

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 25 January 2016
Report for: Consideration
Report of: Scrutiny Committee

Report Title

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE'S DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2016-17

Summary

The Executive's Draft Budget Proposals for 2016/17 were agreed at its meeting held on 16 November 2015. The Leader of the Council gave a presentation to the Scrutiny Committee on 18 November setting out the proposals.

Two Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups were then held during December with relevant Executive Members and senior officers attending to give background to the proposals and answer questions.

This report reflects the outcome of those discussions and summarises issues for the Executive's further consideration in developing its final proposals and response.

The Budget Scrutiny report identifies that Scrutiny Members feel that there are three key areas where the Executive needs to satisfy itself of the robustness of the proposals. These are

- Ensuring that the savings projections and assumptions are soundly based
- Making sure that effective risk management arrangements are in place
- That Equality Impact Assessments are produced and fully understood by the Executive in making their final decisions and that appropriate action is taken to mitigate the effect of any changes on vulnerable residents.

The Scrutiny Committee have also identified a number of areas where significant savings are to be made and where they intend to carry out follow up work next year to ensure that they are achieved and that the impact of changes is known and addressed. These include:

- Robustness of income projections.
- Car parking fees
- Proposals to collaborate with other
- All Age Front Door Transformation Project
- Recommissioned contracts
- Joint Venture Contract
- The impact on users whose packages of care are reduced
- Integrated Health and Social care

- Trafford Care Coordination Centre.
- Reablement services

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the Executive consider and respond to the report and recommendations made.**
- 2. That the Executive note that the Scrutiny Committee and Health Scrutiny Committees are intending to follow up work on a number of areas as part of their future work programmes.**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Peter Forrester, Democratic and Performance Services Manager

Extension: 1815

Background Papers: None

BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT - 2016/17

Foreword by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

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

Budget Scrutiny 2016/17 has once again 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, Scrutiny Councillors and Co-opted Members for their patience and contribution to the process. We would particularly like to thank Councillor Judith Lloyd for chairing one of the sessions.

Members acknowledged that the Council continues to work within an increasingly challenging financial climate and the focus of Scrutiny input has been on the robustness and deliverability of the current proposals in the light of experience of budget savings already made in previous years, and the potential impact on communities and service users.

We hope that our Budget Scrutiny will contribute to the decision making process and in ensuring that robust processes are in place to manage changes. We have identified areas where we feel that there are risks to delivery and to users and we look forward to receiving details of how the Executive will address these.

Councillors Jonathan Coupe and Mike Cordingley
Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Scrutiny Committee.
December 2015

1.0 Background

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

Two Task and Finish Group meetings were held to look at the proposals. The approach this year was to look at the proposals using the themes identified for budget consultation. Scrutiny members noted that the approach to the budget shortfall for 2016/17 and later years has focused on a “One Council” approach by taking a cross directorate view to the savings that need to be achieved by applying the following themes:-

- **Maximising Income** – maximising income from our services or generating income from assets such as advertising.
- **Working Smarter** – looking at the way things are done such as redesign of the workforce.
- **Buying Better** – working with our partners and suppliers to ensure we get best value for our expenditure.
- **Eligibility and Access** – reviewing current care packages and all new applications applying the reshaping social care policy utilising equipment, assistive technology and adaptations.
- **Joining Up and Working Together** – looking at how we deliver community health and social care services for adults in Trafford.
- **Promoting Independence** – helping people to help themselves, through our care strategy.

The meetings raised a number of questions which were dealt with at the meeting or were clarified following the meeting. Scrutiny Members were disappointed that some information was not available at the meeting and felt that this hindered their ability to provide scrutiny. This is something that will be reviewed in determining the process for budget scrutiny next year.

Members also expressed concerned at the low turnout for the public consultations and the costs of the exercise. The Committee recommend that the Executive review its arrangements for public consultation in 2016 so that it represents better value for money.

The main findings from the two meetings are set out below.

2.0 Key Messages

Scrutiny Members identified a number of issues that cut across all of the budget proposals.

- **Savings Projections and Assumptions** – Some proposals are based on estimates of income generation and future work programmes. Whilst it is recognised that these are based on a solid evidence base and are made conservatively there are still a number of assumptions which savings and income generation targets rely upon to be delivered within the year. Scrutiny Members would ask that, if these assumptions prove to be incorrect or change in year, they are shared with Scrutiny at an early stage. This should include an analysis of the

impact in comparison to the projections made within the budget and the action to be taken.

