

Select Committee Review

Thursday 18 and Friday 19 January 2018

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, in the Chair.

Councillor James, Vice Chair.

Councillors Bowie, Dann, Churchill, Fletcher, Ken Foster, Sam Leaves, Lowry, Dr Mahony, McDonald, Storer and Tuffin.

Also in attendance: Paul Barnard (Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Councillor Bowyer (Leader), Councillor Darcy (Cabinet Member for Finance/IT), John Dixon (Investment Planning Manager), David Draffan (Assistant Director for Economic Development), Andrew Hardingham (Interim Joint Strategic Director for Transformation and Change), Lou Hayward (Assistant Director for Street Services), Ross Jago (Lead Officer), Councillor Michael Leaves (Cabinet Member for Strategic Street Scene/Environment), Paul Looby (Head of Financial Planning and Reporting), Councillor Nicholson (Cabinet Member for Strategic Transport, Housing and Planning), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive) Helen Prendergast (Democratic Adviser), Councillor Ricketts (Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing Delivery), Councillor Mrs Beer (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Carole Burgoyne (MBE) (Strategic Director for People), David Northey (Head of Integrated Finance), Alison Botham (Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families), Judith Harwood (Assistant Director for Education, Participation and Skills), Anna Coles (Strategic Co-operative Commissioning), Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor), Emma Crowther (Strategic Commissioning Manager), Councillor Mrs Bowyer (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care), Rob Sainsbury (NEW Devon CCG), Ben Chilcott (NEW Devon CCG), Gary Walbridge (Strategic Co-operative Commissioning), Rob Sowden (Performance Officer), Sarah Lees (Public Health Consultant), Matt Garrett (Head of Community Connections) and Amelia Boulter (Democratic Adviser).

The meeting started at 10am and finished at 16.10pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

5. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

Agreed that Councillor Mrs Aspinall is appointed as Chair and Councillor James is appointed as Vice-Chair for this Select Committee Review.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the code of conduct Councillor Sam Leaves declared a private interest as she was employed by NEW Devon CCG.

7. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

8. **Budget and Policy Decisions**

The Councillor Bowyer (Leader), Councillor Darcy (Cabinet Member for Finance/ICT), John Dixon (Investment Planning Manager), (Andrew Hardingham (Interim Strategic Director for Transformation and Change Finance), Paul Looby (Head of Financial Planning and Reporting) and Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive) presented the draft budget for 2018/19 and associated information which highlighted the following key areas –

- (a) the Medium Term Financial Strategy was recommend by Cabinet on 31 October 2017 and subsequently approved by Council on 20 November 2017; the strategy addressed the funding gap as of that date for the following three financial years;
- (b) the budget gap reported to Council in November 2017 had been £4.766m; the latest position reflected new savings and efficiencies identified to date, new and emerging pressures, the latest information arising from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (c) whether the provision for extra care facilities (£4m) would be sufficient for future demands;
- (d) the lack of public/stakeholder responses to the budget engagement exercise and the cost of undertaking such engagement;
- (e) the Council's approach to the increase in interest rates and the effect this would have on future borrowing;
- (f) how would the £1m of additional monies generated through the Business Rates Retention pilot be used to support the further growth of businesses in the City;
- (g) the impact on next year's budget if the 'one-off' savings were not achieved (ie the savings identified in fleet and garage of £0.607m had not been achieved, would this saving be carried forward);
- (h) a clear understanding of how and where the transformation of services were taking place and where services were either being reduced or removed;
- (i) the use of Section 106 monies in order to support the revenue budget and the risk that this action represented to the Council;

- (j) what measures could be taken to address the legacy pension costs of £1.4m which had been inherited as part of the setting up as Plymouth as an Unitary Authority (since the Education Services Grant had been phased out);
- (k) the use of Bailiffs to recover debt;
- (l) whether the precept for Adult Social Care would remain at 3%;
- (m) concerns relating to the long term use and level of agency staff;
- (n) whether the feasibility of using the Council's 'other provisions and reserves' had been investigated, if a balanced budget could not be achieved;
- (o) concerns relating to the Council's impact on the environment;
- (p) whether the impact of Brexit had been considered and what measures were being undertaken to secure Government funding (£3bn) for investment in preparations for Brexit;
- (q) reassurance that the issues encountered with last year's election would not be replicated at the Local Elections in May and that sufficient funding had been allocated to achieve this;
- (r) how the stretch savings target of £0.5m for the service centre would be achieved (concerns that the quality of service would be significantly reduced).

Councillor Bowyer (Leader), Councillor Nicholson (Cabinet Member for Strategic Transport, Housing and Planning), Councillor Michael Leaves (Cabinet Member for Strategic Street Scene/Environment), Councillor Ricketts (Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing Delivery), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), David Draffan (Assistant Director for Economic Development), Paul Barnard (Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) and Lou Hayward (Assistant Director for Street Services) provided an overview of Street Scene, Waste, Parks and Transport.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (s) the total investment for the Hoe Foreshore and surrounding areas;
- (t) how authorities within the Devon Business Rates Pool would stimulate growth and what role the South West Devon Joint Local Plan and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership would have in driving growth in the area;

- (u) the provision within the Capital Programme for shop fronts (accessibility concerns for users with disabilities);
- (v) whether there was additional capacity built into the Capital Programme in order to further support schemes;
- (w) whether Councillors could be provided with an update on the Planning Inspectorate examination of the Plymouth and South West Devon Local Plan;
- (x) the provision of a detailed breakdown of the budget for street scene and parks;
- (y) whether there had been an increase in the recycling rate within the City due to the introduction of the alternative weekly bin collections;
- (z) what measures had been put in place to mitigate the budget pressure (£0.632m), due to the drop in value of recyclates which had led to a significant increase in the gate fee at the MRF;
- (aa) whether consideration had been given to providing a contingency within the budget for the results of the gully survey.

Day Two - 19 January 2017

Councillor Mrs Beer (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Carole Burgoyne MBE (Strategic Director for People), David Northey (Head of Integrated Finance), Alison Botham (Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families), Judith Harwood (Assistant Director for Education, Participation and Skills), Anna Coles (Strategic Co-operative Commissioning), Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor) and Emma Crowther (Strategic Commissioning Manager) provided an overview children services.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (bb) the pathway for the parent and child around statementing;
- (cc) placement stability and the numbers of children and young people in care;
- (dd) whether the budget would support the step change needed in raising attainment within schools;
- (ee) how the demand around special educational needs and disability were being managed;
- (ff) the provision of special schools and whether children were being educated at home because of lack of places or educated outside of the city and the costs involved;

- (gg) caseload management and whether agency staff were being used to address the high volume of caseloads and the wellbeing of current staff;
- (hh) the National Funding Formula and that Plymouth was disadvantaged by the lack of funding and what was being done to address the unfairness within this city;
- (ii) whether there was a cohort of young people suffering with mental health issues and was this having an impact on their education;
- (jj) the number of children currently living in bed and breakfast accommodation and support given to those children in allocated schools that were not within the locality of the bed and breakfast;
- (kk) the Autism Action Plan and how schools were monitoring the levels of the autistic spectrum;

Councillor Mrs Bowyer (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care), Carole Burgoyne MBE (Strategic Director for People), Rob Sainsbury (NEW Devon CCG), Ben Chilcott (NEW Devon CCG), David Northey (Head of Integrated Finance), Anna Coles (Strategic Co-operative Commissioning), Gary Walbridge (Strategic Co-operative Commissioning), Rob Sowden (Performance Advisor), Sarah Lees (Public Health Consultation), Councillor Ricketts (Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing Delivery), Matt Garrett (Head of Community Connections) provided an overview on health and adult social care and homelessness.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (ll) whether the commissioning plans meet the demands of an ageing population;
- (mm) the future of public health and how this service would be funded in the future;
- (nn) the impact of delayed transfers of care (DTC) on the council and the risks around not achieving DTC targets;
- (oo) whether there was a delay in people accessing mental health services and how the service was dealing with the increase in variety of mental health issues;
- (pp) understanding how many referrals under the Mental Capacity Act and the support services in place when released back home;
- (qq) being more resourceful on how services are to be delivered with less money and whether there was a Brexit plan in place;

- (rr) dementia diagnosis and whether there were enough specialist beds and nurses to care for people with more challenging behaviours;
- (ss) what was in place to monitor people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;
- (tt) the placement of young people in a house of multiple occupation and the safeguarding of those young people;
- (uu) an explanation of the overspend of £600k in this financial year and assurances on how this overspend would be reduced for future years;
- (vv) the number of homeless people within the city and whether there was any specialist provision for the homeless.

9. Recommendations

Agreed to recommend to Cabinet –

- (1) that the final budget report should explicitly state in plain language how and where the transformation of services is taking place and where services are being reduced;
- (2) that future budget reports should highlight the cost of budget engagement undertaken with the public and other stakeholders;
- (3) regarding business rates retention -
 - highlight within the budget how £1m of additional monies gained through the Business Rate Retention pilot will be used to support the delivery of the further growth of business rates;
 - within the budget or revised Medium Term Financial Strategy, confirm how authorities within the Devon Pool will be stimulating growth in business rates, highlight the role of the South West Devon Joint Local Plan and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership;
- (4) regarding the use of Section 106 funding -
 - the Committee notes the current financial difficulties of the local authority and request that Cabinet review the use of Section 106 monies in support of the revenue budget;
 - the budget report should include -

- a revised risk register which highlights the level of risk this action represents for the Council;
 - a statement on how this flexibility is being exploited across comparator authorities across the UK;
- (5) that Council lobby government for additional financial support to assist with the education pension legacy;
 - (6) that a wide review of the environmental impact of the Council is undertaken;
 - (7) that regarding the collection of council tax -
 - the Council should adopt a flexible approach, offering residents in financial difficulty affordable payment arrangements as an alternative to imposing a summons or referring a case to Bailiffs where a vulnerable person defaults;
 - that the use of Bailiffs should be approved on a case by case basis by the Portfolio Holder responsible and that this approval be granted on the basis of evidence that a debtor can pay but is unwilling to;
 - (8) that the total amount of investment in the Hoe Foreshore and surrounding area should be explicit within the budget report;
 - (9) that additional capacity should be built into the Capital Programme Schemes to provide flexibility if further work in support of the scheme is required;
 - (10) that the Cabinet should consider building a level of contingency into the budget to anticipate the results of the gully survey;
 - (11) that all service directors should have and maintain a service plan which should at a minimum include the resource requirements of the service, staff requirements, discretionary and non-discretionary activities, risks to delivery, savings, dependencies, performance indicators, policy changes, cost and volume data where applicable; scrutiny will not be undertaken without service plans in place;
 - (12) that the Council lobby for changes to the Education National Funding Formula to ensure a fair share for Plymouth;
 - (13) that performance indicators should be developed to measure the impact of collaborative working in support of the plan for education;

- (14) that the Plymouth Education Board should review how to support Children and Young People with lower level behavioural and attendance problems to prevent exclusion and the limiting of life chances;
- (15) that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to undertake a review of external spending within her budget with a view to realising further savings;
- (16) that the Cabinet should consider an enhanced capital programme which supports the development of further capacity in extra care and supporting living for vulnerable clients with Dementia and/or Autism;
- (17) that the Committee express its concerns on the long term use and level of agency staff.