

SELF REGULATION SELECT COMMISSION
21st February, 2013

Present:- Councillor Currie (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Ellis, Godfrey, J. Hamilton, The Mayor (Councillor Pickering), Sharman and Watson.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillor Mannion.

54. COMMUNICATIONS

There had been no communications received.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

56. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no members of the public and press present at the meeting.

57. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10TH JANUARY, 2013

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Self Regulation Select Commission held on 10th January, 2013, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

58. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2012

Further to Minute No. 137 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th February, 2013, consideration was given to the report presented by Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, which provided details of progress on the delivery of the Revenue Budget for 2012/13 based on performance for the first nine months of the 2012/13 financial year. It was currently forecast that the Council would overspend against its budget by £1.946 million. The main reasons for the forecast overspend were:-

- The continuing service demand and cost pressures in looking after vulnerable children across the Borough
- Additional, one-off property costs relating to the continued rationalisation of the Council's asset portfolio as part of the efficiency drive to reduce operational costs.

It was expected that the forecast overspend would reduce further over the remaining months following the instruction by Cabinet, endorsed by Scrutiny, that future spend should be on essential items only. For the

remainder of the current financial year, spend must only be in respect of ensuring that vulnerable children and adults were safeguarded, be contractually committed, where to not spend would be a false economy or to ensure compliance with Health and Safety requirements.

Continued management action would be required over the remaining periods of the financial year to ensure that the Council was able to preserve its successful track record in managing both its in-year financial performance and its overall financial resilience.

Discussion ensued and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and subsequently clarified:-

- Management actions bringing the projected overspend into line and the appropriate charges being made against the Housing Revenue Account , built into the thirty year business plan.
- Clarification of the regulations and the use of potential income to help close the gaps.
- Increased costs of collection as a result of increase payments via the Post Office or through local Paypoint outlets, which were offset by the savings.
- Need for payment costs to be factored into next year's budget.
- Overspend for Asset Management as a result of additional security and marketing costs for vacant buildings.
- Cost pressures in Commissioning, Policy and Performance arising from severance or early retirement and the anticipated savings not being achieved.
- Review of Riverside House delivery achievements.
- Interpretation of essential spend and the consistency and parity across Directorates.
- Budget Savings Plan for Children and Young People's Services and the actions required to analyse value for money, reconfiguration of services and the implementation for change.
- Waste Management overspends and whether this related to non-contracted overtime.
- Winter maintenance budget overspend and the impact should the borough experience a severe winter.

Resolved:- (1) That the progress made to date in delivering the significant financial challenges presented in the Council's 2012/13 Revenue Budget be noted.

(2) That further progress reports be submitted to the Cabinet and this Commission during the remainder of the financial year and any comments forwarded on.

59. CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET 2013/14 TO 2015/16

Further to Minute No. 156 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th February, 2013, consideration was given to the report presented by Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, which set out the capital programme for the financial years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Concurrently, the Council had been proactively looking to rationalise its asset and buildings portfolio so as to realise revenue savings and potential capital receipts from any future asset sale. Generally, such capital receipts were expected to be used to reduce future capital financing costs so as to reduce the revenue cost of borrowing in support of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The report set out in detail the budget process that had led to the recommended Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2015/16, the revised proposed spends and funding allocations for Directorates.

Any revenue implications from the revised programme have been fully reflected in the Council's revenue forecast and its updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Capital Programme was funded through a number of sources borrowing (both supported and unsupported), capital grants and contributions, revenue contributions and capital receipts. Any uncertainty over the funding of the Programme rested on confirmation that grants/contributions and capital receipts continued to be available in coming years. Where funding sources were volatile in nature the risks would be managed by continually keeping the programme under review.

The Select Commission welcomed the level of investment in the Borough and were informed that the spend was linked to the corporate priorities, but were disappointed that the information did not show the detail at Ward level.

(1) Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the approval of the 2013/14 to 2015/16 Capital Programme by Council on the 6th March, 2013 be noted.

60. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Further to Minute No. 158 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th February, 2013, consideration was given to the report presented by Colin Earl, Director Audit and Asset Management, which set out the current Corporate Risk Register summary. The summary showed the risks associated with the Council's most significant priorities and projects and actions being taken to mitigate these risks.

The Council's key current risks continued to relate to the financial pressures faced by the Council and the implications of the Welfare Reforms. The report summarised the management actions that were being taken to mitigate these and other risks in the register.

Risks relating to funding of the Capital Programme, personalisation of Adults Care Services, Commissioning and Highways have been removed from the Corporate Risk Register. This did not mean these risks would no longer be monitored; rather they would now be reviewed at directorate level. They could be re-instated at corporate level at any point in time in the future if/as appropriate.

New risks relating to economic growth and Public Health and Wellbeing have been added to the register and an entry included recognising opportunities to promote the Council's achievements and enhance its reputation.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and subsequently clarified:-

- Proposals for further training sessions on the detail contained in the Risk Register.
- Current position with regards to Digital Region and the procurement exercise to find a preferred bidder.
- Child poverty and the impact on Council Services arising from the welfare reform.
- Correlation between planning permission and economic growth in the Borough.
- Policies to grow Rotherham's economy.
- Integration of Public Health into the Council.
- Inclusion of new items within the Risk Register, particularly about any associated risks related to the lifting of restrictions in respect of EU workers and their families and the potential impact this may have on the Borough.
- Conclusion of matters relating to South Yorkshire Trading Standards.
- Management of the Government's budget and the need to plan ahead to mitigate risks.
- Impact of welfare reform and the numbers of people that may be affected across the Borough.
- Briefing documentation about welfare reform being shared with all Elected Members.

Resolved:- (1) That the Corporate Risk Register summary be noted.

(2) That the current assessment of the Council's top corporate risks be noted.

(3) That consideration be given to incorporating the additional items raised by the Select Commission in the Risk Register.

61. STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Consideration was given to the briefing paper and presentation by Chrissy Wright and Janine Parkin, Strategic Commissioning Managers, which outlined the Strategic Commissioning Priorities for 2012/13 focusing on Adults, Children, Young People and Families.

The presentation drew specific attention to:-

- The Strategic Commissioning Model.
- Current Organisational Arrangements.
- Service Planning.
- Service Priorities.
- Challenges and Next Steps.
- Case Studies.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- How commissioning works and whether this should be looked into further by a small Sub-Group.
- Opportunities to revisit domiciliary care providers and look at their ethical care charters.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report and presentation be received and noted.

(2) That any further comments be forwarded to the relevant Cabinet Member(s) for consideration;

(3) That further reports on commissioning activity be submitted to a future meeting.

(4) That a small sub-group look at the commissioning process in detail and include Councillors J. Hamilton (Chair), Beaumont, Beck, Currie, Ellis and Sharman, with liaison with Councillors Dalton, A. Russell and Steele.

62. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser, which provided an update to the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2012/13. Members requested that a report be submitted to each meeting to reflect the current work programme and outline issues yet to be scheduled.

Reference was made to the items listed and the need to include a report around the refreshment of the Corporate Plan priorities.

Resolved:- That the work programme be received and the contents as listed be scheduled in due course.

63. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next scheduled meeting take place on Thursday, 28th March, 2013 at 3.30 p.m.