

Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

1pm, 23 April 2015

- 1 At its meeting on Monday 30 March 2015, the Performance & Finance Sub-Group reviewed the budget monitoring report for February 2015, as well as the detailed monitoring reports for the three areas within the Committee's remit: Business Services; Chief Executive's Office; and Central Income & Expenditure. The Sub-Group also considered the Quarter Three Business Report for 2014/15.

Quarter Three Business Report 2014/15

- 2 The Sub-Group noted that there had been some increases staff sickness in particular areas of the organisation, with a particular spike in July. The high absence figure for the Customer & Communities Directorate was due to Cultural Services, who traditionally have very low sickness rates, being moved into the Chief Executive's Office directorate. The Surrey Fire & Rescue Service and Contact Centre figures were included in Customer & Communities Directorate, and it was noted that there was a trend nationwide of higher absence rates in these areas. Overall, officers confirmed that the figures were broadly consistent with previous years, however would report back whether SF&RS and Contact Centre staff sickness had increased significantly within the last year.
- 3 With regards to the resident survey results, Members requested further detail regarding the decrease in satisfaction rates amongst residents who were served by SCC staff. It was noted that this figure (which had decreased in 2014/15 to 66% from 70%), represented views regarding service received from employees, rather than the outcome of the service. It was agreed that officers would report a summary of which services had suffered a loss of confidence in the resident survey at the next meeting of the Sub-Group.
- 4 It was noted that the target around 'repairing road defects' was rated 'red' in Q3, but expected to be 'green' by year-end. This was largely due to the relationship with the contractor charged with pothole repairs in the County and it was noted that two jet patchers had been engaged to ensure that the target was met by the end of Q4. It was clarified that the Public Health target was rated 'amber' due to falling short on certain nationally determined targets, such as health check completion. Members were not satisfied that the commentary for Adult Social Care Priority 5 (prepare for the implementation of the new Care Bill cap...) adequately explained how the prediction of a 'green' rating would be achieved at year-end. Officers would explore this in more detail and report back at the next meeting.
- 5 The Sub-Group noted that performance against Fire Service wait time targets was listed as 'Red'. Due to the critical nature of this target, there was no 'Amber' rating and anything that was less than 'Green' was listed as 'Red'. As a result, the Sub-Group recommended

That the Communities Select Committee seek assurance from the Cabinet Member regarding performance against this particular target.

- 6 The Sub-Group was critical of the format and layout of the current quarterly business report, stating that it was not easy to access for residents. Officers agreed and explained that a new interactive, online version would be launched for the following year's reporting. A progress update was requested on the launch of the new system, at a future meeting. One aspect of the new system that Members felt was particularly important, was that all services consistently updated it as a matter of routine – and not just when there was 'good news' to report.

Budget Monitoring

The Sub-Group reviewed the budget monitoring report to the end of month 11 for Business Services, Chief Executive's Office and Central Income & Expenditure. It was noted that there was an underspend of £0.6m forecast within Business Services, £1.5m within Chief Executive's Office and a balanced budget within Central Income & Expenditure.

- 7 Members noted from the papers that the position appeared to be slightly better than expected at budget decision time. For example, less interest payable (by £2.6m), overstatement of creditors (£1.8m), relocation allowances lower (£0.4m), better than expected 2014/15 MTFP savings in adults and other services. It was recognised that some underspend needed to be carried forward, however, Members thought it would be useful to view a list of unanticipated improvements and how these had been allocated to various pots of money, post-budget to determine whether a recommendation could be made around redistributing some of these savings to front line services such as Children's Centres and Youth Services. It was therefore agreed, that the following recommendation would be made to Cabinet:

That

Cabinet consider whether the Council could use any of the small improvements to the Council's budgetary position that were unanticipated when it set the budget, to mitigate some of the savings in children's centres and youth services

8. There was some discussion at the Sub-Group meeting about recent comments regarding spend on the Magna Carta celebrations at Full Council. The Sub-Group recommended

That

- 1. A full breakdown of the costings of the 2015 Magna Carta celebrations be shared with the Sub-Group and Chairman of the Communities Select Committee.**

9. In addition, the Sub-Group requested further information, including a breakdown on overspend on redundancy cases during the 2014/15 period. This would be provided to the Sub-Group at the next meeting.

Nick Skellett
Chairman of the Performance & Finance Sub-Group