

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 30th October 2013
Report of: Joint Report of the Executive Member for Finance and the Director of Finance

Report Title

Executive Response to Budget Scrutiny – Update

Summary

As part of the formulation of the 2013/14 budget the Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Executive proposals and made a number of observations and recommendations.

The Executive responded to the Committee's findings in February 2013.

The draft budget for 2014/15 is currently being constructed and is expected to be considered by the Executive on 18 November. This will be reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Council's constitution. As part of the preparation for this task an update on last year's recommendations is attached for information.

The Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider this information as part of their planning for the forthcoming scrutiny of the 2014/15 budget proposals.

Recommendation(s)

Members consider how this information may help towards the scrutiny of the 2014/15 budget proposals.



Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Ian Duncan
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Background Papers: None

ACTIONS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS – Update 2013/14

Ref	Recommendation	Planned Action in Response to Recommendations	Update October 2013/14
1	That the Executive provide Scrutiny Committee with details of any long-term monitoring and evaluation work undertaken in respect of significant budget changes and policy choices in relation to services for children and young people.	<p>CYPS routinely monitors service developments and policy choices through its performance management framework which includes the quarterly reporting to Council Executive of progress against the Annual Delivery Plan.</p> <p>In addition it is proposed to provide an update directly to Scrutiny Committee on a 6 monthly basis covering outcomes for children and young people in Trafford in the context of health, social care, and education. This will allow scrutiny to develop an informed view of the impact any budget changes and policy choices are having on the lives of Trafford children and young people.</p>	First six month review (ie April to Sept 2013) will be available for Scrutiny by 8/11/13
2	That the Executive closely monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposed increase in the use of volunteers to deliver services such	Using volunteers has proved successful in both Hale (27) and Old Trafford (12) libraries. There has been no impact on service delivery as sufficient staff have been retained to support	Since the budget proposals were approved there have been 130 applications have been received. Over 70 Volunteers are now

	as those in Children's Centres and Youth Services.	<p>volunteers and deliver other Council services. Should the budget proposals be approved this approach will be extended to all libraries over the next 2 years</p> <p>A strategic approach to volunteering in CYPS is a key objective within the Directorate Improvement Plan and monitored on quarterly basis. The main areas of activity relate to Children's Centres and Youth Services and an update will be provided to Scrutiny Committee on a 6 monthly basis as referenced above.</p>	<p>trained and supporting staff in all libraries across Trafford.</p> <p>First six month review (ie April to Sept 2013) will be available for Scrutiny by 8/11/13</p>
3	That the financial effect of the proposed transition to a more outreach-based approach be rigorously monitored, given its potential to bring to light previously unforeseen need.	CYPS is in the process of implementing its Early Intervention Strategy with outreach based approaches as a key aspect of that strategy. We will regularly monitor service demand, and the impact that has on capacity and budget planning, through our existing finance and performance management regime.	Monitoring continues as part of Directorate and Corporate management regime
4	That the Executive provide the merger action plan, and whatever details of proposed structures are currently available for the merged CYPS and CWB Directorates, for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.	<p>The high level project plan and proposed management structure are embedded below. A link to the detailed project plan is available from Deborah Brownlee on request.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">   </div> <p>New management structure.ppt Transition Plan.doc</p>	Plan provided at the time as requested
5	That, in relation to the proposed re-tendering exercises for services such as Supporting People and Public Health, the Executive provide Scrutiny with assurances that	The re-tender of services will meet the commissioning and procurement requirements which reflect both quality and general efficiencies. The Council subsequently is assured that services subject to tender request	Action complete Assurances were provided as requested

