

**THE CABINET
30th April, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Stone (in the Chair); Councillors Akhtar, Doyle, Hussain, Lakin, McNeely, Rushforth, R. S. Russell, Smith and Wyatt.

Also in attendance Councillor Whelbourn (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board)

C239 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public asked who monitored the out of house contracts for areas such as home care and care homes.

The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services confirmed that it was his area that had responsibility for commissioning those contracts and ensured that any procedures offered under those contracts with the Council did take place.

In a supplementary question the member of the public asked about the frequency of visits to these places and if reports were available for public scrutiny.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care confirmed that visits were made informally by Elected Members on a monthly basis to care facilities for information and issues arising were reported through the relevant channels.

It was pointed out, however, that the Care Quality Commission also made inspections on an annual basis which would be recorded and officers of the Council under the Home from Home Scheme made regular inspections.

C240 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

C241 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY, 2014

Councillor Akhtar, Deputy Leader, introduced a report by the Director of Finance which provided details of the significant progress on the delivery of the Revenue Budget for 2013/14 based on performance for the first eleven months of the financial year. It was currently forecast that the Council would underspend against its Budget by -£36k (-0.016%). This represented an improvement in the forecast outturn of £1.219m since the January monitoring report. Despite the overall balanced forecast there were a number of pressure areas (detailed in Appendix 1 to the report), offset by savings and underspends elsewhere.

Delivery of this very positive forecast outturn would not have been possible without the early implementation of Cabinet's Budget Strategy to bring spend back in line during the financial year. This included both the implementation of the in-year moratorium on non-essential spend (October 2013) and the release of 126 staff through Voluntary Early Retirement/Voluntary Severance (VER/VS). Implementation of the moratorium on non-essential spend had adversely impacted on some services ability to deliver income targets (most notably ICT services), however, overall a slight underspend was still forecast.

Members were asked to note that meetings continued to take place with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) with regard to levels and timing of Continuing Health Care (CHC) funding. Details of progress to date were included within this report.

It was proposed that the next budget monitoring report would be the Council's 2013/14 Outturn Report which was to be presented to Cabinet in June once the Council's Statutory Unaudited Financial Statements have been prepared.

Resolved:- (1) That the significant achievement of a balanced forecast outturn be noted.

(2) That the progress made to date in respect of Continuing Health Care negotiations be noted.

C242 INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE - PERFORMANCE REPORT RAISING PARTICIPATION AND NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Councillor Hussain, Cabinet Member for Communities and Cohesion, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, which provided an update on the progress achieved by the Integrated Youth Support Service and its partners in relation to progression and retention in learning and employment for young people academic age 16 to 18.

The report set out in detail the progress made against targets, comparisons with statistical neighbours and the national picture, NEET performance, raising participation in the academic age 16 and 17 and learning routes in the academic age 16-18.

Resolved:- (1) That the progress made on improving progression and retention in learning for young people of academic age 16 and 17 in relation to raising the Participation Age be noted.

(2) That the continued reduction in the percentage of young people not in education employment and training (NEET) be noted.

C243 TEENAGE PREGNANCY UPDATE

The Leader introduced a report by the Director of Public Health which provided an update on the progress of reducing Teenage Pregnancy rates in Rotherham.

Over the last five years Rotherham had made a significant impression on this very ambitious target. The annual teenage pregnancy rate had fallen to its lowest in the period 1998-2012 to 30.0 conceptions per 1,000 females aged 15-17 (2012). This represented a 26.7% decrease since the 2011 rate of 40.9. Rotherham's 2012 rate was the lowest rate in South Yorkshire and was close to the England rate of 27.7 (and to Rotherham's 2010 target of 28.3).

The reduction in teenage pregnancy in Rotherham was commendable, and had been delivered with the support of a range of high quality services and provision. The challenge now was to build on progress without ring-fenced funding and during a period of budgetary challenge. In order to support this, Rotherham had sought to ensure this was steered by a comprehensive Teenage Pregnancy Plan. Although there was no current national strategy to drive this agenda, Coalition Government Policy had reiterated its commitment to reducing teenage conceptions linking this to the implications of teenage parenthood with child poverty and this was also echoed by local strategies and plans.

Rotherham Public Health Team along with partners had developed a local Teenage Pregnancy Plan to continue to monitor progress and to ensure that services were reaching the most vulnerable young people presenting as teenage parents. Young women presenting as pregnant have increasingly complex health, wellbeing and social issues and over a third were NEET. The majority of young women were from Rotherham's most deprived neighbourhoods.

Resolved:- (1) That the progress in the reduction of the Teenage Pregnancy rate in Rotherham be noted.

(2) That the progress that has been achieved be recognised by a variety of projects and services that are currently subject to significant cuts in funding.

