
OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Efficiency and Resources Portfolio.

Annual Audit Letter 2016/17

2. Cabinet has received the Annual Audit letter for 2016/17. The Letter provides a high level summary of the results from the 2016/17 audit work undertaken by Ernst Young, the Council's external auditors. The Letter confirms that the Council's accounts give a true and fair view for the year ending 31 March 2017 and that it has proper arrangements in place to secure value for money in use of its resources.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers

3. Cabinet has received an update on developments in relation to the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (legislation which enables Council's to carry out certain types of surveillance activity for prosecutions, as long as specified procedures are complied with).

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017-18 – Quarter 3

4. Cabinet has considered the Quarter 3 forecast of the 2017/18 revenue budget out-turn. The Council's projected revenue reserves at the end of 2017/18 were £20.233 million, which was £5.221 million better than the initial 2017-21 MTFP position and includes a brought forward amount of £0.698 million from 2016/17. Departmental reserves are projected to be underspent by £1.109 million and corporately managed reserves are forecast to be under spent by £3.414 million.
5. Of the £20.233 million projected reserves, there is a risk reserve balance of £4.330 million, with a commitment to use £10.039 million to support the draft 2018-2022 MTFP, leaving £5.864 million one-off funding to further support the general fund moving forward.

Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring Quarter 3 2017/18

6. Cabinet has received information on the current position of the Council's capital commitments and resource together with all the live construction projects currently being managed by the Council.
7. The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work, with the current project position statement showing that there were 33 live projects currently

being managed with an overall project outturn value of £98.061 million. The majority of projects are running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues.

8. The final reports for two significant and successfully completed capital schemes were presented, firstly the Depot Relocation project which was delivered as part of a wider regeneration plan to redevelop Central Park and the second Mowden School Expansion Scheme delivered as part of the Children, Families and Learning Departments School Organisation Plan.

Electoral Registration – Absent Vote Signature Refresh 2018

9. In my last report to Council I advised Members that the Elections Team had written to 5342 electors, whose Absent Vote was over five years old, in order to request that a fresh specimen signature be provided as part of the security measures in place to ensure that their Absent Vote cannot be used by anyone else.
10. At the end of the six week refresh period, 5120 electors had responded, either to provide a fresh specimen signature, or cancel their Absent Vote, and 322 electors had their Absent Vote rescinded accordingly.

Neasham Road – linked to Relocation of Cattle Mart

11. Cabinet approved a proposal that, if implemented, would see the Darlington Cattle Mart (DFAM) move out of the town centre to a new location. Land at Neasham Road owned by DFAM and other parties would be acquired for the development of a mix of housing including a significant proportion of affordable and social; meeting an identified housing need. This acquisition is conditional on a satisfactory site investigation, highway matters and surrender of an existing option to a national house builder. If the proposal is implemented, DFAM has confirmed that they will relocate to a more suitable site off the A68.

Councillor Stephen Harker
Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio