

Corporate Scrutiny and Governance Board

Recommendations from the meeting held on 04August 2015

Council Cabinet Agenda – 05 August 2015

Item 8 Review of Voter Turnout

Members discussed the Review of Voter Turnout report from the former Corporate Scrutiny and Governance Board which is due to be considered by Council Cabinet. Councillor Carr informed the Board that he will be attending Council Cabinet to represent Councillor Eldret, the former Chair of the Board, in her absence.

Members discussed some of the concerns raised in the review, particularly around lowering the voting age from 18 to 16 and allowing staff to take time off to vote in person. The Service Director for Legal and Democratic Services informed the Board that the Law Commission is carrying out a project of electoral law reform which will be looking at statutes and secondary legislation governing a long list of elections and referendums and will be considering numerous changes, including those aforementioned. It is not expected that the final Law Commission report will be published until early 2017.

No further recommendations were made to Council Cabinet on this Item.

Item 9 Quarter 1 – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16

Members were informed that there is currently an early forecast underspend of £2.574m against the overall base budget position for Adults, Health and Housing. However, members were informed that this will continue to be refined as client numbers are monitored during the year and may change if client numbers start to rise.

Members were also informed that the Children and Young People directorate is forecasting a pressure of £2.1m for the financial year 2015/16. This is mainly due to pressures on looked after children agency costs.

The Board discussed the increasing number of Looked After Children in the city and the issues around paying more for private foster carers and the high number of these placements which is showing an upward trend. The Board also heard that a report was being written for the Chief Officer Group on HR Sold Services as some services are loss-leaders and others more financially viable.

No recommendations to Council Cabinet were made by the Board on this item.

The Board referred the recruitment of in-house foster carers be referred to the Inspiring Young People Board for a detailed topic review and the issue of HR Sold Services to the Supporting Derby's Workforce Board for a more in-depth view.

Item 10 Quarter 1 – Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/16

A report of the Leader of the Council providing detail on the revised financial position for the 2015/16 Capital Budget for Quarter 1 of 2015/16 was summarised for the Board by the Head of Finance for Children and Young People.

No recommendations to Council Cabinet were made by the Board on this item.

Item 11 Contract and Financial Procedure Matters

A report of the Leader of the Council on items that require reporting to and approval by Council Cabinet under Contract and Financial Procedure rules was summarised for the Board by the Director of Finance and Procurement.

Members heard that changes to the current capital programme include:

- the approval of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserves to be used for Special Educational Needs review work-streams;
- the approval to tender and award of contract for a Strategic Property Adviser; and
- the use of reserves to be used to support the processing and quality checking of Housing Benefit and Council Tax support claims, and changes to the Housing Benefit system.

Members expressed concern that the estimated cost of the contract value for the Strategic Property Advisor over the three year period of £150,000, based on potential daily rates of between £750 -£1,000 is extremely high. The Board sought reassurances that value for money and outcomes for large strategic sites in the city would be achieved if the Council is awarding a contract at this level.

The Acting Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods informed the Board that payment by results would not be feasible for this post due to the nature of the work that the contract is aiming to achieve and the timescales for this, however the details of the contract would be seeking to award this to a provider with national reach that will be confident in an ability to be able to take forward the development of some of the city's large strategic sites.

The Board resolved to recommend to Council Cabinet that the contract specifications for the Strategic Property Advisor Contract include a proven national influence and evidence of achieving outcomes in the development of large strategic sites.