

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
2nd October, 2015**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Beck, Cowles, Hughes, Mallinder and Julie Turner.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Hamilton, Pitchley, Sansome, Whelbourn and Wyatt.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

39. BUDGET 2016/17 AND MTFs PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Chief Finance Manager, providing an update on progress to identify potential budget savings to deliver the estimated minimum financial challenge of £41.083 million over the next three years. The savings proposals (attached as an appendix to the submitted report) are those which have been risk-assessed (RAG rated) as green and are therefore “able to implement with less direct impact on services.” Such savings require the Commissioners’ approval before being implemented.

The savings proposals, with the report appendix, excluded any lower impact savings proposals where further work is being undertaken to facilitate an informed decision, or which may be implemented by means of an officer decision.

The proposal is that, where it is appropriate to do so and where no consultation is required, the savings proposed in the appendix to the submitted report are implemented during 2015/16 in order to assist with mitigating the current in-year forecast overspend, as well as ensuring that the savings can be delivered with full year effect in 2016/17.

The submitted report contains the first tranche of 2016/17 savings proposals and future reports will contain additional proposals on a phased basis. The aim is to produce a draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by November 2015, in line with the timescales included in this Council’s Corporate Improvement Plan.

Officers reported on the Directorate proposals and Members discussed the various issues, as follows:-

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

(A) Neighbourhoods and Environment and Development Services

- Business Centres – support for start-up businesses (RIDO service) to assist new businesses in being viable; affordable rents for the lease of Council-owned premises (and analysis of the need for rent increases) – written responses were requested in respect of these issues;
- Previously, rent increases have resulted in tenancies being terminated by some businesses;
- Business centres are currently out-performing their budget targets;
- Council properties – market rent increases for commercial tenants;
- Knowledge of the demand for such properties being higher – it is a process of rent review, to a level of rent that the market will sustain;
- Concern about the viability of businesses within the Rotherham town centre – additional details were requested in respect of this issue;
- Ceasing the payments of churchyard maintenance to grants to Parochial Church Councils (last reviewed in 1988) - health and safety implications;
- The Council's closed circuit television systems – ensuring that ICT systems are up-to-date and compatible with CCTV systems; this proposal is subject to approval as part of the Council's Capital Strategy; the costs of this proposal are being calculated as part of the preparation of the business case; the proposed network is estimated to last at least 20 years, although it is acknowledged that ICT technology does tend to develop and change very quickly;
- Clifton Park – increases in various charges for services;
- Project Development – a budget often used as a means of attracting external funding;
- Community Safety (including the Safer Rotherham Partnership).

(B) Resources (Human Resources, Finance, Legal, Corporate Services)

- Human Resources Service Centre;
- ICT Services (security of documents stored on the 'cloud'); whether there is any under-utilisation of facilities which could be offered to other public service organisations and earn income for the Council; (it was confirmed that this would feature as additional savings proposals later in the budget process); it was also questioned why financial systems are hosted elsewhere when significant capacity already exists within Riverside House;
- ICT Services provided for schools (which should be provided on a zero cost basis by the Council); whether schools would accept an increase in charges for such services, or procure these services from other providers; a strategic response on the wider issue of services traded with schools and academies is being prepared by officers;
- Business Support (and management support) – the current review taking place of business support;
- Charges to Academies for the administration of school admission appeals.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD - 02/10/15

(C) Public Health

- Review of out-of-area GUM (Genito Urinary Medicine) payments and local prescribing payments – intention to charge no more than the national tariff (rate of payment per episode of care); local authority duty to provide open access sexual health services; increasing demand upon specific services; Members requested details of the demand from Rotherham residents for such services, from providers located both within and outside the Borough area;
- Theatre and Health Education in Schools (contract renegotiation);
- School Nursing Service (budget reduction) – funding provided by NHS England for the delivery of immunisations and vaccinations for school pupils; extent of saving by the local authority, as Central Government provides this funding as part of the Public Health Specific Grant.

(D) Children and Young People's Services

- Early Years and Child Care Service;
- Children's Social Care Management;
- Training provided for Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years providers – income generation for the Council;
- Family Recovery Programme – early help offer; ensuring that vulnerable children and families continue to receive the necessary support; service support begins during pregnancy; reference to the independent report (2010) of Foundation/Early Years led by Frank Field MP;
- Locality teams (travel requirements).

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

(2) That the savings proposals, as detailed in the report now submitted be noted and officers asked to provide further information, in writing, about the various issues now discussed.

(3) That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be informed of the capital expenditure proposal in respect of the Council's closed circuit television systems, including details of the expected life-span of the equipment and the financial savings expected to be made over the whole period of the project.

(4) That a report be submitted to Commissioner Manzie detailing the comments and requests made at this meeting.

40. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24TH JULY, 2015

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 24th July, 2015, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

41. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2015

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 18th September, 2015, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

42. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be held on Friday, 23rd October, 2015, commencing at 12.00 noon.