

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 31 August 2016

Present: Councillor Smith (in the Chair);
Councillors R Cathcart; T Cummings; M James; R Skillen; J Walker; R E Walker and S Wright

Public in attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Also in attendance: Councillor Briggs–Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

Councillor Lewis – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources

Apologies for absence: J Black, E Fitzgerald, M Hankey and D Silbiger

OSC.196 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R E Walker declared a personal interest in Minute OSC.21, Minutes of the last meeting - relating to the Library Review, as a member of the Reinstated Bury Central Library Group.

Councillors Wright declared a personal interest in any matter relating to staffing as his wife is employed at a Primary School in the Borough.

OSC.197 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the meeting, held on 7 June 2016, be agreed as a correct record.

OSC.198 MATTERS ARISING

In respect of Minute OSC.24, Bury Library Service, Councillor R E Walker highlighted that Bury Central Library had the highest figures in the Borough relating to footfall and visitor usage.

OSC.199 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present at the meeting to ask questions under this item.

OSC.200 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN OVERVIEW PROJECT GROUP

Further to Minute OSC.25(2) of the last meeting of this Committee, Councillor Susan Southworth, Chair of the Safeguarding Children Overview Project Group, provided a verbal update on the work of the Group to date.

It was reported that the Group had since its inception examined various work streams associated with safeguarding Children, including:

- Monitoring Performance Indicators and Action Plans
- Visit to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Youth Offending Team
- Home Education
- Toxic Trio (Domestic Violence, Drugs, Alcohol)
- Review of work of the Phoenix Team
- Interviews with newly qualified Social Workers

Going forward, Councillor Southworth reported that the Group were planning to monitor the Ofsted Action Plan; visit the Victoria Family Centre and New Kershaw Centre; look at the issue of gang culture; and analyse key stage 2 attainment for Looked After Children (LAC).

During discussion of this item, Members of the Committee acknowledged the valuable and detailed work undertaken by the Group. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families highlighted the invaluable work of the Group to date which has contributed to service improvement and allowed for increased Member oversight in this critical area.

It was agreed:

That the Safeguarding Children Overview Project Group continue its ongoing work during 2016/17, with an interim report on progress being provided to this Committee in March 2017.

OSC.201 ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING THE OFSTED INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS AND REVIEW OF LOCAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD

The Cabinet Member (Children and Families) submitted a report presenting an action plan following the Ofsted inspection of Bury Council's Children's Services relating to children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and a review of the Local Safeguarding Board. The inspection took place between 22 February and 17 March 2016 and had determined that children and young people in Bury were safe.

The proposed action plan incorporated the recommendations from Ofsted inspection to assist the Council in ensuring all services to children and young people were good or outstanding.

The plan identified funding from reserves in 2016/17 for the provision of additional short term posts (6 months). The total request of resources from reserves for the action plan was £195K in 2016/17.

It was reported that Cabinet had approved the resource request at its meeting held on 20 July 2106.

During discussion of the Action Plan, the Assistant Director (Social Care and Safeguarding), reported on recruitment issues within the service, highlighting that the key post of Strategic Lead for Quality Assessment and Performance had now been filled. With regard to temporary posts within the Department the Assistant Director commented that the process was being managed economically.

In response to a question from the Chair concerning cost implications, the Assistant Director explained that much of the actions highlighted were cost neutral and met from within existing resources. An undertaking was given to ensure this was explicit in future updates to the Committee.

It was agreed:

1. That this Committee notes that the implementation of the Action Plan will be regularly monitored through Cabinet, the Corporate Parenting Board, Safeguarding Children Overview Project Group and Local Safeguarding Board.
2. That an update be submitted to this Committee early in 2017, following a further visit from Ofsted.

OSC.202 REVENUE AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN 2015/16

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources submitted a report providing details of:

- The revenue outturn figures in respect of the last financial year (2015/2016);
- Major variances between the revised estimate and the outturn;
- The level of school balances;
- Housing Revenue Account outturn for the year;
- The minimum level of balances in the light of risk Assessments.

The figures provided in the report submitted were consistent with the figures included within the Statement of Accounts approved by the Responsible Finance Officer on 27 May 2016 and Audit Committee on 19 July 2016.

In response to a question from the Chair concerning non service specific areas, the Interim Executive Director of Resources and Regulation confirmed that the planned strategy in respect of Treasury Management had contributed to the under spend in this area.

In response to a question from Councillor Cathcart concerning Lender Option Borrower Option loans (LOBO's) the Interim Executive Director explained that Council had low exposure to these types of loans.

It was agreed:

1. That the final outturn for 2015/2016, and explanations for major variances (as detailed in Appendices A, B and C of the report submitted) be noted.
2. That the level of the General Fund balances be noted.

OSC.203 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2015/16

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member and Member for Finance and Human Resources submitted a report providing details of:

- The capital outturn figures in respect of the last financial year 2015/16;
- Major variances between the Revised Estimate and the Outturn;
- The financing of the Capital Programme in 2015/16;
- Re-profile of budgets/allocations and slippage of funding into 2016/17;
- Details of the capital receipts realised during the year.

During discussion of this item Members highlighted the value of re-profiled schemes. The Executive Interim Director explained that slight variation and movement was normal and referred to the fact that the Capital Programme was a 3 year Programme.

It was agreed:

1. That the final capital outturn for 2015/2016, and explanations for major variances (as detailed in Appendix A of the report submitted) be noted.
2. That the financing of the Capital Programme in 2015/16 (as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report) be noted.

OSC.204 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources submitted a report reviewing the Council's Treasury Management activities during 2015/2016.

It was reported that the overall strategy for 2015/16 had been to finance capital expenditure by running down cash/investment balances and using shorter term borrowing rather than more expensive longer term loans.

It was agreed:

That the Treasury Management Annual report 2015/2016 be noted.

COUNCILLOR S SMITH
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7pm and ended at 8.30pm)