- **Risk Management** – The budget proposals contain a number of workstreams to deliver savings. A recurring theme from discussion was to ensure that there is effective management of risk across key workstreams. It was clear from the Executive’s responses that there are recognised and well managed risk identification procedures with risk logs maintained by each team and equality impact assessments conducted for each project. Scrutiny would like these logs and assessments to be made available to the relevant Scrutiny Committees along with details of plans to mitigate the risks identified throughout the year.
- **Equality Impact Assessments** – Concerns were raised as to the impact of the budget proposals on the most vulnerable residents of Trafford and at this stage, there are no equality impact statements in place. Scrutiny would like assurance that these are produced and fully understood by the Executive in making their final decisions and that appropriate action is taken to mitigate the effect of any changes on vulnerable residents.

3.0 Specific Comments by theme

Maximising Income

- As mentioned above, questions were raised about the robustness of income projections and the potential impact if they proved to be inaccurate. The Scrutiny Committee stated that they would look at this as part of their programme for 2016/17.
- The Committee raised questions about the levels at which car parking fees were set. Officers explained the importance of getting the correct balance to ensure prices do not reduce footfall in Town Centres and ensuring they are affordable for staff working in these areas. Members asked that information about parking fee income projections and any impact on footfall is included in the Town Centre updates that are periodically brought to the Scrutiny Committee.

Working Smarter

- Proposals to collaborate with other Councils to process telephone calls and share HR and ICT services were discussed. Scrutiny Committee would like updates on progress with these initiatives and progress in achieving savings identified in the budget.
- The Executive were not yet able to predict with accuracy the levels of savings that the All Age Front Door Transformation Project would be able to deliver through the reduction of duplication of work. Health Scrutiny Committee would like an update on this to come to a future meeting.

Buying Better

- Scrutiny members heard that there are a number of savings to be attributed to the recommissioning of contracts that are due to end in 2015/16. The members asked a series of questions about the length and clauses of these contracts and would welcome further updates on the level of savings that are achieved and how they compare to the budget projections.
- Members highlighted the importance of scrutinising services now provided by Amey as part of the Joint Venture Contract. Members identified concerns raised including

whether Amey would be reinvesting savings back into services, and what will happen in future when new efficiencies are more difficult to achieve. A continued review of the JVC is already part of the Scrutiny Committee work programme, but the Budget Scrutiny sessions reaffirmed the importance of this. Amey Officers will be present at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting in January 2016. The Scrutiny Committee will assess how to proceed from there.

Eligibility and Access

- Concerns were raised about what the impact on those users whose packages of care are reduced and the ability of providers to track this. It was recognised that this situation will improve with the implementation of the TCCC and members welcome the additional information that this system will be able to provide. They would welcome an update to a future meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

Joining Up and Working Together

- Scrutiny Members were informed of the various projects that are currently underway which will further integrate Health and Social care services. This is already an area being monitored by the Health Scrutiny Committee and the Committee will continue to do so. The Committee would welcome more information on savings achieved and any impact on users.

Promoting Independence

- It is apparent throughout the budget proposals and subsequent questions posed by Scrutiny, that a large amount of the work planned in 2016/17 is reliant upon the improved communications and patient tracking that will be brought about through the Trafford Care Coordination Centre. Given the importance of the TCCC, Scrutiny would like to be kept abreast of the impact it has in two ways. Firstly scrutiny would like to be informed of the progress of the TCCCs implementation and informed of the knock on effect of any delays that occur. Secondly, Members of Scrutiny would like an explanation of the new information that the TCCC makes possible so that they have a clear idea as to how this new resource can help shape Health, Social Care and Scrutiny going forward.
- Scrutiny members were disappointed that a review and redesign of the reablement service had been conducted without input from scrutiny. They were also concerned by the information that the Ascot House reablement service had not been meeting its targeted outcomes for users. Members asked questions as to what the new reablement offer was and were told that this will be developed further in the coming months. As such members requested that the findings of the recent reablement review be brought to Health Scrutiny as soon as possible and that the details of the new services be made available to scrutiny once in place.

