



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2014
12.30 pm

<u>Item</u>
<b>7</b>
<u>Public</u>

## **Scrutiny of the delivery of the Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2014/15: Summary of the feedback from the Scrutiny Committees**

### **Summary**

This paper presents Cabinet with a summary of the feedback from the Scrutiny Committees following their consideration of progress in delivering the Council's Business Plan and Financial Strategy during 2014/15.

### **Recommendation**

- A. That Cabinet (and Directors) consider the feedback from the Scrutiny Committees and take it into account in the revision and any refocusing of the Business Plan and Financial Strategy.

## **REPORT**

### **3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 3.1 There are a wide range of risks associated with failure to deliver the Business Plan and the Financial Strategy. These range from the Council not being able to balance its budget, through to potential risk to service users and vulnerable people as service change.
- 3.2 Through completing their work programmes and specific consideration of the progress in delivering them, the Scrutiny Committees aim to help reduce the level of risk and support their management.

### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The delivery of the Business Plan is directly linked to the delivery of the Council's Financial Strategy. Although this report does not have any direct financial implications, the work of the Scrutiny Committees will include making recommendations that may have financial implications if accepted.

## **5. Overall summary of feedback from the Scrutiny Committees**

5.1 Following detailed consideration of progress in delivering the Business Plan and Financial Strategy by each of the Scrutiny Committees, the following points were summarised and agreed by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee. The summary of the feedback from each Scrutiny Committee are set out in Appendix 1.

- There is general satisfaction with the levels of savings identified as achieved and expected to be achieved, [based on the most recent reports and data available].
- Members expressed caution at the use of one-off savings to deliver the 2014/15 savings, recognising the implications for finding additional savings in future years to achieve on-going budgets.
- Members recognise that salami slicing from budgets is no longer possible and endorse the redesign of services. Specific mention was made about the need for a radical redesign of Transport.
- Areas of concern that were highlighted by Members include
  - Increasing demand on Children’s Social Care Services (especially Looked After Children) and Adult Social Care
  - Implications for the Council arising from national legislative changes such as the Care Act.

5.2 There was also a minority recommendation:

- We are concerned that given the new zero based budget we still have a number of red areas identified where savings have not been found, plus that one off savings are being found and used by the Council.
- We were disappointed that only one Cabinet member was in attendance for the scrutiny of the Council’s Business Plan and Financial Strategy.

## **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The Scrutiny Committee work programmes are directly linked to the Councils Business Plan. The Committees work both proactively to support and inform change, and they also work to understand the impact of change on communities and people who use the services.

6.2 The process of reviewing the progress with the Business Plan and Financial Strategy has identified further work programme topics. Therefore, although the Scrutiny Committees take a view of overall progress at specific points during the year, they are always looking at and contributing to the delivery of the Business Plan and Financial Strategy, and holding the decision makers to account.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

- Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2014 – 2017 (Council – 27 February 2014)
- Q1 Performance Report (Cabinet – 15 October 2014)
- Q1 Financial Strategy Report (Cabinet 30 July 2014)
- Q2 Revenue Monitor Report (Cabinet – 15 October 2014)
- Outcome Performance Dashboards – (Performance Management Scrutiny Committee – 5 November 2014, and subsequently at all Scrutiny Committees)

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

All

**Local Member**

All

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Summary of feedback from Scrutiny Committees

## Appendix 1

### Summary of feedback from individual committees

#### Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee

- Areas of interest presented to the Committee included Economic Growth, Public Protection, Transport and Housing. The majority of savings for 2014/15 were confirmed as attainable (green) by Finance, with 2015/16 rated as green-amber, and 2016/17 rated amber-red.
- Savings from Housing have been made in 2014/5, but will be more challenging in 2015/16 and 2016/17.
- Members sought confirmation that savings from the Tourist Economy would not result in a diminished service, and voiced their interest and support for the work on Economic Growth and that it should be a priority in the 2015/16 refresh of the Business Plan.
- Members also drew attention to the important of identifying, avoiding and managing unintended consequences arising from changes in one area affecting another, or on the ability to deliver planned savings.
- Questions were also raised in terms of levels of consultation about the closure of buildings and services.

#### Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee

- The overall good progress in delivering the savings during 2014/15 that fall within the remit of the Committee was noted.
- Members recognised that a greater proportion of savings marked for delivery in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were rated as amber and red,
- Waste (including the Veolia Contract renegotiation) and the redesign of culture and leisure services including Libraries, the Serco Contract, Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre were highlighted by the Members as being of particular interest and priority for 2015/16 onwards.

Additional Work Programme items identified:

- Libraries – visit to Craven Arms
- Condition of Highways
- Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre
- Part-night lighting (12 months on)

#### Young People's Scrutiny Committee

##### Children's Safeguarding and Social Care

- The Committee recognised the on going challenges related to increasing demand and the cost of Looked After Children (LAC), and the progress during the year with the majority of 2014/15 savings secure.
- The three areas of focus: Early Help, Child Protection Thresholds, and LAC, had seen development, but that savings identified for 2014/15 would not all be realised during the year and would be added to the 2015/16 savings.
- 2015/16 areas of focus build on work started in 2014/15 such as redesigning internal residential resources and re-commissioning residential contracts, and

also includes developing targeted early help for adults and children, integrating how services are provided and aiming to improve accessibility, and a multiagency response for child sexual exploitation.

### Learning and Skills

- The majority of 2014/05 savings are expected to be delivered with the significant focus of the work has involved redesigning and reshaping services to reflect the changing role of the Council and meet future demands.
- Preparing to deliver Education Improvement, Education Access and 14-19 teams and traded services through Inspire to Learn; transitioning into ip&e.
- National reforms with new statutory functions for Special Education Needs (SEND) have been met by redesigning roles, responsibilities and ways of working across the 0-25 age range. These reforms will continue in 2015/16.

### **Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee**

- A backdrop of changing demand and legislative developments such as the Care Act were recognised as challenges by the Committee.
- Nationally specified initiatives such as the Better Care Fund also provide the Council with opportunities to develop closer working with GPs and Health, which will help with designing and implementing new ways of working to help people remain independent for longer, and different models of support when they do require funded services.
- A significant area of work during the year that has made good progress was the introduction of the New Operating Model (NOM) for Adult Social Care which involves a new type of conversation with people contacting the Council about Adult Social Care and seeks to get them the right information, advice, support or service as quickly as possible.
- All contracts are being considered to identify potential for review with providers. This includes the Quality in Community Services (QuICS) PFI contracts, where the Council is trying to get assurance from the Department of Health that the PFI credits the Council receives will not be reduced should the contract change. To date this hasn't been forthcoming, which is impacting on delivering the related savings.
- Perhaps the biggest challenge for Adult Social Care (and the wider Council), will be meeting the changes and implications of the Care Act which is being introduced over the coming 24 months. There is likely to be more people who will look to the Council for information, advice, support or services and the Council is working to be able to respond to this.
- There are also key areas of work taking place including Children and Young People's services, Health and Housing to develop and implement integrated models through the Resilient Communities work.

### **Performance Management Scrutiny Committee**

- The role of Resources and Support Directorate was recognised as fulfilling a key role in enabling the Council to change and deliver its Business Plan and the Financial Strategy.

- The challenges in delivering the plans for Accommodation Plans for the Council were raised. The Committee are planning to meet with the Accommodation Group and understand the new Accommodation Strategy.
- It was recognised that it will be important for the Council to maximise the opportunities to generate income/revenue from its capital assets, especially in light of the reported and expected further reductions in funding expected beyond the current Comprehensive Spending Review period and in the new Government.
- The Committee's work programme includes understanding How the Council is enabling Mobile and Flexible working, which is expected to take a full view across a range of the services and support provided across the Council.