

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.

Council Tax Recovery

2. The collection of a Council tax is a key priority for the Council and we have received an update on the Council's recovery process and collection performance.
3. Council Tax collection has been particularly challenging over the last few years with the difficult economic climate and the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme in 2013, however, overall collection performance is good and we found that the collection of arrears of Council Tax are well managed, with dedicated recovery staff who actively pursue the higher debts and those who deliberately avoid paying.
4. Following questions by Members, we were advised that the collection of Council Tax for those in receipt of support was generally successful, with in-year collection of Council Tax for these people being around 80 per cent. However, for those people who are in genuine financial difficulties, the Council does offer support to help them.

Performance Indicators

5. We have received information on the Quarter 2 performance against those key performance indicators for 2018/19 which are within the remit of our Scrutiny Committee.
6. It is pleasing to note that the sickness absence figures are on track at the end of quarter 2 to achieve the year-end target and we discussed the proactive work undertaken by the Human Resources Division and Managers in relation to this and the various health and well-being initiatives in place.

Medium-Term Financial Plan

7. As with all Scrutiny Committees we have had the opportunity to respond to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019/20.
8. The delivery of the core offer remains extremely challenging with some significant pressures arising in Children's social care, however, through innovative financial investments and increased income from economic growth, we are advised that the Council can still deliver the agreed balanced plan, extend the MTFP and a further £0.600 million has been identified which could be used to bolster the Futures Fund themes or be returned to reserves.
9. We discussed a number of risk pressures which have been identified, however, it is not clear at this stage whether they will definitely come to fruition, if they do they

are of significant value. Given the potential impact Officers have considered it prudent to recognise them in the budget and, following a review of these risks, it has been recommended that a prudent level would be to include 60 per cent of the total value in the risk contingency line.

10. We will be holding a meeting in February 2019 to formulate a response on behalf of all the Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet.

Councillor Ian Haszeldine
Chair Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee