

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board

23 February, 2017

Summary of Matters Considered at the Board

Report of Councillor Peter Hughes

The Scrutiny Board met on 23 February 2017 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/>

A Long Term Vision for Sandwell

The Interim Director-Resources reported that the Council is in the process of refreshing its long term vision. The Cabinet and Senior Management Board have developed 10 ambitions, based around people and place, as a basis for consultation and the Board's views were sought on the proposed consultation process and the ambitions themselves.

The Board gave the following feedback to the Interim Director-Resources:-

- (1) In relation to the consultation process:-
 - (a) The "World Café" style consultation events taking place in towns are well received but the ambitions should be shared in advance of the events to allow participants more time to consider them.
 - (b) The voluntary and community sector organisations being consulted should be asked to consult their service users.
 - (c) Tenants and residents groups and faith organisations should be directly consulted.
 - (d) Consultation events should be held in leisure centres and libraries to engage a range of age groups.
- (2) In relation to the proposed ambitions:-
 - (e) 10 ambitions is highly aspirational and it is important to clearly define how the Council will set out to achieve them.
 - (f) The "Place" ambitions should make reference to environmental aims about making Sandwell a pleasant place to live, as well as affordable.

- (g) There should be a commitment to using local labour to deliver the ambitions.
- (h) The ambitions should make reference to promoting the commercial survival of town centres and local centres.

Quarter 3 Council Wide Budget Monitoring 2016/2017

The Board received details of the Council's revenue and capital expenditure as at the end of December 2016, together with a forecast outturn for the financial year 2015/16.

The Board notes the ongoing uncertainty following the recent instruction to establish a Children's Trust and the significant risks that this presents, which are being monitored closely.

The Board noted the surplus of £3.2m on the Housing Revenue Account, which is ring-fenced for capital development. Members feel that consideration should be given to utilising this underspend to fund the provision of CCTV in high rise housing stock to reduce anti-social behaviour, which could potentially lead to savings elsewhere in the Council.

The Board also noted that a surplus remains on the Waste Partnership Contract and members feel that consideration should be given to utilising this surplus to fund recycling projects and projects that would deliver renewable energy, such as windfarms and solar panels.

The Board therefore **resolved:-**

- (1) to recommend to the Leader that, in reference to Minute No. 49/17 of the Cabinet (22nd February, 2017), in considering the recommendations of the Community Safety, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Board (resolutions (1) (2) and (3)) consideration be given to the use of underspend on the Housing Revenue Account to fund the provision of CCTV in high rise housing stock;
- (2) to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment that consideration be given to utilising the underspend on the Waste Partnership Contract to fund recycling projects and projects that would deliver renewable energy.

Councillor Peter Hughes
Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board