

Select Committee Review

Wednesday 29 March 2017

PRESENT:

Councillor Bowie, in the Chair.

Councillor Ball, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Fletcher, James and Storer.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lowry

Also in attendance: Councillor Darcy (Cabinet Member for Finance/ ICT), Andrew Hardingham (Interim Joint Strategic Director for Transformation and Change), David Northey (Head of Integrated Finance), Paul Looby (Head of Financial Planning and Reporting), Ross Jago (Lead Officer) and Helen Rickman (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 4.35 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.

10. **Election of Vice Chair**

Agreed that Councillor Ball is appointed as Vice Chair.

Under this item Members agreed that the Budget Select Committee meetings in which the substantive agenda item was linked to wellbeing then Councillors Mrs Aspinall would Chair the meeting and Councillor James would be Vice Chair, and when the substantive agenda item related to place and corporate then Councillor Bowie would Chair the meeting and Councillor Ball would be Vice Chair.

11. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

12. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

13. **Select Committee Review: Budget Scrutiny**

Ross Jago (Lead Officer) advised Members that the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee Review was a different approach to budget scrutiny in which Councillors would have the opportunity to scrutinise the budget in 'bite-sized chunks' through a variety of meetings.

Councillor Darcy (Cabinet Member for Finance/ ICT), Andrew Hardingham (Interim Joint Strategic Director for Transformation and Change), David Northey (Head of Integrated Finance) and Paul Looby (Head of Financial Planning and Reporting) presented Members with the budget update report and associated information which highlighted the following key points:

- (a) Plymouth had set a robust budget for 2017/18, in response to the large reductions to Local Government funding, which looked to address the challenging demands of the city and its residents enabling Plymouth to continue to grow;
- (b) despite imposed austerity measures, Plymouth would continue to lobby Government specifically with regards to long term funding solutions for Adult Social Care (ASC). Plymouth City Council raised funding by increasing council tax to support this area however it was not considered a sustainable long term solution. The Council had received a £1.3m grant for ASC but this was a one off payment and would not be available after 2017/18 however the need for support would remain;
- (c) additional funding for adult social care was announced in the budget statement amounting to £11.3m over three years with 5.8 received in 2017/18; this funding would come with conditions however the Council would continue to work hard with health partners to assure the new resources were used effectively;
- (d) the Council welcomed the announcement of the Green Paper for wider reforms and for longer term sustainable funding options for Adult Social Care;
- (e) for 2017/18 Government had reduced Plymouth's core spending power by £2.2m to £184.1m. To calculate the 2017/18 revenue support grant, an assumption had been made by Government that the Council would increase its council tax by 2% resulting in a generation of £5.1m;
- (f) the revenue support grant had fallen by over £10m;
- (g) the New Homes Bonus had reduced however the threshold for growth had increased to 0.4%;
- (h) capital receipts were being utilised to support the capital programme;
- (i) the Council would be investing significant capital resources to support four key strategic outcomes including delivering Plymouth plan, generating income, maintaining council assets and transforming service delivery.

Key areas of questioning related to –

- (j) Adult Social Care Funding and details as to when and how this would be distributed;
- (k) the devolution of business rates to Local Government and the effect on the

Council;

- (l) the 'extended rights' programme for children aged 11-16, including free school meals, transport and credit;
- (m) the allocation of the Better Care Fund and how this would be shared with partners;
- (n) the necessity of the increase in Council Tax having regard for additional Government funding secured;
- (o) progress linked to the Sustainability Transformation Plan and pilot sites;
- (p) BID projects underway and those successful;
- (q) preparations for next year's budget including information surrounding the three year settlement and grant allocations.

The Chair thanked Councillor Darcy, Andrew Hardingham, David Northey and Paul Looby for their attendance at the meeting.

The Committee agreed

1. the Better Care Fund financial return would be provided to Members on a quarterly basis;
2. Members of the select committee would meet on an informal basis and agree a plan for scrutinising the budget prior to and in preparation for the next select committee review.

14. **Supporting Information**

Please refer to minute 13 above.

15. **Recommendations**

Please refer to minute 13 above.

This page is intentionally left blank