

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Meeting held 28 January 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Cate McDonald (Chair), Steve Ayriss, John Booker, Tony Damms, Pat Midgley, Chris Rosling-Josephs, Sarah Jane Smalley, Geoff Smith and Ian Auckland (Substitute Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Alston (with Councillor Ian Auckland attending as he duly appointed substitute), and Denise Fox.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 25th November 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25th November 2015, were approved as a correct record.

4.2 10th December 2015

The minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 10th December 2015, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, it was reported that (a) the Chair had written to Mr Hartley, providing responses to the questions he raised at the meeting and (b) the notes drafted by the Policy and Improvement Officer, in consultation with the Chair, on the discussion held at the meeting, on Sheffield City Region's Proposed Devolution Agreement, had been circulated to Members of the Committee, and were attached to the minutes.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted from members of the public.

6. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT

- 6.1 The Interim Executive Director, Resources, submitted a report providing the Month 6 Monitoring Statement on the City Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2015/16.
- 6.2 Dave Phillips, Interim Director of Finance, introduced the report, referring to the overview report, which contained details on the movements in the budget since Month 3, a graph showing monthly trends in terms of Months 3 to 6, levels of variance, risks and the decision of the Cabinet, on the Month 6 Monitoring Statement, at its meeting held on 9th December 2015.
- 6.3 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-
- Whilst there had been some success in terms of reduction in expenditure on legal fees within the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio, further work was being undertaken, specifically in terms of prevention and, which included work in connection with the Strengthening Families Programme, in the hope of reducing such costs further. The main aim of this work was to reduce placements and fostering, by enabling more children to remain in their own homes. A bi-product should be a reduction in legal costs.
 - Considerable efforts were being made to negotiate further reductions with regard to the Council's larger, long-term contracts, such as Streets Ahead and waste and recycling. Whilst there had been some success, it was acknowledged that further reductions were required, and the Council would continue to negotiate with the companies involved.
 - The slippage in terms of the Capital Programme had been identified as an issue and as a result of this, there had been a considerable amount of work undertaken to review the Council's processes, with particular attempts being made to try and link it in more with the Council's priorities.
 - The amount of £382,000 had been showing as a forecast overspend for Policy, Performance and Communications, was primarily due to a delay in the advertising contract, resulting in an underachievement of income. The contract negotiations had now been completed and the first income arising from the contract was expected within the next few weeks.
 - The in-year reduction in Central Government funding for the Public Health contract had meant that reductions in various areas had had to be made in-year. An example of this was smoking cessation, where the increased popularity of e-cigarettes had meant that reduced funding had been possible.

- The majority of the Public Health projects listed in the report, were City-wide, although some were focused on those communities in the City, having specific needs.
- The Council would continue to chase up residents/tenants in respect of rent and Council Tax arrears. The recent changes to welfare benefits had put extra financial pressures on some residents, which made it more difficult for the Council in terms of collecting arrears. The Council would focus its efforts on targeting those people it considered were able to pay, and deal with those having financial difficulties more sensitively. Whilst it was considered that adequate progress in terms of the collection of arrears was being made, it was considered that the introduction of Universal Credit would have a major impact on people's finances.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, the information now reported and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Dave Phillips for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests the Interim Executive Director, Resources, to:-
 - (i) circulate details of the information requested, which was not available at the meeting, to members of the Committee; and
 - (ii) attend a future meeting of the Committee, in 2017, as part of a more in-depth scrutiny exercise with regard to the Capital Programme.

7. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE

7.1 James Henderson, Director of Policy, Performance and Communication, gave a presentation providing an overview of Council performance in respect of the period Quarter 2 2015/16. Also in attendance for this item was Andi Walshaw, Performance and Research Manager.

7.2 Mr Henderson reported on the new Performance Management Framework, Key Performance Indicators and performance review in respect of the 5 key Council Priorities – In-Touch Organisation, Better Health And Wellbeing, Tackling Inequalities, Strong Economy and Thriving Neighbourhoods and Communities.

7.3 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- Whilst there was a considerable amount of detailed data in terms of the Workforce Opinion Survey, a lot of it was not available at the meeting, therefore further details would be circulated to members of the Committee.
- It was not possible to be certain about the reasons for the decline in the average score for the statement 'The work I do is valued' in the Workforce Opinion Survey. However, it was noted that the Director of Resources was leading a piece of work around employee engagement and organisational values, with the aim of helping to improve the score for this statement.
- More detailed information on the reasons for sickness absence could be made available. Stress and mental health issues were now the largest causes for staff absenteeism in the Council.
- The targets in respect of better health and wellbeing were measured by using a sample of responses from a national adult social care user survey. It was noted that the information did not provide officers with the reasons as to why the users had responded as they had.

7.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the presentation now provided, together with the information now reported and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks James Henderson and Andi Walshaw for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests (i) the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications to circulate the information requested, and which was not available at the meeting, to members of the Committee and (ii) that arrangements be made for the Committee to undertake a more in-depth scrutiny exercise, focussing on the In-Touch Organisation and Tackling Inequalities aspects specifically.

8. SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - WORK PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

8.1 The Policy and Improvement Officers submitted a report providing an overview of scrutiny work, attaching the draft Work Programmes of the four Scrutiny and Policy Development Committees.

8.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments

now made; and

- (b) requests that Members contact the relevant Chairs of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committees to raise any suggestions in terms of joint scrutiny exercises.

9. MATTHEW BORLAND

9.1 The Chair reported that Matthew Borland, Policy and Improvement Officer, was attending his last meeting of the Committee, as he would be starting a new job at the University of Sheffield on 15th February 2016.

9.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee places on record its thanks and appreciation for the excellent work undertaken by Mr Borland, whilst in the post of Policy and Improvement Officer during the last two years.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 17th February 2016, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.