

Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 27 June 2018

PRESENT:

Councillor Ball, in the Chair.

Councillor Winter, Vice Chair.

Councillors Darcy, Derrick, Hendy, Kelly, Smith, Kate Taylor and Vincent.

Apology for absence: Councillor Singh.

Also in attendance: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader), Ross Jago (Senior Panel and Partnership Advisor), Alan Knott (Policy and Intelligence Advisor), Paul Looby (Head of Financial Planning and Reporting), Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor) and Helen Prendergast (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 3pm and finished at 5.15 pm.

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.

1. To Note the Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillor Ball as Chair and Councillor Winter as Vice Chair for the forthcoming municipal year.

2. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the code of conduct, Councillor Darcy declared a personal interest (minute 7 refers) as he is an employee Devon and Cornwall Police.

3. Chair's Urgent Business

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

4. Terms of Reference

The Committee noted its Terms of Reference.

5. Corporate Finance Monitoring Report Q4 and Outturn

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader) and Paul Looby (Head of Financial Planning and Reporting) presented the financial outturn report for 2017/18.

The Council's gross revenue budget for 2017/18 was £514.145m which after allowing for income and grants was £183.883m; the financial outturn position before any adjustments was an overspend of £2.411m against the budget set in February 2017; following approval of the transfers to and from reserves and making use of capital receipts, a break-even position had been declared ie an outturn of £186.294m.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (a) the reasons why it had been more challenging in 2017/18 to achieve a balanced budget, as opposed to the previous financial years;
- (b) measures that the new administration would have implemented in 2017/18, in order to achieve the necessary savings whilst avoiding a deficit;
- (c) whether the use of Section 106 agreements to generate new resources and support the revenue budget would continue;
- (d) the risks, if any, associated with the 100% Business Rate Retention pilot scheme;
- (e) what measures could be put in place to address the negative effects of the budget, in particular issues relating to adult social care and the level of homelessness within the City.

Due to the financial implications for Plymouth, the Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that –

- (1) it writes to the Government seeking -
 - clarification on whether the 100% Business Rates Retention pilot scheme would be extended for a further year (2019/20), or whether it would end after one year;
 - an assurance that notification on the continuation or succession of the pilot scheme would be early in the autumn (October).

6. **Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Q4**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader) and Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor) presented the corporate performance monitoring report - quarter four (January – March 2018). The report highlighted the performance against the Corporate Plan and reflected the four priorities.

The activity report provided updates against each of the priority activities originally identified for the Corporate Plan and the four corporate priorities.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader) advised that the Corporate Plan 2018-22 would be revised to reflect the new administration's ambition for the City and the Council, take account of the progress that the Council had made and address new challenges that it faced.

A new approach to performance monitoring was being developed and would be available for the first quarter of 2018/19. A summary of progress for the Pledges would also be introduced which would include detailed tracking information.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (a) the process by which the new administration's 100 Pledges would be measured/analysed;
- (b) whether additional resources would be required to analyse the Pledges;
- (c) whether the scrutiny process would be able to add value when considering performance against the Pledges, if there were no quantifiable targets to measure against;
- (d) the need for staff to be clear on the expectations and targets required relating to the Pledges;
- (e) the timeframe for achieving the Pledges;
- (f) whether there were any plans to reduce the significant increase in the level of sickness;
- (g) what measures could be put in place to address the public's negative perception of congestion issues within the City;
- (h) whether challenging stretch targets should be included within the Corporate Plan rather than just aspirational targets.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees that they scrutinise the 100 Pledges relevant to their terms of reference.

7. **Work Programme**

The Committee agreed to include on its work programme the following items –

- (l) monthly finance monitoring reports;

- (2) debt recovery and enforcement;
- (3) Registrar Office;
- (4) parking (including CPZs, car parking spaces, legacy disabled spaces);
- (5) waste collection and disposal;
- (6) tree maintenance;
- (7) Customer Services (complaints/improve service delivery);
- (8) ICT/Delt;
- (9) Police/Community Safety;
- (10) bereavement services;
- (11) homelessness (Joint Select Committee Review).