

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Thursday, 14th December, 2017

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Brookes, Clark, Cowles, Cusworth, Evans, Mallinder, Napper, Sheppard, Short and Walsh.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Wyatt.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

3. TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE PRESS AND PUBLIC SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF ANY PART OF THE AGENDA.

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

4. BUDGET 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting would be to review income generation and savings proposals from the Strategic Directors of Regeneration & Environment and Finance & Customer Services and the Assistant Chief Executive as part of the budget scrutiny process. A further meeting would be held on 20 December 2017 to review proposals from other Strategic Directors.

5. BUDGET OPTIONS - REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

The Chair welcomed the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment and other officers, as well as the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, to the meeting.

Members considered the following budget proposals:

Title	OSMB Comments	Supported or Rejected	Additional Actions
Review of Corporate Health and Safety (R&E 1)	Members received assurances in respect of the analysis undertaken by the service in respect of the viability of the proposal	Supported	N/A
Increased income/reduced costs from the Market Service (R&E 2a)	<p>Members sought assurances in respect of what was empty liability and how much of the £50k and £75k was attributable to increased income or reduced cost.</p> <p>Members also queried how the Council would increase footfall. It was explained there was a broader approach to this which involved promoting the market, the development of other schemes and a longer term strategy to redefine the town centre to bring more people in.</p>	Supported in principle, subject to additional clarification being provided.	Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration & Transport to supply information to Members
Increase fee income from A630 Parkway widening project for one year only (R&E 2b – 1)	No comments	Supported	N/A
Increase in planning application income or reduce staffing levels if planning applications do not meet the additional target (R&E 2b – 2)	No comments	Supported	N/A

RiDO – Deletion of vacant post (R&E 2b)	Members sought assurances that there would be sufficient capacity left within the team if the proposal to delete a post were to be implemented. It was explained that the focus of the team was on bigger strategic workstreams rather than lower level development and it was anticipated that this could be accommodated.	Supported.	N/A
Revenue Income Through Property Investment (R&E 3 – 1)	No comment.	Supported	N/A

Riverside House Space to Partner (R&E 3 – 2)	Members queried whether the proposal was viable without the landlord's permission. It was explained that all such projects carried a degree of risk and the biggest risk associated with this was that the proposed tenant could find alternative accommodation. At this stage there was nothing to formally submit and no plans were in place. Members also sought assurances in respect of capacity in legal services to expedite any agreement and the impact on customers in Riverside House. In response, it was confirmed that there was sufficient resources to progress the project and that the impact on customers would be monitored. The proposal was considered to be achievable, but it was noted that it would not deliver a full year saving in 2018-19.	Supported	N/A
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<p>Income from Schools for the provision of Asset Management Services (R&E 3 - 3,4,5,7)</p>	<p>Members queried whether this was an activity that Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) could deliver in-house and, in addition, whether the Council had investigated grouping all of the services that could be offered to MATs into one corporate package. In response, officers indicated that they had every reason to believe that MATs would use the service. Officers from Asset Management working with colleagues in Children's Services were working on developing a single package for MATs in future.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Reallocation of Community Engagement and Community Property Work (R&E 3 – 9,10)</p>	<p>Members sought assurances that the directorate had the capacity to deliver against this proposal. In response, it was explained the proposal was designed to create the capacity to deliver. Members sought further information in respect of the detail of the proposed income and were advised there was a set fee against each valuation.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport to provide additional information on the fee structure for valuations.</p>

<p>Stage 2 Implementation of Transport Review (R&E 4)</p>	<p>In response to a request for clarification, it was noted that Home to School Transport was part of this review, along with the exploration of option for changing policy on children's transport and the Corporate Transport Unit. The aspiration was to ensure better management of transport budgets through a corporate unit, rather than through individual services. It was noted that the review was also concerned with fleet procurement and management. Members asked to see the Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal.</p>	<p>Noted that will be the subject to future pre-decision scrutiny ahead of any Cabinet decision</p>	<p>Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment to provide the Equality Impact Assessment to Members</p>
<p>Community Safety and Street Scene Transformation and re-design (R&E 5)</p>	<p>No comments</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Revision to the grounds maintenance service (R&E 6a – 3 & 5)	Members raised queries in respect of the capacity to buy back services through devolved budgets and what work was being done with town and parish councils for them to deliver these services in future. The Strategic Director agreed to investigate the feasibility of both approaches. Reference was also made to the seasonal approach to recruitment for this work through use of agency staff, which was acknowledged to be the most cost effective approach.	Supported	N/A
Integration of the Dog Warden Service into the Pest Control Service (R&E 6e)	Members sought clarification as to the effect of the proposal and it was confirmed that the service would reduce from five days to three days per week. It was explained that there was a lesser risk arising from the proposal as there were fewer stray dogs and the proposal was to scale down staff numbers to meet demand. Members recommended that costs of stray dogs be recouped through microchipping checks.	Supported	Recommendation that costs are recouped through microchipping checks.

