

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday, 3rd October, 2018

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Brookes, Cowles, Keenan, Napper, Sansome, Short, Walsh and Wyatt.

Councillors Alam, Allen, Lelliott and Read, Cabinet Members, were also in attendance.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Cusworth, Evans and Mallinder.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

72. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

73. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair reported that there were no items of business on the agenda which would require the exclusion of the press or public from the meeting.

74. JULY 2018/19 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which set out the financial position as at the end of July 2018 and was based on actual costs and income for the four months April to July, 2018 with forecasts for the remaining eight months of the financial year.

This report was part of a series of financial monitoring reports presented to the Cabinet for 2018/19, setting out the projected year-end revenue budget financial position in light of actual costs and income for the first four months of the financial year and included revenue forecasts, details of capital spending and the projected capital outturn position.

The current revenue position after four months showed a forecast balanced revenue budget after taking account of the £10m budget contingency approved within the 2018/19 budget. Work continued to identify further savings to improve this position further by the financial year end.

The report set out by Directorate, the summary forecast revenue outturn position after management actions which have already been quantified and implemented and these were highlighted.

However, to achieve this position a number of mitigating savings actions have been required and further spending reductions had to be identified and implemented across all Council services, in order to offset the impact of a range of cost and demand pressures impacting on the Council's budgets.

The overspending against budget in Children's and Young People's Services Directorate was continuing in the current financial year as a result of demand for services outstripping budget capacity. The number of children in care continued to increase this financial year.

The increased number of Looked after Children also placed significant pressure on Legal Services within the Finance and Customer Services Directorate. The current forecasted overspend for Legal Services was £1.230m. The Finance and Customer Services Directorate overall was forecasting to outturn within budget after putting into place a range of mitigating actions to compensate for the Legal Service forecast overspend.

The Adult Care Services Directorate were forecasting an overall overspend of £6.221m. A combination of increased client numbers, the rising cost of care packages, and delays in delivery of savings plans have led to pressure on budgets across all client groups. A recovery plan has been developed to address previously undelivered savings and project plans are currently being finalised with the expectation that further savings will be identified from this activity.

Regeneration and Environment Directorate was forecasting a balanced budget, although it was facing challenges from a combination of declining business from the school meals service and challenges with delivery of budget savings.

Discussion ensued on the ability to balance the budget and maintain statutory services and whether there was any flexibility within the Capital Programme once funds had been allocated. It was pointed out the Council had not reached the stage where it could not fulfil its legal responsibilities and that the Capital Programme was continually monitored for areas of slippage and different financial decision making.

Members also referred to the major pressures facing Regeneration and Environment Services and whether the reviews had been concluded and delivered upon. In addition, whether the pressure on Licensing, as a result of the more robust regime, with the additional legal costs and Counsel fees, could have been mitigated against with permanent staff. Members were advised that recruitment remained ongoing in Legal Services and the locum capacity reviewed regularly. A partnership

arrangement was in place with Sheffield's in-house Legal Services to assist with child care cases.

The position in Legal Services would be closely monitored and cases profiled to identify any early trends which may impact even further on the overspend. Indications were that the demand in Children and Young People's Services was beginning to plateau and balance out.

The situation with regards to traded services for schools was also subject to review as this was linked to potential income.

Since the report had been written a number of savings, particularly in Customer Information and Digital Services were yet to be delivered at the current time, but it was anticipated this would be achieved by the end of the year.

The ability of Legal Services and Children and Young People's Services to achieve a balanced budget was questioned further by Members and whether the forecasted figures were accurate, especially when savings proposals had been approved and additional pressures had then arisen, thus cancelling each other out.

Members were advised that the figures contained within the report were for Quarter 1 only (three months of information) and whilst known cost pressures could be identified, assessments based on performance allowed forecasts to be projected forwards. Services were reasonably confident savings could be delivered, more so with achieved and exceeded income targets from areas such as the theatre, museum and parks etc. and holding vacant posts where this could be done without significantly impacting on service delivery.

Members were mindful of judicial review pressures impacting on the Council and the NHS due to the need for services to change and the risks associated with this.

