

# Public Document Pack



## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

### AGENDA PAPERS FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 5 February 2014

Time: 6.30 pm

Place: Committee Rooms 2 & 3, Trafford Town Hall,  
Talbot Road, Stretford M32 0TH

AGENDA	PART I	Pages
1. ATTENDANCES		
To note attendances, including Officers, and any apologies for absence.		
2. MINUTES		1 - 4
To receive and, if so determined, to agree as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2013.		
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
Members to give notice of any interest and the nature of that interest relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct.		
4. BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT		5 - 16
To receive and note the Budget Scrutiny Report for 2014-15, presented to the Executive Committee Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2014.		
The Executive's formal response will be incorporated into the Budget Executive Meeting in February 2014.		
5. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE ON PROGRESS		To Follow
To receive a report from the Executive Member for Economic Growth and Prosperity on the Council's progress in supporting Town Centres within the Borough.		

**6. CHILDRENS SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2012-13**

17 - 24

To receive a report of the Corporate Director of Children, Families and Wellbeing.

**7. UPDATE ON TOPIC GROUPS**

To receive an oral update from the Topic Group Chairmen on the progress of the reviews undertaken by the Topic Groups.

**8. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)**

Any other item or items (not likely to disclose "exempt information") which, by reason of special circumstances (to be specified), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

**9. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION (REMAINING ITEMS)**

Motion (Which may be amended as Members think fit):

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, because of the likelihood of disclosure of "exempt information" which falls within one or more descriptive category or categories of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and specified on the agenda item or report relating to each such item respectively.

TRAILER

**THERESA GRANT**

Chief Executive

Membership of the Committee

Councillors B. Shaw (Chairman), M. Cordingley (Vice-Chairman), S. Adshead, R. Bowker, C. Candish, R Chilton, Mrs. P. Dixon, A. Duffield, D. Higgins, J.R. Reilly, D. Western and J. Lloyd (ex-Officio)

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact:

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This agenda was issued on **Tuesday, 28 January 2014** by the Legal and Democratic Services Section, Trafford Council, Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford M32 0TH.

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2013

### PRESENT

Councillor B. Shaw (in the Chair).

Councillors M. Cordingley (Vice-Chairman), S. Adshead, R. Bowker, C. Candish, R Chilton, Mrs. P. Dixon, A. Duffield and J. Lloyd (ex-Officio)

#### Also in attendance

J.M.J. Maloney - Senior Democratic Services Officer  
S. Frost - Democratic Services Officer

### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Higgins, J.R. Reilly and D. Western

### 61. ATTENDANCES

### 62. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

### 64. DOMESTIC ABUSE - TRAFFORD'S APPROACH TO PREVENTING AND TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Committee received for information a report of the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, setting out the details of a refreshed approach based on an enhanced strategic approach and partnership working in the context of the Committee's earlier review of Domestic Violence Services. The report was welcomed by the Committee, not least because its underlying principles clearly reflected those advocated in the previous Scrutiny Review of Domestic Violence.

It was noted that historically funding in this area had been non-recurrent and grant based; and further information was therefore requested with regard to the security and mainstreaming from 2014/15 and onwards, for the funding streams as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted and welcomed.
- (2) That a letter should be sent to the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, seeking assurance in relation to future funding for domestic abuse services.

- (3) That monitoring of the progress of the Domestic Violence Services be incorporated in the Scrutiny Work programme for 2014/15 and beyond.

**65. UPDATE ON LOCALISED SCHEME FOR COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS**

The Committee received an updated report from the Executive Member for Finance setting out the progress in implementing the localised scheme for Council Tax Benefits. Trafford's Local Council Tax Support Scheme was approved by full Council in January 2013, and rolled out to all new and existing (Council Tax Benefit) claims from April 2013. The report provided the Committee with progress to date including: caseload changes, expenditure, Council Tax collection and recovery, and the new discretionary fund.

Discussions followed and the Committee agreed that the Citizens Advice Bureau should be contacted to seek their views on the impact of their caseload and any increase in residents seeking advice as a result of the changes. Concern was expressed that the applications to the discretionary Council Tax Fund was relatively low, the Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to monitor the number of applications at a future date, in case this suggested that the criteria for applying for the new discretionary fund needed to be revisited.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report be noted and welcomed.
- (2) That the Citizens Advice Bureau be contacted to seek their views on any increase of residents seeking advice as a result of the changes.
- (3) That the Committee will review progress at a suitable future date with regards to the number of applications made to the discretionary Council Tax Fund, and any implications for its application criteria.

**66. UPDATE FROM TOPIC GROUPS, INCLUDING BUDGET SCRUTINY**

On behalf of the Cycling Topic Group, Councillor Chilton advised the Committee of progress to date, including responses to relevant information from stakeholders. It was noted that meetings of the topic group would be resumed after the Budget Scrutiny Meetings had been completed. He also briefed the Committee that a meeting of the Secondary School Sufficiency Topic Group had taken place. Scrutiny Members had submitted a letter in response to the proposed consultation with recommendations and a request to have a further meeting with the Executive Member and Corporate Director to update on progress after completion of the consultation exercise.

