

CORPORATE AND EXTERNAL ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 24TH NOVEMBER, 2014

Present – Councillors I. Ibrahim (Chairman), Sherrington (Vice-Chairman), Ayub, Bury, Cox, Critchley, Darvesh, Evans, Greenhalgh, Hayes, Iqbal, Rushton and Watters.

Also in attendance

Councillor Morris	-	Executive Cabinet Member Leader's Portfolio
Councillor Adia	-	Executive Cabinet Member Regeneration and Resources Portfolio
Councillor Lewis	-	Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Inclusion
Councillor Zaman	-	Cabinet Member for Development and Regeneration
Mr. K. Davies	-	Director of Development and Regeneration
Ms. L. Ridsdale	-	Assistant Director People, Policy and Communications
Ms. S. Johnson	-	Borough Treasurer
Ms. H. Gorman	-	Borough Solicitor
Mrs. J. Pollard	-	Head of Strategic Finance and Accountancy
Mrs. V. Ridge	-	Deputy Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Parkinson and the Chief Executive.

Councillor I. Ibrahim in the Chair.

22. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6th October, 2014 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

23. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2014/2015

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which outlined the proposed work programme for 2014/2015.

Resolved – That the proposed Work Programme for 2014/2015 be approved.

24. FINANCIAL FORECAST AND BUDGET PROCESS 2015-2017

The Chief Executive submitted a report which outlined the Financial Forecast for the next two years, including the projected requirement for savings of up to £43 million by 2016/2017, together with the proposed strategy for delivering this budget as a basis for consultation.

The report outlined the following:-

- The context for the Council's Policy and Budget for 2015-2017;
- Strategic proposals for meeting the financial and policy context; and
- The detailed process for consultation with the public, trade unions and staff;

and was structured as follows:-

Section 2 set out the context for the budget and described the Council's strategic priorities, which would continue to be pursued throughout the budget period;

Section 3 provided the financial forecast and the detail behind a projected savings requirement of £43 million over 2015-2017. It explained the projected reductions in government grants of £31 million; forecast increased costs of £18 million but offset by additional income of £5.5 million;

Section 4 outlined the Council's budget strategy to deliver the savings required. It described the basis for approving a two year budget; set out potential funding streams,

including Council tax income, which would mitigate the scale of savings required and proposed savings targets for each department;

Section 5 described the proposed strategic measures to deliver the budget savings, including further service reductions and efficiencies across all services; centralised and streamlined support services; a new customer contact strategy; alternative service delivery models; public service reform and a redefined relationship with the community;

Section 6 referred to the Council's capital programme and the requirement for one-off investment, in order to both drive economic growth and mitigate revenue reductions; and

Section 7 summarised the potential, high level impact of these reductions on staff and provided the Council's ongoing workforce strategy.

Members were reminded that in view of the scale of reductions required/anticipated, it had already been agreed that a 2 year budget should be developed. This was considered vital for strategic planning and helped ensure that the Council had a realistic chance to deliver the greater proportion of the £43 million savings by April, 2016. However, it was anticipated that even producing a two year budget would require significant use of one-off reserves to balance the budgets in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. The delivery of the budget on a staggered basis over the two year period would, however, allow sufficient flexibility to suspend savings activity if the financial position improved over the budget period.

The allocation of overall savings targets across corporate and departmental services had been undertaken using a similar set of criteria to previous budget rounds, as follows:-

- That as much as possible should be found from reductions in management and administration and from further efficiency measures;

- That the most vulnerable should be protected and lower levels of savings found from children's and adults social care services;
- That targeting should take place to protect services to individuals and areas in greatest need and deprivation; and
- That given the reductions taken so far from front-line universal services such as green space provision (i.e. grass cutting and street cleansing), these services should be protected from further service reductions if possible, although further efficiencies and non-front line reductions would be necessary.

On this basis the specific level of reductions from each corporate or departmental area were as follows:-

- Corporate - £15.9 – 17.9 million
- Adult Social Care - £6.25 – 7.75 million
- Children's - £2.5 – 3.5 million
- Development and Regeneration - £2.3 – 2.5 million
- Environment - £5.3 – 6.3 million
- Chief Executive's - £2.25 million
- Cross-cutting- £4 – 5 million.