Reference was also made to the recent application of a parking charge at Rotherham Show and whether there had been any learning as a result. Members were advised that charges had to be priced sensibly. There had been several complaints on social media and comments made by the public all of which had been taken on board. This would feed into the Rotherham Show debrief. Members of the public appreciated the need for such a charge being implemented in order for the show to be delivered and remain free to access by members of the public.

Members sought clarification on alternative strategies should the income targets not be achieved given the pressures on Regeneration and Environment Services.

It was noted that all controllable spend was being strictly monitored across all Directorates. Any strands for additional income, such as

building consultancy, were being explored for where this could bring some surplus.

Whilst it was noted that the non-filling of vacant posts may be seen as an easier option with smarter working, this did have an impact and placed more strain on existing staff. Members were advised there was no intention to increase pressure on employees especially where demand was still great like in Corporate Services. A longer term review of efficiencies was to take place in some areas which may result in some being reshaped.

The Workforce Management Board had oversight of all vacant posts being held and whilst there was a need for some priority posts to be filled, by holding posts vacant this enabled some existing staff to develop into other areas.

Members again referred to the implementation of a number of historical savings which had led to cost pressures in Customer Information and Digital Services and the action to resolve some of the savings alongside a review of management and staffing structures.

It was pointed out that the costs pressures in the current year were being reviewed on a month by month basis. The review of the staffing structures was ongoing and discussions with the Trades Unions was imminent.

Clarification was sought on the recruitment to posts for employees who were on maternity leave and Members were advised that each post was considered on a case by case basis.

It was also confirmed to Members that the financial forecasts had an included assumption amount against claims for CSE and this was reviewed annually.

Resolved:- (1) That the forecast General Fund balanced budget position after use of the budget contingency be noted.

(2) That the management actions continue to address areas of overspend, provide enhanced controls over all spend and to identify alternative and additional savings.

(3) That the alternative budget savings proposals for Regeneration and Environment, and Finance and Customer Services as referenced in paragraph 3.4.3 and 3.6.7 as recommended for approval to Cabinet be noted.

(4) That the updated Capital Programme be noted.

(5) That financial monitoring in relation to Children and Young People's Services and Adult Services be submitted to future meetings.

75. COUNCIL PLAN QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which confirmed how the Council Plan represented the core document that underpinned the Council's overall vision, setting out headline priorities, indicators and measures that would demonstrate its delivery. Alongside it sat the Council's Performance Management Framework which explained to all Council staff how robust performance monitoring and management arrangements were required to ensure effective implementation.

The Performance Report and Performance Dashboard/Scorecard (Appendices A and B) provided an analysis of the Council's current performance against fourteen key delivery outcomes and seventy-two measures. This report was based on the current position of available data, along with an overview of progress on key projects and activities which also contributed towards the delivery of the Council Plan.

At the end of the fourth and final quarter (January to March 2018) twenty-five measures had either met or had exceeded the target set in the Council Plan. This represented 43.9% of the total number of indicators where data was available or where targets have been set. The direction of travel was positive for thirty-two (49.2%) of the indicators measured in this quarter. The Priority area with the highest proportion of targets met was Priority 4 (Extending Opportunity and Prosperity).

Reference was made to areas that were performing well or improving and those that were off target for the five Priorities, but in general the performance was positive and improving in the right direction.

Members sought information on how workforce capacity and skills could be developed and how the workforce could be sustained. It was pointed out that the Skills Strategy had been delayed, but was currently being worked through by the Investment and Skills Sub-Group. This linked into the Sheffield City Region's strategy and policies, but from a Rotherham perspective. Work was also taking place with the new university campus.

Members welcomed the new style format for the report. In noting the detail asked about the number of complaints and performance data collated for the call centre and more specifically if data was collated for call abandonment.

Performance data was collated for the call centre and there had been some complaints about waiting times. However, staff numbers in the call centre were due to increase over the next few weeks. There had been an increase in calls more recently due to the changes in the waste collection service, but as this service became embedded the number of calls should decrease.

Given the aims of Priority 5 of becoming a modern, efficient Council it was asked if consideration had been given to the early involvement of scrutiny members in the development stages and review of policies which would confirm that Cabinet were taking this priority seriously.

Early engagement with scrutiny members was key and there was a huge amount of scrutiny activity now taking place with scrutiny colleagues.