Councillor Cordingley introduced discussions on the Budget Scrutiny, noting that it could be helpful for consideration to be given to changing the format of scrutinising the budget following its implementation rather than in advance. It was noted that

**Scrutiny Committee**  
**11 December 2013**

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the timing of the exercise which was challenging, for a number of reasons, and resulted in Scrutiny being undertaken in what was unavoidably a provisional context. The Committee agreed that Trafford's Budget Report was an important project to be scrutinised, but reviewing the outcome of services where specific changes had been implemented should be given more attention and would add value to the scrutiny input

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the updates be noted.
- (2) That in due course Councillor Chilton's Topic Group review the post-consultation scheme in the light of consultation responses to the Secondary School Sufficiency consultation.
- (3) That further discussion take place on potential re-modelling of the Budget Scrutiny process, with attention being placed on what the scrutiny process aims to achieve, and the availability of adequate information to secure this.

The meeting commenced at 5.45 pm and finished at 6.45 pm

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## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 27 January 2014  
**Report for:** Consideration  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee

### Report Title

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE'S DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2014-15**

### Summary

The Executive's Draft Budget Proposals for 2014/15 were agreed at its meeting held on 18 November. Directorate-based Scrutiny Topic Groups then held a series of preparatory meetings, to determine issues to be explored in greater detail in workshops held during December with relevant Executive Members and senior officers. This report reflects the outcome of those discussions and summarises issues for the Executive's further consideration and response.

### Recommendation(s)

**That the Executive consider and respond to the report and recommendations made.**

### Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: J.M.J. Maloney, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Extension: 4298

Background Papers: None

## **Budget Scrutiny 2014/15**

### **Foreword by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee**

Budget Scrutiny 2014/15 has been a challenge for, and made significant demands on, all those involved. On behalf of Scrutiny Members, we would like to thank the Executive, Corporate Management Team, Finance officers, Scrutiny Councillors and Co-opted Members for their patience throughout.

We welcome the Executive's decision to consult widely on its budget proposals, and the opportunity for Scrutiny to review and comment on them at an early stage.

Members have acknowledged that the Council continues to work within an increasingly challenging financial climate; and it is recognised that significant elements of proposals for 2014/15 were prefigured in the Executive's decisions taken in respect of the 2013/14 budget round. The focus of Scrutiny input this year has been on the robustness and deliverability of the current proposals in the light of experience to date, and the potential impact on significant groups of service users.

We and our Scrutiny colleagues have welcomed the serious commitment of the Executive to responding to our enquiries this year; and have been appreciative of the positive engagement with the process, and of the thoroughness of the responses we have received.

In this light the following report details the observations and recommendations remaining after Scrutiny Members held workshops with Executive Members and senior officers in December 2013. The nature of the process described above has resulted in what may be a smaller number of specific comments than in some previous years. This should not, however, be seen as lessening Members' concerns that the budget proposals should be robust and their impacts mitigated where possible. We hope that our Budget Scrutiny has contributed to these objectives, and we look forward to receiving the observations of the Executive accordingly.

**Councillors Brian Shaw and Mike Cordingley**  
Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Scrutiny Committee.  
10 January 2014



## **Background:**

This year the approach to budget scrutiny was agreed by Scrutiny Committee, with a rigorous programme designed to forward any recommendations / observations to the Executive at the earliest opportunity in response to its consultation.

The process built on improvements agreed in the previous year, giving Scrutiny Members an enhanced opportunity for involvement and therefore promoting the Member-led approach, which is increasingly characterising all Scrutiny activity, in budget scrutiny.

The four Scrutiny Topic Groups each took on responsibility for a broad service area (CWB Adults, CWB Children, ETO / EGP combined, and T&R), and Scrutiny Members agreed to participate in the process according to their particular areas of interest.

Each topic group held a preliminary meeting to identify those aspects of the respective Directorates' budgets which Members wished to review in more detail. This formed the agenda to be taken forward to the subsequent workshops with Executive Members and senior officers. This was supplemented by a range of additional, more tightly-focussed questions, for which written responses were requested, and received, in advance of the Topic Group workshops.

As a result of developing a focussed agenda, which was shared with the Executive and Corporate Directors in advance of the meetings, the budget scrutiny workshops were able to receive effectively informed responses to their questions. This both enhanced Members' appreciation of the budget-setting environment and promoted a robust challenge to the Executive in explaining and defending the budget proposals.

## **General Observations:**

As set out in the Foreword, there was a broad welcome from Scrutiny Members for the commitment and engagement shown by the Executive to the Budget Scrutiny process. Responses received were, in the main, thorough, comprehensive and focussed on Members' enquiries. In certain areas there was a notable improvement compared to Members' experience in scrutinising the budget proposals for 2013/14.

A particular prominent and constant theme emerged throughout all of the Topic Groups. This related to the fact that many of the proposals were not directly linked to specific, readily identifiable cuts / reductions, but based on further extending / expanding different ways of working, which had already delivered savings in the previous year. Members did express some concerns over the extent to which the "direction of travel" robustly supported future savings estimates, and the extent to which delivery of further savings would be as readily deliverable once the earlier, and in some cases easier, targets had been achieved. In Members' view, this does make it more difficult to evaluate the robustness and the impact of such proposals; and in consequence Members are minded to devote some resource to reviewing the impact of the budget proposals during the year to which they relate.

The remainder of this report covers the Directorate-specific issues and comments which remained following the Topic Group workshops held during December 2013.