The Council was intending to commence formal consultation immediately on the overall budget proposals with a view to reporting back to Council in February, 2015. Consultation would include:-

- Formal consultation with the Trades Unions through the SLJCC and subsequent Corporate Employee Relations Meetings, supported by DJCC's, for the duration of the consultation period;
- A detailed explanation of the overall budget position and allocation of savings in the next issue of Scene, to be distributed to every household in November. Scene would also be used to explain to people how they could feed in their views to the consultation;
- Development of a public consultation survey which would be posted on-line and also posted to 10,000 targeted households;

- An organised briefing event for the public which would be held in December, 2014 to explain the budget and the options put forward and to seek people's views;
- Target presentations/discussions with specific groups such as the Third Sector Forum, Business Ratepayers, schools and other groups as appropriate; and
- A comprehensive communications campaign for staff to ensure every employee understood the proposals and how to feed in during consultation. This would involve a letter to every member of staff from the Chief Executive, a special edition of the staff magazine, Bob and briefing sessions held by Directors in each department.

The Council would also pilot a Community Engagement Fund which would provide a small, fixed term investment to community partners in return for leveraging a greater level of capacity to improve the local area. The Council had allocated £500,000 for this exercise, which would be shared across as many partners as possible to enable the start-up and/or delivery of creative ideas that would contribute to a long term solution to the demand pressures on local public services.

It was explained that the fund would be piloted within areas related to the environment and youth services in the first instance, across the clean, green and safe priorities with the specific objectives of:-

- Reducing demand for Council services and/or
- Making improvements to the environment;
- Provision for Young People.

Bids would be sought from organisations which could demonstrate that they could multiply the value of the investment to achieve the strategic objectives as described.

The report also provided the detailed individual budget options and associated staffing impact, together with the delivery capacity and resources requirements.

It was stressed that the proposals had been developed alongside a continuing commitment to a set of values as an employer which involved seeking to mitigate the impact of the worst aspects of the budget reductions on the Council's workforce whilst remaining a best practice employer.

The report had been considered and approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on 10th November, 2014

Resolved – That the report be noted.

25. UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY GREATER MANCHESTER WASTE DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

Councillor Sherrington declared an interest in this item as she was one of the Council's representatives on the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority. She left the meeting as a member of the Committee to allow her to be scrutinised by the Committee in her role as the Council's representative on the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority.

Mr. J. Bland, Treasurer and Deputy Clerk of the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA), together with Councillor Sherrington, gave a presentation to members which outlined the activities currently being undertaken by the GMWDA particularly in relation to Bolton.

Information was provided in relation to the following areas, viz:-

- The work undertaken by the GMWDA over the last twelve months;
- The targets set for 2014/2015;
- The key challenges;
- Performance information in relation to recycling between 2008/2009 and 2013/2014;
- Performance information in relation to Household Waste Recycling Centres between 2008/2009 and 2013/2014; and
- Bolton's recycling projections (including Trade Waste) for 2015/2016 to 2017/2018.

Councillor Sherrington also addressed the Committee and put forward her views and comments on the work being undertaken by the GMWDA.

Following the presentation, a number of questions/comments were made:-

- The need to have uniformity across all Councils in relation to recycling bins;
- The work being undertaken with manufacturers in relation to recycling;
- What further work needed to be undertaken to improve the target rate;
- Was there a weight limit on bins; and
- What plans were in place to expand the types of plastics which could be recycled.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

26. UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

Resolved – That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

27. DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT – CURRENT POSITION AND QUARTER ONE 2014/2015

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report which gave a current overview of the big issues and performance information for the Development and Regeneration Department, including Housing Services, and Bolton Community Leisure Trust and provided the 2014/2015 internal departmental Quarter 1 position.

The report provided information in relation to the following:-

- A summary of progress made against the major strategic priorities for which the Development and Regeneration Department was responsible for within the Council;

- A summary of progress made against the operational priorities which the Department fulfilled, as a provider of a number of front line and support services; and
- Conclusions and key messages.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

28. AGMA BUSINESS SUMMARY REPORT

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which set out the appointments made by the Council to the various joint authorities and also gave a summary of the business considered at the authority meetings.

Members were reminded that part of the remit of this Scrutiny Committee was to monitor and review and, where appropriate, make recommendations regarding the work of outside organisations. The report focused on one aspect of this, in terms of the added value by the AGMA bodies, including AGMA Executive Board, The Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority and Transport for Greater Manchester Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

29. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) The Executive Cabinet Member Leader's Portfolio held on 13th October, 2014;
- (b) The Executive Cabinet Member Regeneration and Resources Portfolio held on 13th October and 10th November, 2014;
- (c) The Cabinet held on 20th October and 10th November, 2014; and

- (d) Corporate Resources, Strategy and Budget Policy Development Group held on 5th November, 2014.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 p.m. and finished at 6.15 p.m.)

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