	tendering models and contract monitoring are robustly designed to protect quality, standards and volume of services specified, and not specifically (DB 26/11) to reduce tender prices.	value for money whilst encouraging potential service providers to be creative in the delivery of the service to customers in Trafford. The monitoring applied to services following an award of the contract is robust based on an embedded market management approach.	
6	That the Executive provide for Scrutiny further analysis of the proposed savings within Supporting People, Housing Services (Proposal CWB16), and in particular of the acknowledged "significant reduction in service provision".	<p>A full market review of supporting people services was carried out prior to the proposals being formulated. Providers and other stakeholders were fully involved in the review. The social inclusion housing services element of the review was led by Richard Roe the Council's Strategic Housing Manager, this ensured that the review focused on how best to maintain and improve essential statutory housing services. The review provided the evidence base from which the savings proposals were developed. The full market review is available if further information is required. A comprehensive impact assessment is being prepared and will be completed on the 14th Jan, this will provide further analysis and will identify possible impacts and how these will be mitigated. The detailed proposals are:</p> <p>Short stay supported accommodation We propose that there would be a new single service providing short stay supported accommodation. We would tender for this new service. We could reduce costs by £129,000 from April 2013.</p>	Action complete Further analysis provided as requested

		<p>Floating support service We propose to review the floating support service funded through Supporting People We could reduce costs by £135,000 from April 2013 and £35,000 from April 2014.</p> <p>Services for victims of domestic violence We propose to re-tender the service. The new service would begin in April 2013. We could reduce costs by £10,000 from April 2013.</p> <p>Sheltered housing We propose to end the Supporting People contribution towards the scheme manager role at sheltered housing from April 2013. We could reduce costs by £338,000 from April 2013.</p> <p>Community Alarm Service (Category One) We propose to continue contributing to the community alarm service for Category One and sheltered properties throughout 2013/14. This contribution will end from April 2014. The community alarm service at both sheltered housing and Category One will be integrated into the telecare service. Access to the service would be linked to a needs assessment completed by adult social care, rather than type of accommodation. We could reduce costs by £231,000 from April 2014.</p>	
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7	<p>That the Executive give further consideration to the potential impact of proposed savings in Information and Advice Services, particularly in view of the nature of the wider financial climate and envisaged demand increases arising from various aspects of welfare reform proposals.</p>	<p>The Information and Advice Review is based on a partnership approach to the future development of information and advice services in Trafford. This collaborative approach enhances the opportunity to determine how services can be delivered in a more efficient way, whilst at the same time respond to the anticipated demand increases arising from various aspects of the welfare reform proposals in the near future. The partner organisations have responded in an extremely positive way to date and are presenting innovative and creative options for consideration as part of the review process. The review will report in January.</p>	<p>Action complete Further consideration was given Full review report was produced in January and briefings provided to key portfolio and shadow portfolio members</p>

8	That the Executive assure itself about the deliverability of savings associated with the HR staffing review.	<p>The savings are deliverable albeit that they will have an impact on Managers who will have to be equipped to deal effectively with first level disciplinary, sickness, grievance type issues. HR staff will only have the capacity to support serious cases. Training will be restricted to statutory/mandatory and will be delivered primarily from the AGMA hub contract. Workforce development will be prioritised to support the changing shape of the organisation and the pace and level of change required. Opportunities to generate income could be impacted by these further reductions, this needs to be balanced against the benefits of additional income supporting the retention of staff. The impact of changes will be monitored.</p>	<p>Significant training has been undertaken and continues in respect of training managers to take on first line response to disciplinary/sickness issues. The level of change in the organisation does cause a strain on resources and capacity is at its absolute maximum in terms of the Business Partner/Workforce side of the service. The shared service is also feeling capacity issues but improvements in technology and processes will allow further savings to be made here. In addition we now have a firmer understanding of the training requirements of the organisation and if we prioritise 'mandatory' training, again this is an area that will support the savings targets identified.</p>
9	That the Executive ensure that it has the capacity to identify and deliver transformational change programmes including ensuring that the benefits associated with cross authority working are realised.	<p>The final proposed structure for the Transformation Team presents a reduction of 10 FTE (including 2 vacancies). However, the LTA project will conclude in the Spring of 2013, releasing 4 FTE to undertake alternative transformation project activity. In addition, the programme of activity for the Transformation Team will continue to be approved/monitored by the Transformation Board and prioritised to ensure the resources in the team are utilised to the best effect to achieve the change and benefits realisation needed. To support this,</p>	<p>Following the 2013/14 budget consultation, the Transformation Team establishment was reduced from 27 FTE to 17 FTE, including 2 vacancies. Staff have since left the team and they have not been replaced on a like for like basis, in order to proactively manage and account for the need to reduce the team further in the 2014/15 budget consultation process. Of the 17FTE in the current</p>

		<p>director level representatives from each directorate will be guiding the review & development of the Transformation Programme for 2013/14 to ensure the team is deployed most effectively, in consideration of their support requirements and priorities.</p>	<p>establishment, 13 permanent staff are in post with 2 temp staff employed until 31/12/13. The programme continues to be monitored by the Transformation Board and the Transformation, Performance and Resources (TPR) group. Activity so far this year has focussed on the Corporate Landlord project, development of the New Organisational Model, delivery of the Customer Strategy and associated CRM project and supporting the ETO and Information & Advice reviews.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>That whatever the response to the consultation on the future of library provision, the Executive undertake to maximise, wherever possible, availability of IT access in libraries for the Borough's residents.</p>	<p>Providing public access to the internet through the Peoples Network is a statutory requirement and we provide 30 minutes free access per day in all libraries. This is supported by Age UK providing formal training in some libraries and staff supporting residents who want to use the internet or access Council services on-line. Library staff are currently helping residents without internet access to apply for the energy switching scheme.</p>	<p>The People's Network (PN) continues to be a popular and vital service for Trafford residents. To support the work of Trafford's Poverty Response Team extra free time will be offered to customers who need to use the PN computers to complete job applications and welfare benefits. In addition printing of those documents will be offered at half the normal price. Library staff and partners continue to support those people who need training on IT and associated functions. Work is underway to provide WiFi</p>

			<p>in all Trafford libraries and to update the People's Network computers to ensure they are operating the latest software. Access to Pay Day loan sites via the People's Network have been blocked to ensure vulnerable residents are not tempted to take out loans. This has been replicated in many other councils across the North West</p>
11	<p>That the Executive ensure that impact of the savings associated with the dissolution of the Mersey Valley Partnership are fully identified and review whether the proposals are manageable given the time constraints.</p>	<p>The Mersey Valley Partnership funding does not pay for any maintenance provided by Manchester City Council.</p> <p>The maintenance of the Mersey Valley is based on historical knowledge and is of a reactive nature. A small team of Trafford Council employees carry this work whilst monitoring the space.</p> <p>We will continue to work cohesively with all stakeholders to maintain the spirit of collaboration. There are a number of proposals being currently considered to manage the space in the future. These will be shared with Members when they are finalised.</p>	<p>The only impact of the savings was the closure of the Mersey Valley Visitor's centre however the toilets and café remain open.</p> <p>The Trafford Countryside Management Partnership is now operating across the Mersey Valley and has had its first board meeting. The initial focus is on Sale Waterpark as this was identified as the priority area for intervention. Physical improvement work has started with the probation service engaged in undertaking regular tasks within the Valley. A workshop has also been held with other third sector organisations to start the process of understanding the issues and opportunities for community</p>

			engagement. The changes in management model have been delivered within the time constraints.
12	That the Executive should ensure that its approach to the collection of food waste and the level of savings expected from the change in approach to its collection is realistic and achievable.	<p>The approach to food waste collections was detailed in the Executive report dated 26th November and the supplemental report of the same date. It is based on the following collection pattern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Bin – the green bin for food and garden waste is currently collected every fortnight and this will change to a weekly collection. • Grey Bin – the grey bin for general refuse is currently collected every week and this will change to a fortnightly collection. • All properties will be provided with a 7 litre kitchen caddy and a roll of compostable liners to assist residents in recycling their food waste. <p>While the above collection service will be available to all properties, there are a number of bespoke arrangements for particular property types and household circumstance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terraced properties – if they are unsuitable for a green bin e.g. due to space limitations, will be provided 	<p>Trafford Council deliver recycling and refuse collected from households to Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA) and pay for this via a levy. Trafford Council's levy for 2013/14 was set based on the expected tonnages of material collected on the new weekly food waste collection service which results in the £1.1million savings. Progress against the tonnages and savings is monitored on a monthly basis by GMWDA and regular updates are provided to Trafford Council about the impact on the levy. The most recent update to the end of July 2013, shows that Trafford Council is on target to achieve the savings through increasing the amount of waste recycled and diverting more waste from disposal.</p>

