

Membership

- absent

Councillors

Joyce Bosnjak (Chair)
Martin Wright (Vice-Chair)
Michelle Gent (Vice-Chair)
Chris Barnfather
Steve Carroll
Ged Clarke
Wendy Quigley
Sue Saddington
Liz Yates

Officers

Martin Gately - Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Ruth Rimmington - Temporary Governance Officer
Angela Smeeton - Senior Consultation Officer

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 November 2011, having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Consultation on the 2012/2013 Budget Consultation

Angela Smeeton, Senior Consultation Officer drew out the salient points in the report which detailed the Authority's consultation on the 2012/13 budget campaign that ran from 26 September 2011 until 23 February 2012.

To date there had been (19 December 2011) there have been 3,701 consultation responses; 324 via budget proposals, 433 on line, 86 via the budget simulator, 2,857 via the citizens' panel. The consultation findings to date were set out in the report. The findings from the citizens' panel survey were expected in December. Ms Smeeton added that there had been one hundred downloads of the toolkit.

Members asked questions on the report and made the following comments:-

Members asked how the hard to reach groups and individuals were being targeted and commented on areas with low response rates to the budget proposals.

Information had been displayed in two editions of County News (the Council's newspaper). The Nottinghamshire Association for Voluntary Organisations (NAVO) had included a link to the budget consultation on its website and, in addition, mentioned the budget consultation in its local voluntary organisation newsletters. The Council's existing networks had been used to publicise the budget consultation. It was suggested that members might be able to improve participation by raising its profile within the lower response areas. Local newsletters were seen by members as a useful tool, for example; the Woodhouse Warbler.

It was acknowledged that it was impossible to reach everyone and that there would always be those who chose to not partake. It was important for the authority to satisfy itself that it had done all it can to reach everyone.

The Chairman congratulated Ms Smeeton for her update and proactive approach to the budget campaign.

5. Partnerships Review – Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

Members received a report on the updated Cabinet response to the Overview Committee's Partnerships Review. Of the six recommendations, all had been accepted apart from recommendation 2 that had partially accepted. The Authority was looking at how it could refocus its commitment to partnership working and ensure value for money.

Members acknowledged the benefit and effectiveness of having smaller focused working groups, in particular the leaders groups that could also make decisions. Most partners were looking to address reductions and improve focus; a reason due to the withdrawal of LAA money.

Members also had a discussion about Member Forum meetings that would continue under the Localism Bill. Members felt that they were invaluable in terms of local area information.

Members noted the updated response on Partnerships Review.

6. Programme of Scrutiny

Councillor Sue Saddington, Chair of the Communities and Environment Standing Committee reported on the meeting held on 12 December. It had received briefings on the operation and visitor experience of the Robin Hood Festival as part of the Tourism Review and water and gas emissions from disused mines.

Councillor Liz Yates, Chair of the Education Standing Committee provided an update on its meeting held on 19th December 2011. The committee scoped the poverty and educational attainment review, and had received briefings on Surestart/early years, school transport and apprenticeships.

Cllr Saddington drew attention to an issue raised concerning governors in rural areas.

Councillor Ged Clarke, Chair of the Social Care and Health Standing Committee reported that it had met on 28th November 2011 and received a briefing on the Joint Commissioning Strategy and received a response to the Care to Independence Review with six out of the seven recommendations fully accepted.

The West Bridgford GPs Merger and Relocation Review Group had received a presentation from GP's and a practice manager on the reasons for the proposed relocation. A special meeting of the Standing Committee had taken place on 6 December to consider information relating to the Bassetlaw Clinical Services Review.

The Chair said that it was important not to lose sight of certain areas of scrutiny.

The meeting closed at 10:45am.

CHAIR

Ref: M_20 Dec2011