

THE CABINET
4th July, 2012

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors McNeely and Stone.

C30 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public made reference to the proposed changes to Rotherham's Library and Information Service and asked why the successful library at Wickersley was proposed to have more than 10% of its opening hours reduced?

Councillor Rushforth pointed out that a local needs assessment would evidence the information and the question being asked formed part of the consultation process where members of the public could put forward their views. No decision as yet had been made as the consultation process was ongoing.

In a supplementary question the member of the public asked if the local needs assessment would take account of the number of annual visits to the library and the number of users and compare this to other libraries in the Borough, such as Aston, who had less annual visits and less users, but were proposed to have their opening hours extended?

The Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services pointed out that the local needs assessment was not about just the number of users, but tailoring the service to meet the needs of the community it served and ensure that the Council delivered an efficient and vibrant, good quality library service.

It was also pointed out that significant investment had been made to the service recently with six either new or refurbished libraries and as part of the consultation process a number of drop in sessions would be held and people welcomed to come and discuss their comments with relevant officers.

C31 CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2011/12 AND UPDATED ESTIMATES 2012/13 TO 2014/15

Councillor Akhtar, Deputy Leader, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Resources, which set out the capital outturn position for the 2011/12 financial year and recommend for approval changes to the programme for the financial years 2012/13 to 2014/15 resulting from the 2011/12 outturn and scheme changes since the overall programme was agreed in February, 2012 as part of the budget setting process.

The current economic climate and the on-going impact of the Government's austerity measures required that the capital programme was subject to continual oversight, and if necessary, revision, to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were aligned with strategic priorities and maximised

the value from the limited capital resources available.

The financial implications of the Programme were reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

For 2011/12 the Council's capital investment into the regeneration and enhanced infrastructure of the Borough was £93.983m. The profile of this investment and the updated future expenditure plans were reflected in the Directorate summary table set out in the report, along with a detailed copy of the programme for each Directorate

(1) Resolved:- That the 2011/12 capital outturn position be noted.

(2) Recommended:- That the updated 2012/13 to 2014/15 capital programme be approved.

C32 REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN 2011/12

Councillor Akhtar, Deputy Leader, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Resources, which detailed how in 2011/12 the Council budgeted to spend £219.622m on its General Fund Revenue Account. Actual spending for the year was £217.618m, a saving against budget of £2.004m (or -0.91%). Of this, £0.494m was accounted for by surpluses on trading accounts, leaving a net underspend of £1.510m.

In addition, the Delegated Schools' Budget was £178.127m. Actual spend against this was £173.596m, an underspend of £4.531m for the year which had been added to Schools' Reserves which at 31st March, 2012 stood at £7.654m.

The Housing Revenue Account in 2011/12 was budgeted to make a contribution to the HRA General Reserve of £4.613m. Actual contribution to this Reserve was £5.555m - (£0.942m additional contribution).

This was a very positive outturn position, especially given the challenges faced in-year, not least on the Children and Young People's Services Budget. It was a result of the hard work of both elected Members and staff in managing reducing levels of funding at a time of increasing service need and also the generally good financial management on the part of budget holders.

Reflecting the above out-turn position, and assuming the recommendations in this report were approved, the Council's Revenue Reserves as at 31st March, 2012 were General Fund Reserves available and uncommitted to support the Budget £7.494m and Earmarked Reserves (including Schools and HRA Reserves) £42.998m.

Resolved:- (1) That the Council's General Fund, Schools' and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Outturn Position Statements for 2011/12 be noted.

(2) That the level of the Council's Revenue Reserves as at 31st March, 2012 be noted.

(3) That the carrying forward of underspends on Trading Services (£493,719) and requests for carrying forward of specific items (£482,852) in accordance with the Council's approved policy be approved.

(4) That the waiving of the Council's policy of carrying forward 20% of the underspends from 2011/12 and agree the supplementary allocation of £875,000 to support Children's Services in 2012/13 be approved.

