be taken immediately, which by

1 April 2013 and which, due to the complexity of the savings initiatives, may not be delivered until early 2013/14 financial year were also included in the report.

Savings that could be delivered immediately would be taken and budgets reduced to reflect the reduced budgets requirements for the 2012/13 financial year. The 2013/14 budget proposal would reflect the savings identified to be taken on 1 April 2013 and during 2013/14. Draft proposals in respect of the Economic Development restructure, Claimed Rights and CCTV would be subject to further reports to members prior to implementation. Consultation would take place with key stakeholders including Overview and Scrutiny, staff and Trade Unions during September and October.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Council had an ethos of Environment and Economy and therefore there should be no further cuts in Economic Development.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the issues around Economic Development, Highways Claimed Rights and CCTV were complicated. The Executive were looking at economic growth but the Council had a number of vacant posts that were not impacting on the Council's services.

- Some clarity regarding the figures quoted in the report was required. A number of issues were raised in respect of the Chief Executive Service Team, town twinning, the Civic dinner, insurance, CCTV and allotments.

The Portfolio Holder explained that with regard to the allotments the team had lost one officer post and the governance arrangements were currently being looked at. Two posts had also been lost in the Chief Executive's team and the breakdown of savings was included in the report.

The Portfolio Holder further explained that with regard to the civic dinner the invited guests were those who were charitable workers and those who had been active in promoting Carlisle. Therefore it would be inappropriate to ask them to pay for their tickets to the event. He confirmed that there been a cut in funds available for Town Twinning but added that it was important to the Council and would focus more on the youth element in future.

With regard to CCTV the Portfolio Holder gave the background to the funding and advised that there was no contribution to the cost of hardware or monitoring from external parties. However there was no statutory requirement for the Council to provide CCTV coverage.

- The City Council had representation on the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel and any decision made by the Executive on CCTV could be fed back if required.

A report on CCTV was due to be submitted to the Executive at their meeting in November or December. Ms Culleton advised that cameras had been switched off in some areas of the country with no increase in crime figures.

- How would the income from an increase in car parking at Talkin Tarn be used? It was intended that Talkin Tarn would be self financing.

Ms Culleton explained that the intention was that Talkin Tarn would be self financing but at present was subsidised by the council by £58,000 and any additional income would offset that subsidy. Investment had been set aside at Talkin Tarn to cover car parks which had been improved the previous year. The Council were trying to encourage the use of the car park by introducing schemes for regular visitors to the park.

- Were officers confident that the proposed savings would be made?

The Portfolio Holder advised that he had worked with the service managers and officers in finance. Whilst he was confident about the figures contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan the Council could not control external factors.

- It had been proposed to close one of the floors in the Civic Centre and to rent the space. Had any progress been made?

The Portfolio Holder advised that officers were looking at all options to reduce costs and increase income.

Mr Mason reminded Members that the Customer Contact Centre now provided offices for the Passport Office and the Police.

- A Member stated that he believed that enough had been cut from the budget for allotments and that Town Twinning should be used to encourage the youth of the City to meet others in Poland and Germany. With regard to CCTV the cameras were often pointing in the opposite direction to an incident and some were not working at all. If the Police were not prepared to put money into the service it was obviously not one of their priorities. The Executive were doing all that could be done to improve Council services.

- Would the restructure in Economic Development result in a loss of jobs?

The Portfolio Holder advised that no firm proposals were available at the present time.

RESOLVED – 1) That Report RD.35/12 on delivering transformation savings to date and draft saving proposals for 2013/14 be noted and that the Executive consider the points raised in discussion.