## **Service Specific Issues / Observations**

### **Children Families and Wellbeing: Adults' Services**

#### **Foreword by Topic Group Chairman – Councillor John Holden**

“The role of scrutiny has been described as that of a ‘critical friend’ and it was with this in mind that we approached our activities this year. We sought to present a robust but fair challenge where concerns could be addressed and understood. The process of preparing a budget is long and labour intensive. It is therefore to be welcomed that the officers and executive members involved engaged so seriously and openly with the scrutiny process. The process has been developing over a number of years now, and it is clear that the process is progressing in quality from year to year.

The main body of this report sets out our impressions and findings and it is not my intention to repeat them in this introduction. I would, however, like to stress one area of concern that emerged from the process.

The nature of the service means that it is inevitably ‘demand led’ and many parts of the budget will be based upon the best possible estimates of activity levels through the coming years. Many areas of the budget were characterised, very honestly, as best estimates. The interdependence of new approaches and the savings they will deliver is to be expected, but in the case of this service the amounts are uncomfortably large. While there is no intention to question the achievability of the required savings, it was felt that the level of risk did suggest that an enhanced degree of scrutiny throughout the year should be offered as part of the overview process.”

The agenda set by the Topic Group included (N.B. (D) denotes discussion item, (W) denotes Written Response submitted.) :

1. Learning Disabilities – Retendering of Schemes / Cost of Placements (D)
2. Learning Disabilities – Personal Budgets for Transport (D)
3. Enhanced Reablement Offer (D)
4. Enhanced Telecare Offer (D)
5. Market Management – All Services (D)
6. Running Costs / Inflation – All Services (D)
7. Personalisation Agenda – All Services (W)
8. Children’s / Adults’ Commissioning Integration (W)
9. Mental Health – Personal Budgets (W)
10. Running Costs – Ascot House (W)
11. Efficiencies – Advice and Information (W)
12. Efficiencies – Shared Functions: Council and Public Health (W)
13. Complex Needs – Placement Budgets (W)
14. Ending External Provision of Day Centres (W)
15. Replacement of Carers’ Services Contract with Personal Budgets (W)
16. New Service Plan – Supporting People (W)

### 1. Learning Disabilities – Personal Budgets for Transport (CWBA11)

Members were advised that the proposed savings were deliverable. However, it was noted that a large saving was proposed (£200k), in an area potentially affecting a particularly vulnerable service user group. The saving was contingent on the development of a policy for assessment, and it was acknowledged in the report that significant input would be required to deliver the envisaged change. In this light, Members expressed concerns about both potential delivery risk to these savings, and the potential impact, both on the budget and service users, were this risk not to be avoided. The Group would therefore welcome any further evidence to demonstrate the achievability of the proposals.

### 2. Enhanced Reablement Offer (CWBA14) and Enhanced Telecare Offer (CWBA15)

The combined savings across these two areas amount to a very significant sum of not far short of £1M. Members clearly appreciate the benefits, in terms of independence and quality of life, which can accrue from the reablement and telecare approaches, and are supportive of continued investment in these areas. They did, however, raise a number of concerns. The scale of savings involved, and the fact they derive from demand-led areas, requires particular assurance of their deliverability. Members would wish to be assured of what contingency plans are in the event that predicted savings are not met, particularly in respect of those elements of this service which are not statutory, and which may therefore be more susceptible to funds being vired away from them. Members also recognised the benefits of telecare in many cases; but also noted that there will be significant groups of service users for whom personal contact and interaction are critical for the maintenance of their quality of life. In these cases, Members would not wish the attractiveness of telecare savings to outweigh the wider wellbeing benefits of an alternative approach, where this was in fact more appropriate for the service-user's specific needs. The group would welcome an assurance that any assessment of need would take account of the importance of mitigating isolation, and be based on a genuinely person-centred approach.

### 3. Running Costs / Inflation – All Services (CWBA19)

The group noted that the savings proposed here were again very substantial, exceeding £420k, and Members were advised that this built on savings already achieved in the previous two years. Members would appreciate further detail on where precisely these savings will impact, what percentage of the relevant budget line this represents, and what percentages of savings in this same area were made in the two previous years. Whilst the group was advised that residential and homecare rates were explicitly excluded from this proposal, Members would welcome greater assurance on the impact and deliverability of this saving, given the cumulative year-on-year effect, the likely reducing scope for further efficiencies, and potential impact on procurement, support services, etc.

## **Children, Families and Wellbeing: Children's Services**

### **Foreword by Topic Group Chairman – Councillor Mrs. Patricia Young**

“I would like to thank the Executive Members, the Corporate Director of CWB and her officers for the detailed presentation. I feel I should also thank them for their patience, especially in view of the reduced Committee assembled to take part in this session. Scrutiny members have noted that Trafford is going through a period of significant organisational change and understood the need to implement a range of austerity measures such as maximising income, changing ways of working, better procurement and reducing back office staff. We appreciated how these proposals will help transform the services provided without any significant detriment to the overall provision. The following section details the observations and recommendations made by Topic Group C arising from its review of the budget proposals.”

