

EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 January 2014

PRESENT - The Mayor (Councillor Johnson); Councillor I Haszeldine (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Curry, Francis, Landers, H Scott, C Taylor and J Vasey. (9)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Coultas and Crumbie. (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Harker, Long and Newall. (3)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE –Elizabeth Davison, Assistant Director – Finance and Human Resources

ER25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

ER26. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014/15 TO 2019/20 – (a) Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee – Specific Proposals - Pursuant to Minutes ER19/Dec/13 and ER23/Dec.13, the Assistant Director – Finance and Human Resources, gave a brief overview of the two areas of work were being undertaken as part of the budget proposals in relation to Public Sector Collaboration and Joint Commissioning and Internal Efficiency and Agreements and Restructuring.

In relation to Public Sector Collaboration and Joint Commissioning, particular reference was made to the work which was currently being undertaken in relation to the Better Care Fund, which was a single pooled budget to support health and social care services to work more closely together as a response to growing demand and constrained resources across the health and social care economy. This work is acting as the starting point for collaboration work with the Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group where savings and efficiencies could be made by joint commissioning and by developing a more integrated approach which would also provide better outcomes for patients and service users and that a proof of concept in relation to that work would be submitted to Members in due course.

Reference was also made to the work currently being undertaken in relation to waste collection and disposal, which included potential partnership working with the other Tees Valley Authorities and it was reported that Members would be updated on the progress of that work as and when appropriate.

In relation to the proposed savings in respect of internal and efficiency improvements and re-structuring, it was reported that the achievement of these savings, without impacting on service delivery, would be a real challenge in view of the internal savings which had already been made, however, it was felt that they were realistic and a number of smaller projects were being looked at to deliver the savings.

Members questioned on whether there was any other joint collaboration work with other local authorities being considered at the current time; the success of Xentrall Shared Services and any potential to expand that service to other partners; and the need for this Council to be a 'willing partner' in taking forward any potential future collaboration.
2019/20.

RESOLVED – That this Scrutiny Committee works closely with the other Scrutiny Committees to monitor the delivery of the proposals contained with the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2019/20 and will continue to receive regular update reports.

(b) Scrutiny Committee's Response - Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of all of this Council's Scrutiny Committees which had been held to consider the specific proposals within the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2019/20 which were within their individual remits.

Each of the Chairs, or Vice-Chair, in attendance at the meeting, gave a brief overview of the work undertaken by their Scrutiny Committee and outlined the reasons for the recommendations.

Discussion ensued on the need for Members to take forward their community leadership role and how they could be supported in developing that role, the view, of some Members, that they felt increasingly unable to support the direction of travel of the Medium Term Financial Plan; the role of the Council's Organisational Planning Team in taking forward the specific projects and proposals and joint working which was starting to develop with Members and Officers; and the need to continually monitor the progress against delivery of the Plan.

RESOLVED – That, in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2019/20, Cabinet be advised of the following views/comments of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees :-

(a) in relation to the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee :-

- (i) having considered the information provided at meetings held on 5th and 19th December, 2013, and 30th January, 2014, it reluctantly supports the overall strategy and the direction of travel and will continue to monitor the overall progress of its delivery on a regular basis and will also continue to monitor the progress of delivery in relation to those areas within the Plan which are within its remit, it will also work closely with the other Scrutiny Committees to monitor the delivery of the proposals within their individual remits and will continue to receive regular update reports from them.

(b) in relation to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee :-

- (i) having considered the information provided at the meeting held on 6th January, 2014, it notes the proposals.

(c) in relation to the Place Scrutiny Committee :-

(i) having considered the information provided at meetings held on 8th and 16th January, 2014 :-

(A) it notes the proposals within its remit;

(B) it welcomes the ethos of Building Strong Communities, Spending Wisely and Growing the Economy throughout the Plan;

(C) it requests that the findings of the Your Darlington Residents Survey be submitted to a future meeting to enable any further scrutiny to be undertaken as necessary;

(D) a Review Group be established to give consideration to Litter Reduction and Grounds Maintenance;

(E) it maintains that the Head of Steam Museum is crucial to Darlington's sense of Place in relation to culture, planning and economic regeneration;

(F) it is committed to the creation of a Heritage/Campus model and the need to make it viable for the future; and

(G) will encompass further work in relation to the Head of Steam Railway Museum and Cockerton Library within the Cultural Review Group and amends the Terms of Reference accordingly.

(d) in relation to the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee :-

(i) having considered the information provided at the meeting held on 8th January, 2014 :-

(A) it notes the proposals within its remit;

(B) it welcomes the ethos of Building Strong Communities, Spending Wisely and Growing the Economy evident throughout the Plan;

(C) it requests that the final analysis of the consultation be shared with Members to enable any further scrutiny to be undertaken as necessary;

(D) the work with the infrastructure organisation be reported to its meeting in March 2014 and that any further views or proposals be shared with Members as things develop; and

(E) it will continue to support the partnership working with local NHS Organisation to provide the best health services for the residents of Darlington.

(e) in relation to the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee :-

- (i) having considered the information provided at the meeting held on 14th January, 2014, it is satisfied with the direction of travel for those areas within its remit and will continue to monitor the progress of delivery in relation to those areas.