

OVERVIEW & BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item under consideration: REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2018/19 to 2020/21

Date Considered: 26 January 2018

- 1 At its meeting on 26 January 2018 the Overview & Budget Scrutiny Committee considered the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2018/19 to 2020/21. Chairmen of the Select Committees also attended the meeting to provide input on specific service budgets and savings.
- 2 The Committee noted the challenging situation facing this council and the sector as a whole and therefore recommends a need for an increase in the pace of change to ensure services can continue to meet the needs of residents and save money.
- 3 Members did raise concerns about the level of reserves now held by the Council and how and when these could be replenished.
- 4 The Committee reviewed the transformation projects outlined in the reports and emphasised the need for both service specific and cross-cutting initiatives at the Council and in partnership with other organisations to help realise a sustainable budget.
- 5 The Chairman suggested to the Leader that a Cabinet Member should have responsibility for the achievement of the transformation projects with a similar responsibility created at officer level.
- 6 The Committee wished to commend Finance for their efforts in providing such a comprehensive and detailed report ahead of the Cabinet and Council meetings to allow for sufficient scrutiny of the proposals.
- 7 The Committee agreed the following recommendations:

Corporate Services Select Committee

- a) There should be a clear five-year strategy in place to deliver savings through improved energy efficiency across the whole of the Council's estate, including an awareness campaign to influence staff behaviour in relation to lighting and heating, replacement of existing lighting with LED bulbs, installation of passive infrared detectors, and effective management of energy contracts.
- b) The Select Committee was informed that relatively little of the existing £4.2M invest-to-save reserve had been used to date to deliver the savings so far in Orbis. Consideration should be given to whether the objectives of Orbis could be achieved without spending all of the allocated reserve, allowing this money to be used to reduce the budget shortfall in 2018/2019.
- c) The Audit & Governance Committee to be asked to review the existing procurement governance arrangements, to ensure that contracts are implemented in a timely manner and managed in an efficient and cost-effective way.

- d) Additional resources to be provided in Property Services to enable a separation between those officers supporting maintenance of the Council's existing property portfolio and those identifying new opportunities for investments which support modern service delivery: this will ensure that projects in other services which will achieve savings and/or relieve service pressure can be progressed in a more timely manner.
- e) The policy of using capital investment to achieve revenue savings by bringing services back in-house (for example SEN and extra care housing) should be prioritised.

Adults and Health Select Committee

- f) The Council to work with healthcare partners to reduce the number of disputed Continuing Healthcare Cases particularly those that are not with Surrey's six CCGs, to enable resources spent on administering these cases can be put back into the frontline.
- g) Increased priority to be given to the provision of Extra Care services, in order to achieve a significant improvement in the level of delivery.
- h) The Adult Social Care Directorate develop robust digital and assistive technology strategies in order to reduce demand on the service in the short and medium term.
- i) Proposals to increase charges for the provision of adult social care services to be supported; this to be done in a sustainable way to ensure that it doesn't lead to more individuals being unable to pay for the costs of their care.
- j) Cabinet continues to argue the case for fairer funding with Central Government in respect of Surrey's Public Health allocation.
- k) The Council moves towards a targeted approach to the delivery of Public Health services to ensure that they reach those most in need of support.
- l) Cabinet remains alert to the Council being too liberal in its interpretation of those initiatives that can be shadowed funded through the Public Health budget and is alert to the danger of the shadow-funding target leading to money being taken out of Public Health that would be better spent on the delivery of services actively commissioned by Public Health.
- m) Officers investigate opportunities for collaborating with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in the planning and delivery of services commissioned by Public Health.

Communities Select Committee

- n) Encourages the Library Service to progress its development of community supported libraries.
- o) Recommends that the Library Service undertakes appropriate public consultation regarding future changes to libraries in early 2018.
- p) Recommends that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service investigates using a portion of its overtime budget to employ permanent, full-time staff to mitigate risks related staff resilience.

- q) Encourages a more proactive approach to collaborating with East and West Sussex fire authorities as detailed in Surrey Fire & Rescue Service's Public Safety Plan to deliver on potential savings that can be achieved through effective collaboration.

Cross Service

- r) A Cabinet Member is given responsibility for the delivery of the transformation projects outlined in the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2018/19 to 2020/21 complemented by a similar role for a specific Officer.
- s) The Council's travel policy to be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure that it supports the aim of minimising costs by:
- Influencing staff behaviour (for example, encouraging the use of video conferencing, discouraging unnecessary travel and identifying whether lower cost alternatives are available), and
 - Encouraging services to review operational arrangements (for example the frequency and level of attendance by fire crews in response to automatic alarms).

Scrutiny Next Steps:

- 8 The Budget-Sub Group continues to regularly monitor the Council's budget identifying priority areas for scrutiny and undertaking in depth investigative work as necessary.
- 9 Additional to the above, the Budget Sub-Group further investigate the costs and benefits of the council developing a range of in-house residential services for children and adults that require social care to reduce the amount of spend on external providers and report back to this Committee with their findings as agreed in November 2017.
- 10 Select Committees to undertake reviews of the fees & charges schedules and savings plans in their remits in order to comment on these plans and the overall direction set by the Cabinet prior to the adoption of a refreshed Medium Term Financial Plan. These findings will be communicated to Cabinet on 27 March 2017 by the Overview & Budget Scrutiny Committee.

Kay Hammond
Chairman of the Overview & Budget Scrutiny Committee

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