



Finance Panel

Panel Observations to Cabinet on: 19th September 2023

The Finance Panel met on 15th September 2023 and considered the following documents:

- **The Revenue Financial Forecast As At 30th June 2023 - Quarter 1**
- **Capital Forecast 2023-24, As At 30th June 2023 - Quarter 1**
- **Financial Planning Report**

The Finance Panel thank the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Transformation and Officers for attending.

Finance Panel made the following observations:

- The Panel welcomed:
 1. That the Governance and Audit Committee were to request the re-implementation of a 10-year capital programme. Finance Panel fully supported the request.
 2. The overachieved forecast in revenue from Local Authority owned car parks.
- The Panel noted:
 1. That currently only half of the High Schools and All Through Schools had achieved a set budget. Finance Panel have requested to be kept updated with a clear narrative and impact of financial surgeries by Officers.
- The Panel requested:
 1. That Panel are regularly updated on the Capital Finance Requirement, throughout the budget setting process.
- The Panel expressed concern:
 1. Of the cost pressure on the Highways, Transport and Recycling (HTR) service in particular that the Home to School Transport was currently being managed from underspend within the budget.
 2. That the (HTR) Service Area was reporting a projected deficit. In light of the substantial amount of work undertaken to deliver the 20mph zones, has there been a greater volume of highways maintenance undertaken by Contractors.
 3. That the Sustainable Communities for Learning Capital programmes had been pushed back. Finance Panel request a longer-term view with ambition and pace.

Scrutiny's Recommendation	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1. That Cabinet give assurances of the cost pressures reported by the Highways, Transport and Recycling (HTR) Service, in particular that the Home to School Transport, as currently managed from underspend within the budget.	There are cost pressures within the Transport service, which is a result of increased demand and contract increases. It's been highlighted as a pressure for 2024/25 and is being managed in year with service underspends from within HTR. As of 30 th September 2023, HTR is showing a net surplus of £108k, which includes the pressures within Transport.		
2. The (HTR) Service Area was reporting a projected deficit. Information requested as to whether highway maintenance was being undertaken by Contractors.	HTR is showing a projected surplus as of 30 th September 2023 of £108k. Highway Maintenance is carried out by the internal highways teams. We do use contractors as well for some of the larger resurfacing schemes.		
3. That Cabinet provide clear rationale why the Sustainable Communities for Learning capital programme has been pushed back.	<i>There have been delayed starts to capital projects. Re-tendering and re-profiling into future years has had to be undertaken.</i>		
4 That Cabinet Support the Governance and Audit Committee's request for the re-implementation of a 10-year Capital programme.	<i>The Council approves and publishes a 5-year strategy a 10-year strategy would be very vague and high level.</i>		

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e., by 15th November 2023

Membership of the Panel on 15th September 2023:

County Councillors: A W Davies (Chair), P Lewington (Vice Chair), A Jones,
E Vaughan and C Kenyon Wade

Co-Opted Member: G Hall