

**BUDGET AND
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

6.10 P.M.

9TH SEPTEMBER 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors Tony Anderson (Chairman), Dave Brookes (Vice-Chairman), Chris Coates, Janet Hall, Richard Newman-Thompson, Elizabeth Scott and Keith Sowden

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Alycia James and Susan Sykes

Also in attendance:-

Councillors Eileen Blamire and Abbott Bryning, Cabinet Members (Invited for minutes 10 & 11)

Officers in attendance:-

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| Andrew Clarke | Financial Services Manager |
| Stephen Metcalfe | Principal Democratic Support Officer |

7 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 22nd July 2014 were signed as a correct record.

8 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

9 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

10 PROVISIONAL REVENUE, CAPITAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2013/14

The Financial Services Manager presented a report that provided summary information regarding the provisional outturn for 2013/14. It set out information regarding the carry forward of revenue budgets and capital slippage for Members' consideration. It also incorporated the treasury management outturn report and related matters.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option considered by Cabinet, were set out in the report as follows:

The City Council had a legal requirement to ensure that its expenditure was fully funded and to have regard to proper accounting practice. In addition, the Prudential Indicators were a statutory requirement linked to the budgetary framework. For these aspects, therefore, there were no alternative options for Cabinet to consider. Cabinet had been

asked to endorse certain actions taken by the Chief Officer (Resources), and Cabinet should therefore consider whether it had sufficient information to do so, or whether it required any further justification.

The report had requested Cabinet to consider a number of capital slippage items and Reserve transfers. The framework for considering these was set out in the report but basically Cabinet had been asked:

- Approve any number of the items / requests, in full or part.
- Refuse any number of the requests and if commitments have already been incurred, require alternative funding options to be identified. Cabinet should note, however, that this may impact on other areas of service delivery.
- Request further information regarding them, if appropriate.

On the assumption that the City Council continued to support its previously approved spending plans, then the Officer preferred options were to approve the capital slippage requests, as set out in Appendix G to the report, require no carry forward of the overspendings as set out in Appendix E to the report and approve the various transfers and use of Reserves as set out in the body of the report.

Although the City Council's General Fund budget and the associated Government funding reduced again in 2013/14, it continued to manage the financial pressure well, and had again improved its financial standing as at 31st March 2014. This had been achieved by narrowing down the breadth of service provision and reducing the number of employees both of which have had an impact on service delivery. Balances for both General Fund and the HRA were higher than forecast, and the City Council had other substantial earmarked further reserves to help respond to the tough financial challenges expected over the coming years, in shaping and delivering against future corporate priorities.

The resolutions of Cabinet with regard to this matter were submitted as an Appendix to the report for Members information.

Members went on to ask a number of questions relating to such issues as Icelandic investments, provisions and variances, the standard and maintenance of the council housing stock, universal credit and welfare reforms.

The Panel requested that information regarding welfare reforms and the number of council properties that will be provided with bathroom/kitchen refurbishments be reported to the next meeting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That information regarding welfare reforms and the number of council properties that will be provided with bathroom/kitchen refurbishments be reported to the next meeting.

11 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2014/15

The Financial Services Manager presented a report that informed of the corporate financial monitoring report and other supporting statements for Quarter 1 of the 2014/15 performance monitoring cycle. No corporate performance report was presented although it was noted that reporting would restart for Quarter 2.

The Corporate Financial Monitoring report included sections on General Fund Revenue Monitoring, General Fund Capital Programme, Revenue Collection Performance, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Provisions and Reserves and Contract Procedure Rules and Other Exceptions to Tender. The latest position with regard to Treasury Management activities was included as well as a quarterly update regarding the property portfolio.

The Panel asked a number of questions regarding borrowing, long term savings and the number of voids and repair issues.

After considering the report the Panel requested a briefing note regarding the reasons for the increase in council housing void properties in the last quarter.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That a briefing note be requested from the appropriate officer regarding the reasons for the increase in council housing void properties in the last quarter.

12 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Principal Democratic Support Officer submitted a report to update members on the Panel's Work Programme. Members were asked to consider whether they would like to include any further items in the Work Programme.

The Panel was advised that the following items had been included within its Work Programme:

- Financial Monitoring;
- Corporate Performance Monitoring;
- The Annual Stakeholders Meeting;
- Budget Overspends/Variiances.

With regard to the Marmot Review Members were advised that a Member briefing would be held on 8th October 2014 commencing at 2.00 p.m.

It was noted that Members were being notified electronically when the list of forthcoming key decisions was published and paper copies had been placed in the Members' distribution.

A briefing note upon the draft Procurement Strategy had previously been circulated as requested at the last meeting of the Panel in order to share information on expected procurement developments. Members requested that a report upon this issue be provided at the November meeting and that the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder be invited to attend the meeting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That a report be provided at the next meeting of the Panel regarding the draft Procurement Strategy and that the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder be invited to attend the meeting.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.45 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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