

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 8 December 2014**

Wards: All

**Subject: Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission – pre decision scrutiny of the Business Plan 2015-19**

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

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**Recommendations:**

- A. That Cabinet, in taking decisions relating to the Business Plan 2015-19, takes into account the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the outcomes of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

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**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. To inform Cabinet of the recommendations and comments resulting from pre decision scrutiny of the Business Plan 2015-19 by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Overview and Scrutiny Panels at their November 2014 meetings.

**2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. Each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has examined the budget and business plan proposals relating to the service areas within their remit. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has also received the findings of the Panels.
- 2.2. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission met on 25 November 2014 and agreed to forward to Cabinet the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. These are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3. The Commission agreed to draw Cabinet's attention to particular comments and recommendations made at its meeting on 25 November:
- The Commission noted with concern the increase in the budget gap over the period of the medium Term Financial Strategy from £15.2m when the 2014/15 budget was set to £32m now, but could discern no change in approach in the draft Business Plan to address the doubled deficit
  - the Commission registered its disappointment at the lack of savings proposals presented for scrutiny at this stage in the budget setting process. This meant that there was very little on which the Panels and the Commission could comment. The Commission looks forward to receiving savings proposals in the next round of scrutiny, designed to

achieve a balanced budget over the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

- the Commission noted the predicted overspend for 2014/15 and the difficulties being experienced in meeting the savings targets this year. It agreed that the planned use of £4m from the reserves to close this gap was appropriate in the short term but that this approach would not be sustainable in the longer term.
- the Commission noted that the impact of the capital programme on the revenue budget is predicted to rise over the next 4-5 years. It therefore recommended that Cabinet ensure that the capital programme continues to be challenged vigorously and items removed if they are not going to be used.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1. Cabinet is required under the terms of the constitution to receive, consider and respond to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny.

### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED.**

- 4.1. The Constitution outlines the requirements for consulting scrutiny on the budget.

### **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. Round one of scrutiny of the 2014-18 Business Plan was undertaken as follows:-

- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 4 November 2014
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 12 November
- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 11 November
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 25 November 2014

- 5.2. Comments and recommendations from round one will be reported to Cabinet on 8 December 2014.

- 5.3. Round two of scrutiny of the Business Plan is planned as follows:-

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 8 January 2015
- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 13 January 2015
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 14 January 2015
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 29 January 2015

- 5.4. The responses from round two will be presented to Cabinet on 16 February 2015. A meeting of full Council will then take place on 4 March 2015.

### **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. These are detailed in the substantive reports elsewhere on this agenda.

### **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The process for developing the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4C of the Council's Constitution. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny

Commission and panels with regard to the development of the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4E of the Constitution.

- 7.2. The legal and statutory implications relating to the budget and business plan are contained in the reports elsewhere on this agenda.

## **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement.

## **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. These were examined by the Commission and were taken into account in making their recommendations to Cabinet.

## **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

## **11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- Appendix 1 – Comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels at meetings in November 2014

## **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1. None

**References/Comments from Scrutiny Panels to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission 25 November 2014**

**Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2015-2019**

**Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 4 November 2014**

The Panel noted the report and agreed to forward their recommendations and comments to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for consideration as follows:

SEN Transport (CSF2012-05): The Panel recommends officers expedite such savings as can be achieved from the SEN budget without detriment to users.

All savings: That the Panel reluctantly agree the proposed savings and have noted those savings to be replaced.

**Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 11 November 2014**

The Panel noted and commented on the report. No comments were forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

**Healthier Communities and Older People O&S Panel: 12 November 2014**

The Panel raised some concerns about the knock on effects of budget cuts. It was agreed that this would be discussed in more detail at the January budget scrutiny meeting.