

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 13 December 2018 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.20 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Emily Smith
Councillor Liam Walker
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor (In place of Councillor Mike Fox-Davies)
Councillor Les Sibley (In place of Councillor Michael Waine)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Lorna Baxter, Director for Finance; Katie Read, Senior Policy Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Secretary

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	Ben Threadgold, Policy and Performance Service Manager
6	Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services; Lara Patel, Deputy Director for Safeguarding; David Clarke, Deputy Director for Education; Kate Terroni, Director for Adult Services; Benedict Leigh, Deputy Director; Bev Hindle, Strategic Director for Communities; Simon Furlong, Director for Community Safety; Philip Dart, Interim Transformation Programme Director.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and schedule are attached to the signed Minutes.

69/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Mike Fox-Davies (Councillor Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor substituting), Councillor Michael Waine (Councillor Les Sibley substituting) and Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive.

70/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE ON BACK PAGE OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

71/18 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting on 8 November 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.

72/18 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

A request to speak on Item 6 was received from Councillor Laura Price. It was agreed to take this at the start of the item.

73/18 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2 2018-19

(Agenda No. 5)

Ben Threadgold introduced the report and highlighted the indicators that had changed from the last quarter as indicated in paragraphs 4 and 5.

The following points were raised by Members to consider for future reports:

- Separate out figures for paper and plastic recycling;
- Find better indicators for “Air Quality”, “Level of Connectivity” and “People play an active part in their communities”;
- Provide more information on the data that backs up the indicators;
- Include the date of the latest agreed budget as well as a comparison to the original budget.
- Highlight how effective the extra expenditure on highways has been.

74/18 SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING 2019/20 - 2022/23

(Agenda No. 6)

Councillor Laura Price asked the Committee to consider three issues in particular:

- The reduction in the Mental Health budget for working-age adults and the possible knock-on effects on adult and children’s social care and homelessness. The

sector is already under huge pressure and this £1m saving could be a tipping point.

- There is concern that the proposed reassessments of care packages will not deliver the predicted savings and could be very disruptive creating costs elsewhere.
- There is not enough information for Members on the new model for children's services.

Lorna Baxter gave a presentation introducing the report. At the time of the meeting the Provision Local Government Finance Settlement had not been received but it was not expected to contain any major surprises.

Directors and other officers responded to points raised by Members as follows:

- A consultation paper on a proposed new formula for local government finance is expected soon but the outcome will not be known until December 2019 and it will come into effect from April 2020. It is difficult to predict the outcome at this stage or to predict the effect on services.
- The Council's reserves are currently £69m. The current net pressure of £8.1m in 2019/20 is anticipated to be met in part by the use of reserves and/or balances, but the outcome of the settlement and the final information from district councils as well as the review of charges are still required.

Children's Services

- When the Council opened new residential assessment centres demand was relatively low but it has increased exponentially. However, the edge of care service has an 83% success rate at avoiding children becoming Looked After Children.
- It will take time to address the shortage of placements in the South East region.
- Officers are working with the market to provide increased capacity and a good price.
- The Council's fostering offer is under review with a view to develop an improved support package. The numbers placed in foster care are steady but demand is increasing.
- Five of the savings under Children's Social Care are red rated under deliverability because of the stage we are at – still working on a new model which needs to be evidence-based.
- A 9% increase in demand is factored into the MTFP – this is a mid point prediction as demand has risen by 20% this year.
- Any children placed in Oxfordshire by other Local Authorities are placed with external providers.
- A Cabinet Advisory Group is looking at SEN Home to School Transport to try to identify savings through different ways of working. Officers from Highways are involved in exploring options.

Adult Services

- Reassessments of the need for care and the right provision to meet this are worked out with the people and their families. There are examples where changes were made that suited the user better, saved the Council money and freed up resources to assist others.

- Healthwatch are conducting a review of the changes in daytime support which will include talking to people who have stopped using services. The independent review will go to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February.
- There are benefits from the pooled budgets with Health in which the money is joined around the individual but it needs to be monitored closely.
- More block purchasing of beds provides more certainty for providers, which can be financially beneficial for them, and this means buying groups of beds can cost less than buying individual beds for the Council. Current users will not be moved as a result of this change.
- Mental health services for adults of working-age were not affected by savings made in previous years because of the council's commitment to mental health. The same savings need to be made now as were made in other sectors. There will be an impact on individuals but this is proportionate to the impact on other vulnerable people.
- Officers will work with providers and users to design savings. The most vulnerable will continue to be protected.
- There is some concern that roles can become blurred in integrated teams and there is a need to make sure that staff are engaged in social care tasks.

Communities

- With regard to the Housing and Growth Deal, some revenue costs can be charged to capital programmes as long as they relate to the creation of an asset.
- Councils also negotiated with Government that there would be money for revenue costs of infrastructure schemes especially in the early stage.
- With regard to affordable homes, it is in the agreement that Councils will be repaid costs relating to sites started by the end of December.
- The Council benefits in various ways from the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership. For example, the Council had been spending £1m a year on its development budget but that is now £0.25m because the LEP carries most of that responsibility.
- The financial impact of the Carillion recovery plan is still not known but will emerge in 2019/20.

Corporate measures

- The possibility of developing joint services between the County Council and Cherwell District Council in the Law and Governance area is being examined and may become a prototype for other areas of work.
- The original savings target for the transformation programme still applies but they have been taken out of the position set out in this report (reference 20CM4). A report to Cabinet in January will detail how the first two years of the programme will be funded and proposed savings targets and this will be based on better information.
- The expected overspend on high needs SEND in 2018/19 is currently forecast as £8m. Whilst the Department for Education recognise this cost should not fall on the Council and a plan to recover the position must be produced, the overspend being carried forward needs to be managed. As there is a significant risk that the overspend cannot be managed, an element has been included as a pressure in the contingency budget (reference 20CM2).

- The Schools Forum and schools have been asked to support transferring 0.5% of the School Block funding to the High Needs block but have refused.
- Regarding income generation, there will be a review of charges in January and further proposals are being worked up. It is intended that services should recover whole costs and inflation.

The Chairman thanked all the officers for their contributions to the budget process and stated that she will report the concerns raised to the Cabinet.

75/18 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda No. 7)

The following changes to the work programme were agreed:

Recycling Rates moved from March to May
Growth Board added to May

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 20