The agenda set by the Topic Group included (N.B. (D) denotes discussion item, (W) denotes Written Response submitted.) :

1. Children In Care Placements (D)
2. Market Management (D)
3. Children's / Adults' Commissioning Integration (D)
4. Connexions – Costs Reduction (D)
5. Connexions – Reduced Targeted Service Offer (D)
6. YOS – Costs Reduction (D)
7. YOS – Reduction in Grant Assisted Projects (D)
8. Reducing Costs of Homelessness Provision (W)
9. Reduction in Cost of MARAS (W)
10. Complex Needs – Reduction in Placement Budgets (W)
11. Music & Education Psychology Service (W)

Members noted the challenge, in general terms, of effective Scrutiny in cases where a key theme of savings proposals is the expansion / extension of broad approaches to service provision, rather than specific, readily quantifiable measures. In such cases, the risk exists that past performance is not necessarily a reliable guide to future achievement, especially where increasing challenges are faced on a year-on-year basis, and against the background of essentially unquantifiable demand-led pressures. The Group's discussions suggested that these challenges are likely to be replicated in the budget-setting process itself.

In this light Members expressed the view that robust impact assessments would be required in support of the developed proposals; and would welcome more information on what contingency planning was in place in the event of non-achievement, and whether prudent financial provision had been made to mitigate this.

## 1. Children In Care Placements (CWBC2)

Members noted that the delivery of approaching £500k of savings was significantly dependent on the increase in the use of in-house carers. The recruitment strategy was already described as “comprehensive”, raising the question of whether there was a natural limit on the scope for further development. Members would welcome further assurance on how robustly quantifiable savings estimates in this area actually are. Members also raised the question of the nature of the impact of costs (education, health, etc.) in respect of out-of-borough children who were being fostered in the borough.

## 2. Market Management (CWBC5)

Members noted the advice set out in the report that achievement of the £350k of savings “should not have a service impact but could be challenging for providers”. Notwithstanding this, Members noted that significant elements of inflation are not directly within the Council’s control, and had concerns about the potential impact of non-achievement of this target on the internally-provided elements of service provision. Members would welcome further information on contingency plans in the event of non-achievement.

## 3. Connexions – Costs Reduction (CWBC28) and Connexions – Reduced Targeted Service Offer (CWBC29)

Members noted that the total savings across these two areas amounted to £160k. Whilst they were advised that this followed on from previous reductions, and that statistics for NEETs remained generally positive, Members queried how far this was sustainable, noting that the budget proposals report referred to “service reduction and risk of higher numbers of young people not progressing to education training and employment”. Members requested details of what proportion of the total budget these savings amounted to; and similar figures for the past two years. They also queried what account had been taken of the possible adverse social, and therefore financial costs, of this policy choice, particularly when viewed in conjunction with point 4 below.

## 4. YOS – Costs Reduction (CWBC30) YOS – Reduction in Grant Assisted Projects (CWBC31)

Members considered that the proposal for an integrated service should incorporate more detail of precisely how the £150k savings would be achieved. The Group was advised that, whilst money had already been withdrawn from the service in the current year, a positive impact on offending rates had still been achieved through a greater concentration on preventative initiatives. Similarly to concerns on other proposals, Members would welcome further assurance on how secure predictions are that this effect could be continued and expanded into the future, and hence how robust the savings, and impact assessments, in fact are.

## 5. Music & Education Psychology Service (CWBC27)

In respect of the Education Psychology Service, the Group noted that the envisaged increase in SLA income appears to be £15k on the basis of £27k, i.e. in excess of 55%. Members would welcome confirmation of the basis of this projection, and whether the income increase derives from price or activity levels. If the former, Members would welcome any assurance which can be given that schools will not fail to access an important service.

## **Transformation and Resources Directorate**

### **Foreword by Topic Group Chairman – Councillor Rob Chilton**

“I would like to thank all who took part in the Budget Scrutiny session for the Transformation & Resources Directorate. There were a number of issues raised regarding the budget, largely associated with ensuring that there was a reasonable statistical/operational basis behind some of the conclusions reached in the budget options. Thanks to the very detailed and thorough responses to our concerns that were provided by the T&R Directorate, most of our questions were already answered in written form by the time we came to our final questioning session with Executive Members and Senior Staff, which allowed us to concentrate on what we deemed the most pertinent issues. It is my personal feeling that the extremely thorough way the T&R Directorate approached the Budget Scrutiny sessions, and the quality of their written and verbal responses should be seen as an exemplar for all other Directorates.”

The agenda set by the Topic Group included (N.B. (D) denotes discussion item, (W) denotes Written Response submitted.) :

1. Design & Print Savings (D)
2. ICT Maintenance & Infrastructure Costs (D)
3. Welfare & Council Tax Reform (D)
4. Contact Centre Review (D)
5. HR Staffing Review (D)
6. Redesign: Partnerships & Performance and Safe & Strong Communities (D)
7. Communities Support Review (D)
8. Operations at Sale Water Sports Centre (D)
9. Public Health Overhead Harmonisation (W)
10. Legal & Democratic Staff Review & Re-Banding (W)
11. Review of Funding for TCLT (W)
12. Culture & Sport Resource Review (W)
13. Revenues & Benefits Staffing (W)
14. Review of Libraries Strategy (W)
15. Review of Voluntary Grants (W)

### **T&R Issues / Observations:**

#### **1. Design & Print Savings (TR3) and ICT Maintenance and Infrastructure (TR5)**

Members noted the volume of proposed savings in these areas, and suggested that an indication of their extent in relation to the total budget in these areas would assist in assessing their deliverability. Members were conscious of the delivery and timescale risks frequently associated with significant IT projects and their rollout. Whilst recognising the potential benefits, both financial and non-financial, as now set out, the group agreed that implementation should be closely monitored to minimise slippage, and would welcome further detail of governance / accountability arrangements in respect of the significant IT projects proposed. Members also made the point that any impact assessment should set out any potential impacts of proposed design and print savings on customers with disabilities.

## 2. Contact Centre Review (TR11)

The savings proposed derive in part from the reduction of 2 x fte staff, in response to a projected reduction in call volume. Given the envisaged pressure in services arising in part from other budget proposals, the Group was not convinced of the likelihood of such a reduction; and this view appeared to be supported by an apparent significant increase in the call volume trend over the past 12 months. Members felt that this saving would be dependent on a more robust assessment of factors contributing to this trend in order to demonstrate its deliverability.

## 3. HR Staffing Review (TR12)

Given savings already secured in this area, Members expressed concerns regarding the magnitude of the proposal for 2104/15. It was suggested that the savings estimate was to a degree aspirational rather than quantified, particularly given that the report acknowledged that the operating model has yet to be determined, and that any slippage in savings would be met from reserves. Given that some of the cost reduction was predicated on developing business with schools, Members raised the question of how significant budget reductions would facilitate this; the levels of confidence on the part of the Executive that this was achievable; and whether any general contingency planning had been done, apart from a potential call on reserves. Members would welcome greater assurance on these points, and consider that close review of achievement against targets will be necessary.

## 4. Redesign of Partnerships & Performance / Safe & Strong Communities (TR13) and Communities Support (TR17)

Members noted that the volume of proposed savings across these areas (£350k) was large, and that this was additional to significant savings listed for the previous two years. This raised questions of whether additional savings of this magnitude were deliverable and, if so, why they had not been identified in preceding years. Members raised a number of specific concerns, including: the impact of on the range of functions supported by the staff concerned, including Locality Working and performance data monitoring and analysis; the extent to which the proposed structure would be flexible and responsive to changing demands across the services involved. Members would welcome assurance on these points, and that the fitness for purpose of the structure would be kept under review.

## **Environment, Transport and Operations Directorate / Economic Growth and Prosperity**

### **Foreword by Topic Group Chairman – Councillor John Reilly**

“Scrutinising the Executive’s budget proposals this year once again afforded Topic Group B Members the opportunity to inform the Executive on specific issues and general areas of concern. Given the vast experience of each Member of the Topic group, I stand witness to the robustness of those discussions and debates. Clearly, in this challenging financial climate, the necessity to hold the Executive to account for its decisions and ensure that budget proposals are robust and fit for purpose is paramount, particularly on delivery of the Council’s statutory responsibilities and those relating to sensitive and high profile areas. I believe that a good understanding between the Executive Member, Senior Officers and Members of the topic group was achieved and, although it is of course acknowledged that individual Members will still hold reservations as to certain aspects of the proposals, resulted in a fair and balanced scrutiny approach and at least one amendment to the EGP/ETO savings schedules.”

### **A. EGP**

The agenda set by the Topic Group included (N.B. (D) denotes discussion item, (W) denotes Written Response submitted.) :

1. Property & Development – Surplus Property (W)
2. Town Centre Space Advertising (W)
3. Green Deal – New Income (W)
4. Transfer of Assets / Running Costs (W)

In reviewing the Budget proposals, and bearing in mind some of the very significant ETO issues to be reviewed in the same session, Members agreed that they would confine their enquiries, in the first instance, to requests for written responses. In the event, the associated responses proved satisfactory, so no formal discussion was, in the event, required with the Executive Member / Corporate Director.

### **B. ETO**

The agenda set by the Topic Group included (N.B. (D) denotes discussion item, (W) denotes Written Response submitted.) :

1. Business Support Review (D)
2. Outdoor Media (D)
3. Highways Management (D)
4. Parks Maintenance (D)
5. Groundforce – Redesign & Reprioritisation (D)
6. Tree Unit – Operational Delivery Model (D)
7. Highways Depot Security Costs (W)
8. TRO Advertising Costs (W)
9. Moving Travel Offences (W)
10. Highway Verges (W)
11. Festive Lights (W)
12. Waste Management Sites – Rationalisation (W)
13. Public Protection Restructure (W)



## **ETO Issues / Observations:**

### **1. Business Support Review (ETO9)**

Whilst this saving was listed as applying to both ETO and EGP, it was unclear from the report where this proposal would impact; and no reference appeared within the EGP savings schedules. Members agreed that it would be helpful for this to be clarified when the proposals are brought forward for formal decision.

### **2. Outdoor Media (ETO13)**

Members raised a number of concerns about these proposals, including the extent to which their delivery might be dependent on Planning or other third party approvals. Whilst the group was assured that the estimate had taken account of these issues, Members requested further information to demonstrate the proposals' robustness.

### **3. Highways Management (ETO18)**

Whilst Members were advised that the proposed savings related to managerial and supervisory posts, concerns remained, especially given the envisaged changes in some cases to inspection frequencies and tolerance levels, and availability of capital funding for structural maintenance projects, regarding the impact on the infrastructure. Members would request that the developed proposals are accompanied by a thorough assessment of the risks and identification of mitigation measures.

### **4. Parks Maintenance (ETO22) / Groundforce – Redesign & Reprioritisation (ETO23)**

Especially in view of the level of savings proposed in these areas (£750k), and the fact that the inevitability of reduced service levels in some areas were already acknowledged in the Budget report, Members had raised queries in their preliminary meeting about their deliverability. Whilst responses were provided to the Topic Group, Members felt that concerns in relation to envisaged plant / equipment cost reductions, certainty of assistance from e.g. Housing Associations and Friends of Parks groups, and the overall assessment of impact had not been fully addressed; and would welcome further assurance on these issues in particular.

### **5. Tree Unit – Operational Delivery Model (ETO24)**

Members had raised concerns regarding the potential impact on service levels in what can frequently be a sensitive and high-profile area. Members were advised that the proposals were explicitly designed to avoid any direct impact on front-line operatives. Members retained concerns regarding the misdirection of tree-related calls and the potential impact on the efficiency of the service, and were interested to know if there was any scope to enhance efficiencies in tree-related services delivered through ETO and RGP directorates.

## 6. Waste Management Sites – Rationalisation (ETO28)

In discussing the proposals with the Executive Member, the rationale for, and appropriateness of, the geographical distribution of the retained sites remained unclear; and equally the extent to which these proposals were based on, for example, usage tonnages rather than convenience for residents across the borough. Members had significant concerns on this point, and requested that further information be supplied to demonstrate why the proposal represented the optimal configuration.

## 7. Public Protection Restructure (ETO30)

The Topic Group expressed concerns regarding the impact of the proposed reduction of £167k in what was thought to be already a comparatively small service area, but one which had its focus on delivering the Council's statutory responsibilities in sensitive and potentially high-profile areas. Members agreed that a thorough analysis of risk and mitigation measures was needed in view of the potential impact of these proposals.

## **PERFORMANCE IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND IMPACT OF BUDGET SAVINGS MADE DURING 2012-13: REPORT FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **PURPOSE**

Children's Services committed to significant savings within the 2012-13 round of budget setting and these have now been implemented. The purpose of this report is therefore to review the impact of those budget reductions and also to review the benefit of the use of volunteers due to the volunteering strategies in place within several service areas.

### **SAVINGS AND IMPACT**

The savings made are outlined in this section, together with how those savings have been achieved and the impact they have had on service delivery.

#### **Children's Centres**

Following a major review of the role and effectiveness of the children's centres in Trafford in December 2013, combined with the need to reduce the budget, recommendations were made for a re-structured service and for £1,710,000 saving to be delivered from the budget of £3,987,785 which equated to a 42.9% saving. The number of children's centres was reduced from sixteen to six and there was a corresponding reduction in staffing. However, the remaining staff worked in partnership with other services and with children, families and communities, to minimise the impact of the reductions on service users. Staff teams were reconfigured to give consistency within localities and ensure a good local knowledge of each area was maintained. Staff considered there was a positive impact for service delivery and professional development from the relocations and transitional period as there was opportunity to share good practice and mix skills in new ways. The three heads of children's centres worked very effectively to co-ordinate and deliver the changes.

Currently 53.34% of children under five are registered with a children's centre which is a 5% increase in the last twelve months. The implementation of the Early Years Pathway has had a positive effect on these numbers, with registration at 77% in Partington where the pathway has been established since April 2011 and 69% in Stretford where the pathway was implemented in November 2012. The engagement in south and central is not as high and plans are in place to roll out the pathway on those areas.

Children's centre attendance has increased by children under 5 years of age from 6,745 attendances between April and November 2012 to 8,175 child attendances at group activities. Due to the redesign of the children centre model of service delivery creating family support services a further 5,322 targeted 1:1 contacts were achieved, making a total of 13,497 combined attendances and contacts between June and December 2013.

Feedback from parents and carers has remained positive about the quality of work undertaken via children's centres.

## Volunteering in Children's Centres

Children's Centres continue to recruit, train and engage volunteers in delivery of services, both to maintain community input into universal services and to give local families opportunities and skills which support their employability.

- There are currently **70** active volunteers in Children's Centres
- In addition to this, there are **20** Breastfeeding Peer Supporters delivering direct support to parents
- The range of volunteers recruited reflects the diversity of our communities and the "target groups" children's centres are tasked with reaching, such as; lone parents, BME backgrounds, fathers, workless households and parents with disabilities or parents of a child/children with disabilities
- Volunteers support the delivery of universal play and stay groups, toddler gyms and baby massage sessions. There are a number who also volunteer their time on Parent Forums and Advisory Boards to support decision making and shape service delivery
- **10** people have attended training sessions delivered in partnership with Trafford College – although this is a slight decrease from those trained prior to the service restructure, this is due to the fact that the course has been developed to provide accredited training which will contribute to future qualification opportunities
- A further **27** volunteers have expressed an interest to attend the next course in the New Year. We plan to deliver this accredited training to 3 cohorts of learners by the end of March 2014
- **65** people have been signposted to other groups and partner agencies in order to boost confidence, gain work experience and begin vocational training in placement (e.g. Teaching Assistant) – this is more than double the amount signposted in the previous period.

## Connexions Service

The Connexions service delivers a targeted service to vulnerable groups who are either not in education training or employment (NEET) or at risk of becoming so. In addition the service delivers an independent advice and guidance service around education training and employment to secondary schools and Trafford College on a traded service basis. Both elements of the service have been very successful and the work is undertaken in partnership with a range of other organisations in order to offer young people creative and flexible opportunities that meet their needs. In 2012-13 a commitment was made to make £100K saving from the targeted service which resulted in the loss of two connexions advisor posts and other additional savings. Fortunately, due to the excellent partnership working across services and schools, there has been no negative impact on NEET outcomes so far. The number of young people who are NEET or whose destination is not known fluctuates throughout the year due to the annual education cycle and the chart below demonstrates the position to date for the year 2013-14. It is not possible to evidence whether young people have felt any reduction in the volume of the service, but feedback from young people who have been involved with the service continues to be very positive.

## 1.2 : NEET Numbers & adjusted %ages (16-18 Academic Age)

Q1-2	Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep	
2012-13	392	5.49%	368	5.26%	358	5.25%	384	5.51%	396	5.76%	255	4.18%
2013-14	330	4.52%	317	4.38%	330	4.54%	310	4.27%	330	4.55%	207	5.16%
Q3-4	Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan		Feb		Mar	
2012-13	293	4.23%	292	4.25%	294	4.31%	292	4.27%	268	4.03%	280	4.21%
2013-14	243	3.56%										

### Youth Service

The youth service delivers a range of positive activities and individual support and development opportunities to young people across six local centres, two specialist hubs and using a mobile street based team. A saving £316K delivered for 2013-14. All the centres have remained open with the exception of the Fuse which closed for other reasons. Youth work in Partington was delivered via a street and park based plan over the summer and plans are being progressed for sessions to be delivered from the Moss View school site from January 2014. The reduction in funding was achieved primarily through a reduction in staffing but following the youth service review and restructure in 2011 the management of youth work was already delivered via a hub and spoke model and it was therefore possible to reduce the central management posts further to assist with the savings. However, the reduction in funding has equated to the reduction of youth work sessions at the six local youth centres from three nights per week to two nights per week. The impact of this reduction has been minimised by local partnership working and youth work action plans which were created on a partnership basis as part of the review. Positive activities continue to be available to young people from a range of services and the youth service still plays a key part in this work.

### Youth Service Volunteering Strategy.

The youth service worked in partnership with Salford Foundation to develop a clearly structured volunteering strategy during 2012-13 for both adults and young people. The approach created clear standards and systems for recruiting and training volunteers, building on existing volunteering that was in place in the service. The target of training 50 volunteers in the first year was almost met, with thirty three adults and fourteen young people trained. The adults ranged from those offering specific skills around outdoor activities for Duke of Edinburgh Awards or performing arts at Gorse Hill Studios, to those supporting open access sessions. The young people were trained as junior youth leaders and developed their own identity and branding of M.A.D. (Make A Difference) and ran junior youth nights in Sale West and Partington which were very successful. The work of supporting and mentoring volunteers in order to enable them to deliver a good service and continue to develop has been co-ordinated by one Area Youth Worker and this is an on-going area of development.

In 2013-14 to date the positive work of the volunteering strategy has continued. There are now sixty adults trained of whom forty are regularly volunteering with the service. There are thirty young people trained, all of whom come from more needy areas of the borough. They have developed a strong and supportive group identity and are gaining skills for life and for their futures. They contribute significantly to the work of the service and junior youth nights have recently started at Altrincham youth centre and in Sale Moor in addition to those established last year. The figures for the groups established last year are currently as follows:

- Sale West has had 554 contacts with young people aged 8-11, with 87 regularly attending junior youth work sessions, planned and delivered primarily by young volunteers.
- Partington has had 613 contacts with young people aged 8-11, with 145 regularly attending junior youth work sessions delivered primarily by young volunteers

### **Youth Offending Service:**

The Youth Offending Service put forward a two year saving plan aligned to the implementation of the Children and Young Peoples Service Early Help Strategy. The service will continue to monitor the impact of the savings on any upturn in the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice Service (YJS). In 2012/13 there were 71 FTEs, a 27.6% reduction from 2011-2012. In Q1 and Q2 2013/14 there has been 24 FTEs, a 25% decrease from the same period in 2012.

This has been achieved through Pre-Court measures delivered via excellent working relationships with agencies including the Police, Fire Service, Youth Service and the voluntary sector. A key part of the Youth Offending Service delivery model is the use of volunteers. The Youth Offending Service recruited 31 new volunteers over the last year, taking the overall number of volunteers in the service up to 63. The Restorative Justice Team has also successfully trained 11 volunteers and sessional workers in Restorative Justice Training through the International Institute of Restorative Justice. They have also successfully trained two trainers who can deliver Restorative Justice Training.

### **Use of Custody**

In the last 12 months 4 young people received custodial sentences compared to 65 in 2007/8. This reduction in the use of custody is attributable to a number of different factors. Relationships between the YOS and the Court Officers and Magistrates have significantly improved resulting in greater confidence in the work being delivered by YOS. In addition there has been a range of service strategies and service provision such as Intensive Fostering as an alternative to custody provision; the use of robust bail packages to prevent unnecessary remand of young people; the rigorous quality assurance of reports written by the Youth Offending Service outlining the most effective and appropriate alternatives, and how young people can be effectively managed within the community informed by thorough risk assessments and the routine tracking and proactive reviewing of all remands with a view to promoting intensive and creative bail applications, including collaboration with other areas.

### **Reduction in Re-Offending**

In the last 12 months the YOS achieved a 12% reduction in frequency of offending significantly higher than the combine northwest and national average.