		<p>with a 23 litre outdoor caddy in place of a green bin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apartments/Flats - Communal green bins will be provided to all apartment/flat complexes prior to the commencement of the weekly food waste collection service. • Large Families - Families with five or more permanent residents in the property will be entitled to a larger 240L grey bin. • Residents with medical conditions - Residents who have medical conditions causing them to generate waste which cannot be recycled will be entitled to a larger 240L grey bin. <p>The financial savings have been established based on experience from Stockport Council of operating the same frequency of food/garden and non-recyclable waste collections as are being outlined in this proposal. The Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority has estimated that 50% of the typical grey bin in Trafford is organic (food/garden) waste. The Council currently collects approximately 38,000 tonnes of waste in the grey bin and from this proposal it is estimated that the tonnage will reduce by 9700 tonnes. These tonnage figures, along with tonnage data for the existing waste collection service have been sent to the Waste Disposal Authority and the difference between the 'as is' service and the</p>	
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		proposal for weekly food/garden and fortnightly non-recyclable waste is the basis for the savings proposal of over £1 million per annum put forward.	
13	That the Executive provide further details on the impact of the new initiative in respect of parks maintenance, in particular, whether differential standards would apply to different parks, or within different areas of parks.	<p>The current proposed changes within the Groundforce Structure are focused on improving productivity by 15% and better deployment of our workforce and resources.</p> <p>It is being proposed that the Groundforce workforce is reduced by 10 posts. As Ground force covers both parks and street cleaning officers are confident that this proposal can be mitigated by more efficient delivery.</p> <p>This will deliver improved cost effective outcomes that will enable us to meet on our savings target whilst ensuring that our current standards are maintained in within our Green spaces in the 2013/2014 programme.</p> <p>A small number of parks are maintained to Green flag standard.</p> <p>Our initiative does not seek to reduce standards that our customers experience though there will be some operational changes to ensure cost effective and coherent delivery.</p>	A reduction in 7 post was completed. The shortfall against the target has now been built in to the 2013/14 budget monitoring process and will be delivered through the current consultation on Groundforce working practices, which will reduce the overtime and number of vehicles and plant, whilst retaining service standards.
14	That Executive provide assurance that the streetscene in Trafford Park will be maintained to ensure that it remains an attractive area to all businesses in the area. They should	<p>We will continue to maintain the Street scene within Trafford Park to the agreed standards that we currently operate to.</p> <p>Following the recent transfer of the</p>	The new proposals to change the way we are dealing with a range of environmental issues across the Borough, rely upon much

	<p>also ensure that their approach to ensuring this should involve the use of all available methods including, where possible planning and enforcement functions.</p>	<p>enforcement function to ETO, Groundforce and other functions within the business are working more closely to establish synergies that will lead to more cost effective outcomes.</p> <p>This approach will enable the reduction of fly tipping and other anti-social activities across the borough.</p>	<p>greater engagement with the public and partners through a larger and wider network of employees, partner agencies and local groups with the aim to change behaviour and encourage social responsibility. This will continue to maintain street scene standards in Trafford Park.</p>
<p>Additional</p>	<p>During the Scrutiny process there were questions raised about the new financial arrangements for sharing gains and losses arising from business rates.</p>	<p>[No recommendations were made in the Scrutiny report]</p>	<p>The Valuation Office Agency has provided an update on the level of appeals as at 30 September 2013, showing for the last quarter that the amount outstanding has reduced from £156m to £150m. However, since April 2013 £26m of appeals have been 'closed' but £27m of new appeals have been added to the list. Analysis of this data is being evaluated and at this stage it is too early to provide an accurate position.</p> <p>It is expected that the cost of settled appeals in the future will be significant and this is compounded with the level of backdated payments. Potentially the Council could be in a position of triggering the DCLG 'safety</p>

			net' this year. This is still under evaluation and will form part of the considerations for the 2014/15 budget.
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