BUDGET SCRUTINY ACTION PLAN

Issue	Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Response
<p>Information Provision - Some information was not available at the meeting.</p>	<p>Scrutiny and Executive to review approach to the process for budget scrutiny next year to ensure that all information is available.</p>	
<p>Public Consultation - Low turnout for the public consultations and the costs of the exercise.</p>	<p>Executive review its arrangements for public consultation in 2016 so that it represents better value for money.</p>	
<p>Savings Projections and Assumptions – Some proposals are based on estimates of income generation and future work programmes. Whilst it is recognised that these are based on a solid evidence base and are made conservatively there are still a number of assumptions which savings and income generation targets rely upon to be delivered within the year.</p>	<p>Scrutiny Members ask that if assumptions prove to be incorrect or change in year that they are shared with Scrutiny at an early stage. This should include an analysis of the impact in comparison to the projections made within the budget and the action to be taken.</p>	
<p>Risk Management – The budget proposals contain a number of workstreams to deliver savings. There are recognised and well managed risk identification procedures with risk logs maintained by each team and equality impact assessments conducted for each project.</p>	<p>Scrutiny would like these logs and assessments to be made available to the relevant Scrutiny Committees along with details of plans to mitigate the risks identified throughout the year</p>	
<p>Equality Impact Assessments – Concerns were raised as to the impact of the budget proposals on the most vulnerable residents of Trafford and at this stage, there are no equality impact statements in place.</p>	<p>Scrutiny would like assurance that these are produced and fully understood by the Executive in making their final decisions and that appropriate action is taken to mitigate the effect of any changes on vulnerable residents.</p>	

<p>Income Projections - As mentioned above, questions were raised about the robustness of income projections and the potential impact if they proved to be inaccurate.</p>	<p>Scrutiny Committee to look at this as part of their programme for 2016/17.</p>	
<p>Car Parking Fees - The Committee raised questions about the levels at which car parking fees were set. Officers explained the importance of getting the correct balance to ensure prices do not reduce footfall in Town Centres and ensuring they are affordable for staff working in these areas. Members asked that information about parking fee income projections and any impact on footfall is included in the Town Centre updates that are periodically brought to the Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>Information about parking fee income projections and any impact on footfall be included in the Town Centre updates that are periodically brought to the Scrutiny Committee.</p>	
<p>Collaboration - Proposals to collaborate with other Councils to process telephone calls and share HR and ICT services were discussed.</p>	<p>Scrutiny Committee would like updates on progress with these initiatives and progress in achieving savings identified in the budget.</p>	
<p>All Age Front Door Transformation Project - The Executive were not yet able to predict with accuracy the levels of savings that the All Age Front Door Transformation Project would be able to deliver through the reduction of duplication of work.</p>	<p>Health Scrutiny Committee would like an update on this to come to a future meeting.</p>	
<p>Recommissioning of contracts - Scrutiny members heard that there are a number of savings to be attributed to the recommissioning of contracts that are due to</p>	<p>Health Scrutiny Committee would like further updates on the level of savings that are achieved and how they compare to the budget projections.</p>	

end in 2015/16.		
Joint Venture Contract - Members identified concerns including whether Amey would be reinvesting savings back into services, and what will happen in future when new efficiencies are more difficult to achieve	Amey Officers will be present at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting in January 2016.	
Care Packages - Concerns were raised about what the impact on those users whose packages of care are reduced and the ability of providers to track this. It was recognised that this situation will improve with the implementation of the TCCC and members welcome the additional information that this system will be able to provide.	Update to a future meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee.	
Joining Up and Working Together - Scrutiny Members were informed of the various projects that are currently underway which will further integrate Health and Social care services.	This is already an area being monitored by the Health Scrutiny Committee and the Committee will continue to do so. The Committee would welcome more information on savings achieved and any impact on users.	
Promoting Independence - It is apparent throughout the budget proposals and subsequent questions posed by Scrutiny, that a large amount of the work planned in 2016/17 is reliant upon the improved communications and patient tracking that will be brought about through the Trafford Care Coordination Centre.	Health Scrutiny Committee would like to be kept abreast of the impact it has in two ways. Firstly scrutiny would like to be informed of the progress of the TCCCs implementation and informed of the knock on effect of any delays that occur. Secondly, Members of Scrutiny would like an explanation of the new information that the TCCC makes possible so that they have a clear idea as to how this new resource can help shape Health, Social Care and Scrutiny going forward.	

<p>Ascot House - Scrutiny members were disappointed that a review and redesign of the reablement service had been conducted without input from scrutiny. They were also concerned by the information that the Ascot House reablement service had not been meeting its targeted outcomes for users. Members asked questions as to what the new reablement offer was and were told that this will be developed further in the coming months.</p>	<p>The findings of the recent reablement review be brought to Health Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible and that the details of the new services be made available to scrutiny once in place.</p>	