

**COUNCIL**  
**31 March 2022**

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**OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**Climate Change**

2. We received an update from the Head of Highways Asset Management on the work being undertaken within that section to reduce and continue to reduce its carbon footprint by trialling and using alternative methods on its schemes.
3. We were advised that, over the last three years, the total amount of Co2 savings within that area was 147 tonnes, which equates to driving 882,000 miles in a diesel car.
4. Recycling of existing carriageways has proved effective with six schemes within the Borough using this method over the last three years, with a total of 4000 tonnes of material recycled, equating to 230 wagon loads, which would ordinarily have been sent to landfill.
5. Where recycling of road surfaces is not suitable and more traditional methods of working still need to continue, warm asphalts are being used which are made at a much lower temperature. This leads to less gas being required, equating to a typical saving of between eight and ten per cent reduction in carbon emissions. Seven schemes have been completed this year using this method and it will continue into next year's schemes.
6. Tar bound planings have also been stored from the summer maintenance programme for use on a scheme to raise the level of a road, and again, this saved 146 wagon trips with the job being completed earlier than if traditional methods had been used and that a one coat system is being used for footpaths which is also expected to achieve savings

**Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 3**

7. We have considered the latest capital resource and commitment position to inform the monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme, together with an update on the current status of all construction projects which are currently being managed by the Council.
8. The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work which is delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and more critically to Council services and there are currently 46 live projects being managed with an overall projected outturn value of £138.928 million with the majority of the Council's projects running to time, cost and quality expectations. Monitoring is on-going however, given the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally.

9. Six projects which were showing variances were highlighted to us and we were provided with an explanation as to the reasons for those variances which were mainly logistical issues.
10. We also discussed the reporting capability of Project in a Box, the new electronic capital project reporting system, and the level of information which could be provided to us to enable us to compare the position from the previous quarters information.

### **Revenue Budget Monitoring – Quarter 3**

11. The Council's projected reserves at the end of 2021-21 are £29.773 million, a £4.847 million improvement on the initial 2021-25 MTFP position and we were advised that this improvement in reserves, included a brought forward amount of £2.317 million from 2020/21, £0.196 million of projected departmental overspend, the rebasing exercise of £0.993 million, a £0.729 million increase in corporate resources and net £1.004 million which was required from the CV19 reserve (a total drawn down from the reserve of £1.474 m to fund the departmental CV19 costs and £0.470m to refund the shortfall in government grant for Sales, Fees and Charges in corporate resources).
12. Of the £29.773 million projected reserves, there is a risk reserve balance of £5.350 million and a commitment to use £15.838 million to support years two to four of the current MTFP, which leaves £8.585 million of unallocated reserves.
13. We discussed the stronger than expected recovery of the Council's leisure and culture facilities and the intention to use that additional income to a ring fenced 2025 Rail Heritage Fund to be utilised for the refurbishment of the Loco No. 1 replica and a request from the Group Services for People to carry forward funding to cover the implementation costs of a new Education Case Management System.

### **Work Programme**

14. We constantly review our work programme and adapt to items which we may wish to look at. In doing this, we also look at how we can ensure we are briefed on areas within our remit and we have held a number of sessions with Officers, outside of the formal Scrutiny meetings to do this.
15. As mentioned above, the Council has a new electronic capital reporting system, Project in a Box and we have recently had a session with the providers to see its reporting capabilities, together with sessions on the Commercial Premises Hygiene inspection regime, a briefing on the outcome of the employee survey and an update on the Markets. We have also got a session booked to look at the current position in relation to the Broadband Infrastructure within Darlington.
16. If any issues arise out of these briefings, we would add this to our agreed work programme and undertake further more detailed work.

**Councillor Mike Renton**  
**Chair Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee**