
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.

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18 – Quarter 3

2. We have received the Quarter 3 forecast of the 2017/18 revenue budget outturn. The latest projections show an overall improvement against the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) of £5.221 million, an increase of £1.429 million from the half – year report. Departmental resources are forecast to be underspent by £1.109 million and corporately managed resources are forecast to be under spent by £3.414 million.
3. We particularly discussed the improved position in relation to adult social care, which was reporting an improvement of £1.009 million, which was mainly due to the projected reduction in residential placements and an increase in income received towards packages of care. It is expected that, by the year end, there will be 57 less residential placements than the budgeted position, which is a reduction of 12 per cent.
4. In relation to Children's Services, there have been a small number of changes across budget lines, however, the most significant change during this period relates to the Transport Unit. There is an expected year-end budget pressure due to a rise in the number of children attending special schools inside and outside of Darlington and a full review of transport is being undertaken. We have asked that we be provided with updates on this as the review progresses, along with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
5. Other areas of departmental underspend are in relation to Finance and Governance as a result of reduced costs of the pensions increase, a rates rebate in relation to the Dolphin Centre and a higher than expected turnover in relation to building services as a result of a strong performance of new build and works for schools, together with a lower reliance on sub-contractor works.
6. We will continue to monitor the MTFP position as part of our work programme and receive regular updates.

Work Programme

7. We will be considering adding a number of items to our work programme. Officers are currently looking at some areas where we have requested further information and Members will also be provided some clarification on areas they have requested be looked at, particularly in relation to the Housing Revenue Account, Allocation of Section 106 monies, Car Parking income and, as referred to above, the cost of school transport.

Councillor Ian Haszeldine
Chair Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee