

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 22 November 2012.

PRESENT: Councillors Brunton (Chair), Cole, Harvey, C Hobson, G Purvis (as substitute for J A Walker) and P Purvis Williams

OFFICERS: B Baldam, J Bennington, A Crawford, J Shiel and P Stephens.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Arundale, Dryden, Kerr, Mawston, Sanderson and J A Walker.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point of the meeting.

12/63 2ND QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN.

A report of the Director of Strategic Resources was presented regarding an estimate of the annual projected outturn for 2012/2013 based on the second quarter review of revenue expenditure against the current year's Revenue Budget.

It was reported that the projected outturn position for 2012/2013 was a break-even position.

The Board's attention was drawn to major variances with regard to each service area and in particular to the following:-

(a) Pressures totalling +£2.5million which were forecast on safeguarding, in particular on the Independent Fostering and Residential Schools agency budgets.

(b) Within Social Care, demand led pressures of +£1,386,000 which were predicted but savings of -£276,000 on Physical Disabilities, -£401,000 on Learning Disabilities, -£329,000 on Mental Health and a large saving on Supporting People contracts of -£392,000 following a review in 2011/2012.

(c) Social Care had made savings of -£448,000 from the negotiation of price increases with the independent sector, -£346,000 from additional one off Fairer Charging Income and £109,000 back dated contributions from the Shaw Trust.

(d) Within Environment pressures of +£512,000 were forecast on Environment Services. It was pointed out that budget reduction targets for Building Cleaning, Depot rationalisation, and subsidised buses would not be achieved in full. Income shortfalls had also been predicted for car Parking and Facilities Management and there were pressures on Fleet Services. Such pressures were partly offset by savings on the Kerbside Recycling Contract.

(e) It was anticipated that the above pressure would be partially offset by projected savings totalling -£510,000 on Community Protection budgets. The service was expected to make substantial savings particularly on staffing costs.

(f) Within Regeneration, savings of -£89,000 were forecast on Housing Services staffing cost budgets but would be offset by income shortfalls in Estates and Community Regeneration.

(g) Reference was made to a projected pressure of -£203,000 on the Mouchel Partnership budget within Corporate Services as the Partnership savings target would not be achieved in full.

(h) Savings of -£578,000 were predicted on central costs particularly on capital financing and ex trading pensions back funding.

In discussing safeguarding issues Members discussed the current arrangements of shared working and noted the ongoing consideration of providing a range of residential options in

Middlesbrough.

Clarification was provided on the role and circumstances of when advice would be sought from barristers and confirmation given that the overall safeguarding issues would be considered further in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan and following the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement announcement anticipated in December 2012. Although it was noted that additional resources had been allocated within the Medium Term Financial Plan given the increasing number of Looked After Children and children with complex needs the Board reaffirmed their concerns at the significant costs involved and the potential impact if there were insufficient resources to cope with demand.

Following discussion about current arrangements in respect of Ayresome Industries it was agreed that further information would be provided to Members on the number of staff involved should the proposal to close as part of the recent budget consultation proceeded.

It was also agreed that further details could be provided to Members regarding the projected budget pressures in respect of Health and Safety recharges within Environment.

The continuing decrease in income from car parking remained an issue and the need to attract more people to the Town Centre was acknowledged. A Member suggested that the possibility of reducing car parking charges as in the case of other local authorities should be considered further.

In commenting on the current budget proposal to cease the Green Waste Collection Service Members referred to the need to give careful consideration to the impact on the current waste disposal arrangements.

A request was made for further clarification on the likelihood of increased number of visitors should admission charges be reduced with particular regard to families in respect of the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum.

A breakdown of Gross Expenditure and Income budgets against projected Expenditure and Income outturns were outlined in Appendix A of the report submitted.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the Officers be thanked for the detailed information provided which was noted.
2. That further information be provided to Members on the areas requested as outlined.

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2ND QUARTER CAPITAL MONITORING AND REVIEW 2012/2013.

A report of the Director of Strategic Resources was presented which provided an update on the Council's capital programme (2008/2009 to 2013/2014) based on the second quarter review of capital expenditure.

It was reported that the change in overall net expenditure across all schemes since the last review had resulted in a decrease of £222,000 in Council wide resources to support the capital programme (0.06% of the total programme) as outlined in Appendix A.

It was reported that in overall terms £2, 656,000 had been re-profiled from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014 and future years of which £197,000 related to block budget provisions. The re-profiled gross expenditure and resources since the last review were shown by service and individual scheme in Appendices B and C of the report submitted.

The detailed allocation of block budgets held by service areas were shown by individual scheme in Appendix D of the report submitted.

The overall programme position as at Quarter 2 review was shown in Appendix E of the report submitted.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the Officers be thanked for the information provided which was noted.
2. That further information be provided to Members on the impact of the major review undertaken in respect of the Telecare service.

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COUNCIL PERFORMANCE AND RISK UPDATE QUARTER TWO 2012/2013.

The Policy and Improvement Manager presented a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an overview of the Council's performance and its corporate risk register at Quarter Two 2012/2013.

The report summarised the Council's performance against the 2012/2013 Strategic Plan and the Board's attention was drawn to those KPIs which were off target.

In terms of Environment specific reference was made to domestic waste landfilled which was slightly off target at Quarter Two although it was anticipated that performance would increase with a year-end estimate at 6.4%. It was noted however that there was uncertainty around green waste collections.

In response to clarification sought from Members it was agreed that further information would be provided in relation to those KPI's off target in Regeneration with particular regard to the speed of processing planning applications. Additional information was requested regarding the number of applications considered at the Planning and Development Committee and also with regard to library contacts given current proposals to close Hemlington Library. Members also asked for clarification regarding the failure to meet the gross supply of housing.

In discussing the KPI's off target within Wellbeing, Care and Learning Members requested further information on the decreasing numbers involved in relation to Personal Budgets.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the Policy and Improvement Manager be thanked for the information provided which was noted.
2. That further information be provided to Members on the issues raised as outlined.