Online digital services were being rolled out more with the implementation of new software which was working well. This had confirmed that more than 85% of those wanting a green waste service had signed up online. There was more to do over the coming months.

Members had noted that fixed penalty notices being issued had decreased. There had been a gap between the pilot ending and the new contract arrangements, but performance in this area should soon improve and be evidenced in the next quarter. Due to the court system in Sheffield some of the case prosecutions were taking time to be processed.

Further information was sought on whether the enforcement contract extended to more than just Rotherham Town Centre and actually branched out into wards. Members were advised that two weeks into the contract enforcement officers had been across fifteen of the twenty-one wards and provided a visible presence and would be more prevalent once the full staffing resource was achieved.

Members questioned why there had been an apparent increase in complaints for street cleaning and grounds maintenance and were advised huge challenges faced grounds maintenance with the initial snow at the start of the season, torrential rain and then drought conditions with the warmer weather. Performance relating to waste management had improved.

It was also noted that anti-social behaviour incidents and hate crime figures had reduced. The reduction in the percentage of positive outcomes for reported hate crime incidents was lower than last year. South Yorkshire Police had seen an increase, however, in the satisfaction levels for how hate crime was dealt, but a reduction in the number of repeat victims of anti-social behaviour. The Police were to continue delivering a programme of awareness and embed this as part of the CAT meetings and Police resourcing.

Clarification was sought on how the creation of a rich and diverse cultural offer and thriving town centre would be measured (Ref. 3.A6). Members were advised that 38% of the target had already been achieved in Quarter 1 as a result of the increase in visits to the Council's culture and leisure facilities and libraries. This was measured by attendance figures at various organised activities by individuals, groups and schools. Specific examples were provided.

Comparison figures were sought on the Council's performance from last year to this and it was reported that 50% of the actions were on target and 50% were off target. Performance was being closely monitored and actions driven forward for continuous improvement. There was regular liaison between Cabinet Members and Strategic Directors on a weekly basis and reports provided to scrutiny and the Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their attendance and input and welcomed early sight of performance in relation to Children and Young People's Services and Adult Services in due course.

Resolved:- (1) That the overall position and direction of travel in relation to performance be noted.

(2) That consideration be given to measures which have not progressed in accordance with the target set and the actions required to improve performance, including future performance clinics.

(3) That the performance reporting timetable for 2018/19 be noted.

**76. RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS -
USE OF INTERIMS, AGENCY AND CONSULTANCY STAFF**

Further to Minute No. 33 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th September, 2018, consideration was given to the report which detailed the outcome of the review following concerns by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at the increasing and significant forecast of in-year agency and consultancy overspend.

The review sought assurance that the Council measured performance and value for money in its use of agency staff and consultants and was taking appropriate action to maintain spend within acceptable limits. The recommendations made by Members were based on information and evidence collated during the course of the review and their challenge of existing practices and developing protocols.

The Cabinet accepted all twelve broad recommendations arising from the scrutiny review. Progress would continue to be closely monitored and would be led by the Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development.

Resolved:- (1) That the Cabinet's response to the scrutiny review on the Use of Agency, Interim and Consultancy Staff be noted.

(2) That a report be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in January, 2019 for an update on progress.

77. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

There were no issues to report.

78. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

The Chairs of the Select Commissions provided the following updates on work undertaken and planned activities:-

Improving Places Select Commission

Councillor Sansome confirmed all activity/reporting would be monitored through the work programme.

Improving Lives Select Commission

Councillor Brookes reported the Performance Sub-Group had discussed a number of issues relating to Safeguarding and Early Help, which Councillor Watson had provided an update on.

Challenges were also made to dips in performance and reassurances were provided.

Health Select Commission

Councillor Short had nothing further to report.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

The Chair confirmed a meeting was to take place with Voluntary Action Rotherham and two additional budget meetings were to be scheduled shortly.

Resolved:- That the update be noted.

79. CALL-IN ISSUES - TO CONSIDER ANY ISSUES REFERRED FOR CALL-IN

There were no call-in issues to report.

80. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no matters or urgent business to report.

81. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place on Wednesday, 17th October, 2018 at 11.00 a.m.