## Children, Families and Wellbeing: Annual Delivery Plan Performance Measures

### Quarter 2 2013-14

The table below outlines performance against the ADP targets for the Directorate. In terms of those measures that are directly impacted by the 2013-14 budget proposals I would highlight the following points;

- Breastfeeding overall rates and closing the gap in our vulnerable localities are both showing a significant improvement at the mid-year point. Children’s Centres are an integral part of the Early Years pathway and services delivered through the Centres have supported this improvement.
- 16-18 year olds Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) is highlighted as red and an exception report outlining the reasons for this are also attached. In summary it is due to an increase in the number of ‘not knowns’ rather than actual number of NEET in September due to delays in receiving destination data from some colleges outside of Trafford. This has now been corrected and actual NEET rate is ahead of target and continuing to decrease from an already low base. The year on year trend is shown in Table 1.2 above emphasising the ongoing improvement.

SERVICES FOCUSED ON THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE								
Ref.	Definition	Freq	12/13 Actual	13/14 Target	2013/14 Q2			
					Actual	Target	DOT	Status
New	Maintain % of eligible population aged 40-74 offered an NHS Health Check who received an NHS Health Check in the financial year	M	10.5%	10.5%	2.97%*	2.6%		G
*This is figure for Q1. Q2 not available until early November. 2.97% equates to 1985 people offered a health check, of an eligible population of 66,819. Of those being made the offer, 1049 (52.8%) had a check. On a straight trajectory this measure is on track to meet target.								
New	Breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks: difference from Trafford average of the lowest areas, by Medical Centre catchment	Q	-16.3%	-15.5%	-5.06%	-15.5%	↑	G
Achievement against this measure remains very good this year and significantly above what was seen at the same time last year and remains on track to achieve a challenging target. The figure for the quarter was 54.59%. It reflects work done with and by midwives and Health Visitors to support women to both initiate and continue breastfeeding. Extra support and training has been targeted towards lower achieving areas, and figures, particularly in the West, have improved significantly.								
Whilst this is an encouraging start, it must be noted that the breastfeeding figures can be very volatile with								

significant changes, quarter on quarter.

New	Children in Care Long Term Stability	Q	78.8%	80%	82.0%	80%	↑	G
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Latest benchmarking data (September 13) shows Trafford's 3 year average for this measure to be the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the country. This is an important indicator and the provision of long term stable placements to children in care provides the foundation on which children can grow and achieve positive outcomes.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION								
Ref.	Definition	Freq	12/13 Actual	13/14 Target	2013/14 Q2			
					Actual	Target	DOT	Status
	% of pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths	A	71.9%	73%	Annual Indicator			
CGV 2c	% of pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths	A	41.5% G	43%	Annual Indicator			
LCA2	Maintain the low level of 16-18 year olds who are not in education training or employment (NEET) in Trafford	M	4.45% G	4.4%	5.16%	4.4%	↓	R
See Exception Report								
New	Maintain Trafford's position within the Top quartile of authorities nationally, with regard to the rate of persistent absence from School	A	Top G	Top	Top		↔	G
Data based on 2 terms (Autumn 12, Spring 13) released 15/10/13, shows Trafford to have maintained its position in the top quartile of authorities with regard to the rate of persistent absence.								

<b>Theme / Priority:</b>	<b>Excellence in Education</b>
Indicator / Measure:	LCA2
Indicator / Measure detail:	Reduce the percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment



Baseline:			
<b>Target and timescale:</b>	4.4% Upper target September 2013	<b>Actual and timescale:</b>	5.17% September 2013
<b>Why is performance at the current level?</b>			
<p>The NEET percentage is arrived at from a national formula which takes into account the number of young people whose destination is “Not Known”. The Not Known figure for September 13 was higher than expected which therefore has an impact on the NEET figure. When the actual number of NEET young people is looked at there were 207 compared to 255 young people at the same time last year.</p> <p>Connexions is responsible for tracking the destination of all 16 – 19 year olds and has a process in place which includes receiving enrolment and progression data from schools and colleges to update the current destination of young people. This year it has been more difficult than in previous years to get this information from some schools and colleges, mainly from those in other Greater Manchester local authority areas. There have been changes to the way that some neighbouring local authority areas are tracking young people which has had an effect in Trafford. The usual practice is that the Connexions/LA where the FE / sixth form is based will receive enrolment data for all students and will then share this with the students home LA via the national CCIS website. Where neighbouring LAs have not progressed with this as in previous years this has left a larger number of students to be followed up by phone call or home visits.</p> <p>Trafford Connexions is using a new database to track and record destinations of young people. The new system automatically moves a young person to “Not Known” at the end of their course. This means that some young people will be classed as Not Known in September as their Year 12 course has finished, but they have not yet been recorded as starting on a Year 13 course. The most accurate picture of NEET, Not Known and In Learning will not be seen until all enrolment lists have been updated.</p>			
<b>What difference does this make – the implications of not meeting target?</b>			
The impact is that the most accurate NEET percentage is not available and appears to partners that there are more young people still waiting to be placed in education or training than in effect there are.			
<b>How can we make sure things get better?</b>			
<p>Connexions and Partnerships and Performance are actively contacting FE colleges, schools and sixth forms to get enrolment lists.</p> <p>Connexions Advisers are actively phoning young people and where necessary making home visits to ascertain their current destination.</p> <p>It is expected that an accurate “Not Known” figure will be available at the end of November which will then show a more accurate NEET percentage.</p>			

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