
OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Medium-Term Financial Plan

2. We have been considering the proposals contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2019/20.
3. As Members will be aware, the proposals contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan are 'directions of travel' as opposed to very specific implementation plans and our Scrutiny Committee has a valuable role in testing out that direction of travel and the approach proposed and we did this at our meeting held on 19 December 2013. We also at that meeting, discussed the proposal to utilise reserves over the next two years to bridge the budget deficit and we sought the views of the Director of Resources, as the Council's Chief Financial Officer, on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of the reserves. Following a discussion on the proposals and the need to reduce expenditure and ensure that cost reductions were delivered on time so that the level of reserves did not become inadequate in future years, we reluctantly agreed to support the proposed Strategy and the Direction of Travel.
4. We will also be considering specific areas within our remit i.e. public sector collaboration and joint commissioning; and internal efficiency agreements and re-structuring, and these items will be added to our work programme for further consideration.
5. As you will see from elsewhere on this agenda, all Scrutiny Committees are undertaking work in relation to the MTFP within their individual remits and we will be holding a special meeting on 30 January 2014, to co-ordinate a response to Cabinet as part of the consultation process.

Revised Weekly Refuse/Recycling Collection

6. Following the decision of Cabinet, at its meeting held on 13 November 2013, to consult on the introduction of alternative weekly refuse/recycling collections, we have, at the request of a Member, looked at the financial implications of introducing a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection, known as an Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) service for recycling and residual waste.
7. The Assistant Director, Community Services attended our meeting on 19 December 2013, and outlined the reasons for Cabinet's decision to consult on

an AWC service; how the system would work; the anticipated savings which would be delivered if the proposals were approved and the procurement process which had been agreed by Cabinet for the purchase of either boxes and wheeled bins and for the purchase of new recycling vehicles.

8. We were advised that it was anticipated that savings of £400,000 would be achieved in the financial year 2015/16 with £100,000 being achieved in 2014/15 due to implementation costs and half-yearly operation.
9. Having considered the proposals and the options, and following questions to the Officers in relation to health and safety, the operational proposals and staffing implications, educational issues to encourage more residents to recycle; procurement arrangements, particularly in relation to the vehicles, and the on-going discussions which were taking place across the Tees Valley in relation to future collaboration, we agreed to monitor, through the Medium-Term Financial Plan, the anticipated savings and to follow the Procurement process, which has already been agreed by Cabinet.

Councillor Ian Haszeldine
Chair Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee