

Overview Select Committee (OSC) Finance Task Group

Minutes of Meeting held on 4th December 2017

Present

Cllr Baljit Singh, Chair of Task Group
Cllr Ratilal Govind, Vice-Chair
Cllr Jean Khote
Cllr Virginia Cleaver
Cllr Diane Cank
Cllr Malcolm Unsworth
Cllr Inderjit Gugnani
Alison Greenhill, Director of Finance
Amy Oliver, Chief Accountant

Apologies

Cllr Lynn Moore
Cllr Ross Grant
Cllr Nigel Porter
Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

1. Revenue Budget Monitoring Period 6 – 2017/18

- 1.1 Cllr Singh noted the key issues highlighted at the front of the report in relation to Adult Social Care and Children's Services.
- 1.2 Members discussed the continued pressures faced by Adult Social Care from increasing costs in relation to existing service users and the effect of the living wage. Members recognised the achievement of the department in finding one-off savings earlier than planned in very difficult circumstances.
- 1.3 Members discussed the pressures faced by Children's Services and noted the rise in the number of looked after children from 660 at the end of March to 688 at the end of September. Members noted the use of reserves in 2017/18 to meet the anticipated £1.3m pressure on placement costs.
- 1.4 Members were pleased to hear of the success of the Multi –Systemic Therapy teams and that a further team was being introduced. Members discussed the importance of trying to break cycles and of work with families to prevent children ending up in care.
- 1.5 A discussion took place regarding the rise in numbers of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (paragraph 14.7) and the pressure this put on the SEN transport budget. Members asked for more detail in relation to the SEN transport budget and numbers of children.

- 1.6 Members discussed the £2m spending review target for Sports Services. Alison Greenhill confirmed there had been a consultation looking at ways to improve the Council's leisure centres and to encourage people to use them through proposed investment. The results of the consultation will be considered by scrutiny in January.
- 1.7 Members discussed the work completed by the Council in relation to sexual health, and asked for more information on preventative work conducted, and of the diversity of the workforce.

2. Mid-Year Review of Treasury Management Activities 2017/18

- 2.1 Cllr Singh introduced the mid-year treasury report.
- 2.2 Alison Greenhill confirmed there was nothing significant to report and that no new borrowing had been undertaken so far in the year.

3. Income Collection April 2017 – September 2017

- 3.1 Cllr Singh introduced the report, noting Council Tax & NNDR collection was in line with previous years.
- 3.2 Cllr Singh highlighted the current level of Housing Benefit Overpayment debt (£17.9m, as shown in paragraph 2.2). Members discussed the various reasons why people receive benefit overpayments. Alison Greenhill confirmed the Council had stringent controls in place, in line with Government requirements, to ensure people who receive Housing Benefits are entitled to these sums. However, she noted the process relies heavily on those receiving Housing Benefits to notify the Council of any changes in their circumstances.
- 3.3 Members raised concerns that when Leicester goes on to full Universal Credit, we will struggle to recover Housing Benefit Overpayments from claimants' ongoing benefit if they have 3 or more attachments. Alison Greenhill confirmed she was petitioning Government on this matter.
- 3.4 Members requested further detail on the number of fines for each bus enforcement area and the total revenue raised.

4. Capital Budget Monitoring Period 6, 2017/18

- 4.1 Cllr Singh introduced the Capital Monitoring report, and noted OSC will be asked to make any observations it sees fit, including in respect of the two decisions detailed in the report. Questions regarding individual projects can be asked of the Mayor at the meeting.

