

## **Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board**

**9 June, 2016**

### **Summary of Matters Considered at the Board**

#### **Report of Councillor P Sandars**

The Scrutiny Board met on 9 June, 2016 to consider the following matter. For more detail, a copy of the minutes is available on the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) via the Council's website at <http://cmis.sandwell.gov.uk/cmis5/>

#### **Consideration of the Council's Financial Outturn 2015/2016**

The Board received details of the Council's financial outturn for 2015/2016 for each service area, the housing revenue account, the Council's capital programme outturn and the treasury management outturn. The Board also received commentary in relation to the 2015/2016 revenue collection performance for the major income streams of the Council, including council tax, non-domestic rates, housing rents and general debtors.

Previously, at a workshop held on 2 June, 2016 the Board identified a number of issues requiring clarification/further detail. The relevant directors were therefore in attendance to provide responses to the Board on those issues.

The Board noted that a number of the deficits shown within the accounts are not actually deficits and are offset in another place in the accounts. The Section 151 Officer has undertaken to review the way that these figures are presented in the future to present a clearer picture to readers.

Details of the issues the Board raised and the responses provided can be found in the minutes of the meeting, which are available on the Council's Committee Management Information System. The Board made the following recommendations, which were submitted to the Cabinet on 22 June, 2016:-

- (1) that directors and cabinet members be congratulated on the efficient management of their respective budgets and the resultant surpluses achieved, despite the continued reduction of funds from central government;

- (2) that the Director-Neighbourhoods be congratulated on the level of rent collection, in spite of the roll out of Universal Credit, but that the situation remain under close monitoring as the roll out of Universal Credit continues;
- (3) that the Director-Neighbourhoods continues efforts to collect rents from the borough's permanent traveller site and consults other local authorities with such sites on alternative methods employed to maximise collection rates;
- (4) that the carry forward of surpluses within the Libraries Service be endorsed to contribute to the smooth delivery of the restructure of the service and the Director-Neighbourhoods be congratulated on the fact that all 19 of Sandwell's libraries have remained open to date;
- (e) that the approach of the Director-Public Health in seeking to combine contracts to generate savings be endorsed, given the uncertainty over future funding provision and the likelihood of funding reductions;
- (f) that the approach of the Director-Children's Services in relation to the recommissioning of short breaks services to improve service delivery and enable efficiency savings to be made, be endorsed.

The Council should note that these recommendations are not those of the full Board due to the meeting being inquorate.

**Councillor P Sandars**  
**Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board**