C33 CYPs BUDGET 2012/13

Councillor Akhtar, Deputy Leader, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Resources, which presented a strategy for ensuring that the Children and Young People's Service had a budget which was adequately resourced. Delivery of that Budget would require change in the way services were configured and work was already well in hand to effect that change, led by staff in the Children and Young People's Services Directorate. Furthermore, Council-wide resource was being marshalled to support Children and Young People's Services staff in the implementation of change. Details of the headline pressures within the Children and Young People's Service budget and the actions implemented, or to be implemented to mitigate the pressures were also set out as part of this report, along with an analysis of the Directorate's further proposed savings and progress against delivery of these savings, with an assessment of risk.

The Directorate's Budget Savings were monitored through an 'Action Plan' which was maintained on an ongoing basis with progress considered at the fortnightly Directorate Leadership Team meetings, with the Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Resources attending these meetings once a month.

Councillor Lakin, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Service, reiterated the need for the Directorate to be appropriately resourced and confirmed that the tight monitoring arrangements would ensure that any slippage against the Action Plan was highlighted and reported at the earliest opportunity, by this needs led service.

Cabinet Members welcomed the support to the Directorate to ensure it was adequately resourced, but asked that the position be closely monitored and any proposed changes to grant funding be reported on to enable action to be taken as soon as possible.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposed actions to mitigate Children and Young People's Services Directorate pressures and to ensure that expectations regarding service delivery could be achieved within the approved budget be noted.

(2) That the progress to date regarding delivery of savings as shown in Appendix 1 be noted.

(3) That the use of Council 2011/12 underspends to finance the one-year-only residual pressures within the Children and Young People's Services 2012/13 Budget be approved.

C34 WELFARE AND BENEFITS REFORM

Councillor Akhtar, Deputy Leader, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Resources, which outlined the major changes on welfare and benefit reforms and the potential impact on the community.

The report provided a brief summary of the likely local impact of the Government's Welfare Reform Programme, set out in the Welfare Reform Act 2012, and gave an update on the Council-led partnership response.

Cabinet Members considered the proposed Strategic Partner Steering Group and asked that the risks associated with the reform be included in the Risk Register, along with widening the remit to include the impact of the implementation of Universal Credit.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of this report be noted.

(2) That the approach taken so far be endorsed and adequate and appropriate representation on both the Welfare and Benefit Operational Task Group and Partner Strategic Steering Group moving forward be approved.

(3) That a strategic steer be provided and progress reports be submitted to future meetings for the Cabinet's consideration when policy changes and adaptations in response to the welfare and benefit reforms were known.

C35 RGF ROUND 3 BID: SHEFFIELD CITY REGION ENTERPRISE ZONE - INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, which sought approval for Rotherham to be a partner in a Regional Growth Fund (RGF) bid; with Henry Boot, Harworth Estates and Sheffield Business Park, to seek funding for infrastructure works within the recently launched SCR Enterprise Zone (EZ). It was also seeking approval for the Council to act as the accountable body for the RGF money if it was secured.

The bid comprised three strands brought together into an overarching programme, the proposals of which were set out in detail as part of the report.

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

(2) That Rotherham M.B.C. becoming a partner in the RGF bid be approved.

(3) That Rotherham M.B.C. acting as accountable body for the £13.2m of RGF loans/grants being sought through the project be approved.

C36 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 (as amended March, 2006 (information relates to finance and business affairs).

C37 STRATEGIC ACQUISITION

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, which sought approval for a strategic acquisition of the site in question and for the Council to enter into negotiations to purchase in order assist in the regeneration of Rotherham.

The financial information and risks and uncertainties associated with this acquisition were set out in detail as part of the report.

Resolved:- (1) That the Director of Audit and Asset Management enter into formal negotiations for the acquisition of the asset as detailed within the report

(2) That a further report be presented to Cabinet with full details of the negotiated acquisition in due course.