

Time Commenced – 5.01pm
Adjourned – 6.58pm
Reconvened – 17 January 2023 – 5.00pm
Time Finished – 6.55pm

Executive Scrutiny Board

16 January 2023

Present: Councillor Repton (Chair)
Councillors Care, Carr, Dhindsa, M Holmes, Jennings, Martin,
Roulstone, Whitby

In attendance: Councillor Barker - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Governance
Councillor Eyre – Cabinet Member for Community
Development, Place and Tourism
Councillor Hassall – Cabinet Member for Regeneration,
Decarbonisation, Strategic Planning and Transport
Councillor J Pearce - Cabinet Member for Streetpride, Leisure
and Public Spaces
Councillor Poulter – Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Strategy and Policy
Councillor Smale - Cabinet Member for Finance, Digital and
Culture
Councillor Webb - Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and
Housing
Councillor Williams – Cabinet Member for Children and Young
People and Skills
Councillors Hezelgrave, Lind, Naitta, Nawaz, Rawson, Skelton
Verna Bayliss – Director of Planning, Transportation and
Engineering
Andy Brammall – Director of Digital and Customer Services
Clare Davenport – Director of Leisure, Culture and Tourism
Emily Feenan – Director of Legal, Procurement and
Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Heather Greenan – Director of Policy, Insight and
Communications
Suanne Lim – Director of Early Help and Children's Social
Care
Steven Mason – Democratic Services Officer
Gurmail Nizzer – Director of Integrated CYP Commissioning
Rachel North – Strategic Director of Communities and Place
Alison Parkin – Director of Financial Services
Simon Riley – Strategic Director of Corporate Resources
Perveez Sadiq – Director of Adult Social Care Services
Paul Simpson – Chief Executive
Andy Smith – Strategic Director of People Services

62/22 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

63/22 Late Items

There were none.

64/22 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

65/22 Budget Proposals 2023/24 – 2025/26

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources on Budget Proposals 2023/24 – 2025/26.

It was reported that on 21 of December 2022 Council Cabinet approved for public consultation on the Budget proposals for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26, to run from 22 December 2022 to 28 January 2023.

Members noted that the Budget detailed the resourcing plans for delivering the Council Plan agreed in February 2022 which set out a new Vision for Derby 'Ambitious for Derby' and priorities linked to four partnership themes (Growth, Green, Resilient and Vibrant).

It was also reported that the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) assumed delivery of £16.554m of budget savings and additional income in 2023/24, and an increase in Council Tax of 4.99% (this included 2% specifically for social care).

It was noted that the MTFP incorporated £32.357m of pressures in 2023/24, to address demand and cost pressures and to invest in Council priorities.

It was reported that scrutiny of Council Priorities and its resourcing detailed in the MTFP was an integral part of Executive Scrutiny Board's functions and that the Board could then make any appropriate recommendations to Council Cabinet.

Members noted that the setting of a balanced budget for 2023/24 had been challenging against a backdrop of very volatile public sector finances and that this has required the development of a significant number of savings proposals across all Council activities.

To allow for effective scrutiny, the Chair of Executive Scrutiny Board agreed to the scrutiny taking place over the following two sessions of the Board.

16 January 2023:

- Scrutiny of Budget Strategy (Main Report)
- Scrutiny of Communities and Place and Corporate Resources Savings Proposals (Appendix 2)
- Scrutiny of Communities and Place and Corporate Resources Pressures (Appendix 3)
- Scrutiny of Revenue Reserves (Appendix 4)

17 January 2023:

- Scrutiny of People Services Savings Proposals (Appendix 2)
- Scrutiny of People Services Pressures (Appendix 1)
- Scrutiny of Capital Programme (Appendix 5)

The first part of the meeting covered Corporate Resources. Councillor Barker – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Governance, outlined the main proposals and pressures within his portfolio.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- The viability of the council going forward, with the proposed staff reductions.
- Fewer staff, leading to less inspections (trees, for example) and the possible impact on insurance risk.
- Property rationalisation.
- Reduction in opening hours at the “front door” and the introduction of self-service.
- The reduction in audit coverage.
- The centralisation of business support and administration functions.
- Procurement and the use of waivers.
- IT savings.
- The possibility of the council selling its procurement services to other councils’.

The second part of the meeting covered Communities and Place. Councillor J Pearce – Cabinet Member for Streetpride, Leisure and Public Spaces, outlined the main proposals and pressures relevant to his portfolio.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- The funding gap in relation to Highways.
- The availability of Leisure Services.
- Problems with litter.
- Blue bins and brown bins and any related charges.
- Tackling environmental waste and fly tipping.
- Parks being a valuable resource and important for health.

Councillor Hassall – Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Decarbonisation, Strategic Planning and Transport, covered the main proposals and pressures within his portfolio.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- Cuts being counterproductive in terms of less economic regeneration and development.
- The impact upon attracting international development.

- The proposed reduction of officers, including Regeneration officers.
- The current level of reserves, use of reserves and the effect of the Pandemic on the use of those reserves.

Councillor Eyre – Cabinet Member for Community Development, Place and Tourism, outlined the main proposals and pressures relevant to his portfolio.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- The Christmas offer for the city.
- The cuts in relation to the closure of Community Managed Libraries (CML) and associated staff.
- The future use of CML buildings.
- The invite for expressions of interest for community groups to take over buildings associated with the CML project.
- Better Together – the strategic vision, the strategic lead and the impact of the budget proposals upon its delivery.
- The link between Highways functions, engineering projects and Community teams.

In the absence of Councillor Smale – Cabinet Member for Finance, Digital and Culture, for the first session, the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources and the Strategic Director for Communities and Place outlined the main proposals and pressures relevant to his portfolio.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- Proposed cuts in relation to Derby Live and Derby Live staffing.
- Reductions in the number of events.
- The impact of the proposals on any future application for City of Culture status.
- How the Museum Service will achieve its savings.

The third part of the meeting covered People Services. Councillor Williams – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Skills, spoke about the main proposals and pressures in relation to her portfolio.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- The cost of out of area placements.
- The deletion of the Exiting Care Team.
- Fostering Care allowances.
- Reductions in the School Improvement Team.
- Home to School Transport savings.
- Social Work vacancies, the demand for services and individual caseloads.
- Early Help savings.
- The work of NEET employees and the provision of youth workers.

- The opportunities represented by the role that communities can play in providing personal support.
- Cuts to Statutory Services.

Councillor Webb – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing, summarised the main proposals and pressures within his portfolio.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- Bed blocking and the lack of facilities in residential housing.
- Shared Lives savings.
- Cuts to Home First and occupational therapists.
- Scaled down Care packages for people in the community.
- Funding for mental health day services.
- Personal care and the use of Telecare.
- The possibility of engaging the community more for preventative work.

The final part of the meeting covered the capital budget. Councillor Smale – Cabinet Member for Finance, Digital and Culture, covered the main proposals and pressures in relation to this.

There was considerable discussion and Members asked questions, raised concerns, and sought assurances in relation to a number of issues including:

- Capital projects that had been stopped or delayed, such as the Guildhall.
- The money available for the Christmas offer and the forthcoming coronation event.
- The reprofiling of longer-term projects.
- Slippages to projects.
- Energy projects.
- The ability to reprofile projects that have a return on investment so that they can be added into the capital programme.

The Executive Scrutiny Board agreed the following resolution:

In light of these unacceptable cuts and service reductions that will badly impact and affect the lives of many thousands of people here in Derby, Executive Scrutiny Board requests Council Cabinet to again urgently ask for a cross-party meeting with relevant Government Ministers to get a more favourable financial settlement or help.

MINUTES END