C244 AREA ASSEMBLY & AREA ASSEMBLY CO-ORDINATING GROUP MEETINGS

Councillor McNeely, Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services, which detailed how consideration had been given to the Area Assembly and Area Assembly Co-ordinating Groups Terms of Reference and Article 12 of the Council's Constitution with Area Assembly Chairs and the individual Area Assembly Co-ordinating Groups.

An update was provided to Area Assembly Chairs meeting on 20th January, which set out a number of proposed changes. The proposed changes set out in this report reflected feedback from Area Co-ordinating Groups and the Area Chairs meetings held in September and November, 2013 and at the meeting held on 20th January, 2014.

Cabinet Members were made aware of the need to ensure that the relevant approvals were sought as some of the delegations for revisions could be made by the Executive and others were delegated to full Council.

(1) Resolved:- That the contents of the report be noted and the amendments that referred to the executive functions be approved.

(2) Recommended:- That the amendments referring to non-executive functions be approved.

C245 USE OF VOLUNTEERS

Councillor Akhtar, Deputy Leader, introduced a report by the Director of Human Resources which detailed how the use of volunteers presented the opportunity to utilise skills of community members to improve the environment in which they lived and the services that they and their families accessed.

A survey of Council managers highlighted the positive input that volunteers already made to a range of services and these were illustrated in the report.

The benefits of volunteering included:-

- Utilising talent within our communities to enhance service delivery.
- Helping people to help themselves and involve more members of the community directly with the services they receive.
- Enabling people to participate and increase the sense of civic pride by supporting fellow community members and the Borough as a whole.
- Increasing diversity within the organisation.
- Enhancing the skills and employability of individuals who volunteer including unemployed people.
- Bringing in new perspectives and those of service users that could positively influence service delivery.

In addition to volunteering opportunities that were directly managed by the Council, there were significant opportunities to work with community, voluntary or faith groups to promote local activity which supported and enhanced Council service delivery.

Gateshead Council were writing to all Councils seeking support for a National Volunteers Month in June, 2014. Joining in Gateshead's campaign would offer a focus for using that month to promote existing volunteering opportunities and new opportunities that services may wish to offer.

Cabinet Members welcomed the opportunities for volunteering across the Borough and suggested that all Elected Members be involved in some form of volunteering capacity during June, 2014.

It was also suggested that careful consideration be given to the management of the volunteering process to ensure it was less bureaucratic.

Resolved:- (1) That the opportunities for volunteering across the Borough be supported.

(2) That Gateshead Council be joined in supporting a National Volunteers Month in June 2014 and promote volunteering opportunities at this time.

(THE CHAIRMAN AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING URGENT ITEM IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON PROGRESS AND THE KEY THEMES THAT WERE EMERGING)

C246 INTERIM REPORT IN RESPECT OF CHILDREN'S CENTRES PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Further to Minute No. 167 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th January, 2014, Councillor Lakin, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Services, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, which detailed the public consultation concerning the proposals which opened on 3rd February 2014 and which were due to close on 30th April 2014 at 5.00 p.m. after the statutory period of consultation.

This report presented an update on some of the key and recurring themes emerging from the consultation process to date from the comments received at the public consultation events. However, these would need to be considered and verified in light of a full detailed analysis of the consultation responses and completion of the Equalities Assessment.

It was noted that emerging feedback on the proposed geographical distribution of Children's Centres suggested a further two buildings were proposed to stay open. Children and families further away from the buildings would be reached by Children's Centre outreach workers and other service providers delivering services from local community buildings.

On the completion of the consultation, a further report would be submitted to the Cabinet setting out a series of options regarding the possible way forward accompanied by the Equality Analysis, which would incorporate the emerging theme for a geographical rationale and retention of centre buildings, and the current use of the Children's Centres.

Resolved:- (1) That the consultation process required by Cabinet, which was still ongoing, be noted along with some of the key themes that are emerging and the potential implications.

(2) That a further report be submitted following the completion of the consultation process.

C247 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006) (information relating to the financial or business affairs).

C248 PROPOSED WESTGATE CHAMBERS DISPOSAL

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, which sought approval to put Westgate Chambers onto the market to seek developer interest for a predominantly residential development.

Further information was provided on the rationale for the disposal, the finance associated with this building's disposal and the risk and uncertainties, which were set out in detail as part of the report.

Cabinet Members sought clarification on the lease arrangements for the tenants, mixed use options for the building, timely phasing proposals and the intention to liaise with Ward Members and relevant officers on future options as part of the renaissance redevelopment programme.

As part of the discussions around regeneration in the area it was also suggested that a further report be submitted on the regeneration schemes that formed part of the Town Centre Strategy highlighted the progress made to date.

Resolved:- That the disposal of Westgate Chambers on the open market as detailed in this report be approved.