Waste Options Appraisal / Waste Review (R&E 7a)	No comment	Noted that will be the subject to future pre-decision scrutiny ahead of any Cabinet decision	N/A
Change Bank Holiday Monday waste collections to Saturday (R&E 7c)	Reflecting on the situation at Birmingham City Council, Members reiterated the need to ensure that the trade unions were involved in discussions in respect of this proposal.	Supported	N/A
Introduce advertising/sponsorship on waste collection vehicles (R&E 7d)	No comment	Supported	N/A
Review of cleaning provision in corporate landlord properties(excluding Riverside House) (R&E 8 – 3)	No comment	Supported	N/A
Review of caretaking vehicles provision (R&E 8 – 4)	No comment	Supported	N/A
Riverside House Café (R&E 8 – 5)	No comment	Supported	N/A
Riverside House Cleaning (R&E 8b – 2)	No comment	Supported	N/A

Culture and Sport Staffing Reconfiguration (R&E 9a)	Sport and Tourism	Members were concerned at the lack of clarity in respect of the impact on staff numbers in this proposal.	Deferred	Assistant Director Culture, Sport and Tourism to attend on 20 December 2017 to provide clarification in respect of the proposal.
Rother Valley Country Park – development of a new caravan site (R&E 9b)		No comment	Supported	N/A
Increase income at the Civic Theatre (R&E 9c)		Members supported the notion of utilising income to make the theatre fully self-sustaining.	Supported	N/A
Temporarily prioritise essential maintenance only at Countryside sites (R&E 9e)		No comment	Supported	N/A
Increase income across parks, countryside and green spaces (R&E 9f)		No comment	Supported	N/A
Temporarily Prioritise Essential Maintenance Only at Clifton Park and other urban green spaces (R&E 9g)		No comment	Supported	N/A
Expansion of Nationality Checking Service (R&E 9h)		No comment	Supported	N/A

Reduce or Stop the provision / maintenance of highway assets – Cenotaphs (R&E 11 – 4)	Members sought further information in respect of which cenotaphs were maintained by the Council, rather than parish councils.	Deferred	Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to bring information back to Members on 20 December 2017.
Sponsorship for Town Centre events; i) Christmas illuminations (£44,000) ii) Christmas tree (£2,000) (R&E 11)	Members were fully supportive of the proposal, but sought assurances in respect of any failure to secure a sponsor. It was explained that coordination between the Council and town centre businesses	Supported	N/A
One Off Income for Recycling of old Street Lighting Lanterns (R&E 13)	No comment	Supported	N/A
Realignment of the Highways Budget – Street Lighting Energy and Highway Insurance Premiums (R&E 14)	No comment	Supported	N/A

6. BUDGET OPTIONS - FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Chair welcomed the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance to the meeting.

Members considered the following budget proposals:

Title	OSMB Comments	Supported or Rejected	Additional Actions
Consolidate Riverside House Customer Services (FCS CIDS1)	No comments	Supported	N/A
To remove the cost of hiring a van for the Information Governance team to deliver historic paper records to staff across RMBC (FCS CIDS2)	No comments	Supported	N/A
To reduce the Information Governance Team by one member of staff (FCS CIDS3)	No comments	Supported	N/A

<p>Restructure the Management team across the Digital Service (FCS CIDS4)</p>	<p>Members sought clarification as to why the proposal would deliver the anticipated benefits given the historic issues with IT in the authority. In response it was confirmed that the service would be in a stronger position as a result of the implementation of the proposal. Members sought further clarity in respect of the number of vacant posts and how long they had been vacant for. In response, it was confirmed that a large number had been held as vacant throughout the financial year. Members sought further information in respect of the reconfiguration of management in CIDS.</p>	<p>Deferred</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services to provide clarification in respect of the proposal on 20 December 2017.</p>
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<p>Revenues & Benefits Service - reduction in overtime (FCS – Fin 1)</p>	<p>Members sought assurances in respect of the checks and balances in place to prevent the unnecessary payment of overtime. It was explained that former practices had been challenged and changes had been made to significantly reduce overtime since the appointment of the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services. Members also raised the need to move to e-billing for Council Tax. However, it was also suggested that the annual waste calendar be issued in the same letter as Council Tax bills to achieve efficiency on printing and postage.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>That OSMB consider establishing a task and finish group to review communications to residents.</p>
<p>Recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments (FCS – Fin 2)</p>	<p>No comment</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Staffing savings from the Procure to Pay service (FCS – Fin 3)</p>	<p>Members received assurances that the progress for purchase orders was managed through an electronic system and noted the issues that had faced the service in the past two years.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Review of Income Collection Arrangements (CW3)</p>	<p>No comment</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>N/A</p>

7. BUDGET OPTIONS - ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

In view of the time taken to review the proposals from the Strategic Directors of Finance & Customer Service and Regeneration & Environment, the proposals from the Assistant Chief Executive were deferred for consideration until Wednesday 20 December 2017.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would be held on Wednesday 20 December 2017 at 9.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.