

- Bury Healthy Mind

During discussion of this item, Members were informed of the outcome the consultation process around work related savings options which had been modified after consultations with the Trade Unions and staff.

In response to a question from Councillor Carter, the Acting Assistant Director reported that the Employee Survey was a useful way of monitoring the effect of healthy workforce initiatives

With regard to the issue of short term sickness periods it was confirmed that all employees were interviewed on their return to work and absence patterns monitored as part of the Managing Attendance process. The Executive Director of Resources and Regulation stressed the need to take a robust approach and work positively with the Trade Unions to reduce sickness levels.

It was agreed:

That future Corporate Financial Monitoring reports include information relating to sickness absence levels within the Council.

OSC.367 CORPORATE PLAN PROGRESS MONITORING REPORT

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Finance) submitted a report outlining the progress made during quarter two 2014-2015 for the corporate performance indicators and projects within the Bury Council Corporate Plan.

In response to a question concerning how fuel poverty is measured it was explained that this was determined by looking at the percentage of disposable income spent on heating the home. Sarah Marshall, Performance Officer, undertook to provide a full response to the Committee.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

OSC.368 BUDGET 2015/2016

Steve Kenyon, Assistant Director of Resources & Regulation (Finance), gave a presentation detailing the key financial issues facing the Authority and subsequent efficiency savings to be made for Bury Council's 2015/16 budget.

The following key facts were presented:-

- For 2015/16, £16 million will be cut from budgets. This equates to a loss of £54 m (50%) of the budget in 5 years.
- This means the Council will need to prioritise key services at a time when residents' needs and expectations are changing and demand for services is increasing.

- In order to do this the Council are exploring alternative ways of delivering services and reviewing organisational structures.
- For 2015/16 the Council have received only 1 year's funding settlement information from the Government, which has yet to be confirmed.
- The Council's core funding from Government is likely to be cut by 13% (to be confirmed).
- The Council will also face cuts to a number of grants received from the Government, for example Early Intervention and Education Services grants. This is in addition to pressures from levies from other bodies and uncertainty following the localisation of Business Rates.

The meeting was informed of the following key measures to address the cuts:-

- Alternative Service Delivery Models - £3.420m
- Third Sector - £0.200m
- Income Generations - £2.012m
- Better use of External Funding - £3.376m
- Savings from the way the Council buys things - £1.320m
- Managing Assets - £0.726m
- T & C's, Restructuring and vacant posts - £3.229m
- Improved Recycling - £0.862m
- Reduction in provision of services - £0.662m

The Committee were informed of the financial issues facing the Authority as part of the consultation process for the 2015/16 budget. In terms of the next steps, it was reported that up to 9 January 2015 the Council is consulting residents and stakeholders on the package of cuts needed for 2015/16. This will be followed by a review of the consultation feedback which will be fed into the budget setting process for 2015/16.

Questions and comments were invited from the Committee and the following issues were raised:

- In response to a question from Councillor Daly concerning Greater Manchester Devolution, the Executive Director of Resources and Regulation reported that the impact is still largely unknown but stated that the Council would be looking to exploit the opportunities afforded by devolution to deliver services more efficiently.
- Members of the Committee discussed the role of the community in helping to deliver savings and the need to manage expectations in light of funding reductions.

It was agreed:

That Steve Kenyon be thanked for his presentation.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Finance) submitted a report informing Members of the Council's financial position for the period April 2014 to September 2014 and a projection of the estimated outturn at the end of 2014/2015.

The report also set out a proposed series of measures to curb spend in 2014/15 and proposed that this continue into 2015/16, as detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the report submitted. The report included Prudential Indicators in accordance with CIPFA's Prudential Code.

During discussion of this item, Councillor Holt expressed concerns about the proposed review of training commitments and highlighted the vital importance of training for the workforce of the future. The Executive Director acknowledged the importance of training but stressed the need to ensure value for money and highlighted the different methods that were available to deliver training.

It was agreed:

1. That the financial position of the Council as at 30 September 2014 be noted.
2. That the s151 Officer's assessment of the minimum level of balances be noted.
3. That the following measures to curb spend in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, to be implemented with effect from 1 December 2014 be noted:
 - Freeze on external recruitment (exceptions to be signed off by Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development); internal recruitment will continue to support the redeployment process.
 - Re-launch Work Life Balance options around reduced hours / purchase of leave;
 - Cease all but essential spend on stationery, office equipment etc.;
 - Any spend above £500 to be signed off by Executive Director.
4. That it be noted that Executive Directors have been requested to:
 - Review the use of all casual/ agency staff/consultants;
 - Review arrangements for overtime/additional hours;
 - Review training commitments;
 - Review spend on IT/ Communications.

OSC.370 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY MID-YEAR REVIEW 2014/2015

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Finance) submitted a Treasury Management mid-year review report in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice. The report covered the following areas:

- An economic update for the 2014/15 financial year to 30 September 2014;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Council's capital expenditure (prudential indicators);

- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2014/15;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2014/15;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2014/15;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2014/15.

It was agreed:

1. That, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the report be noted.
2. That the increase of the Counterparty investment limit for Barclays from £10m to £15m to reflect that Barclays will be the Authority's main banker for 2015 be noted.

OSC.371 CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW PROJECT GROUP - UPDATE

Leigh Webb, Principal Democratic Services Officer, reported on the work to date of the Children's Safeguarding Overview Project Group. A copy of the minutes from the initial meeting, held on the 4th November, were submitted for information.

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2014 be noted.

COUNCILLOR I GARTSIDE
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm)