

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 10 January 2024 at 9.30 am at the Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT

Cllr Ben Evans	Cllr Dr Andrew Miller
Cllr Andrew Gravells MBE	Cllr Alan Preest (Chair)
Cllr Terry Hale	Cllr Chloe Turner
Cllr Colin Hay	Cllr Kathy Williams
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	

Virtually in attendance:

Cllr Matt Babbage

Substitutes:

Cllr John Bloxsom
Cllr Susan Williams

Cabinet Members:

Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE, Leader of the Council
Cllr Stephan Fifield, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery
Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning
Cllr Stephen Davies, Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years
Cllr Philip Robinson, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills, and Bus Transport
Cllr Dave Norman MBE, Cabinet Member for Fire, Community Safety and Libraries
Cllr David Gray, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
Cllr Dom Morris, Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood
Cllr Lynden Stowe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Change

(In attendance for their relevant items)

Apologies:

Cllr Nick Housden, Cllr Lisa Spivey and Cllr Wendy Thomas

36 SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET & REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION AND COUNCIL STRATEGY

- 1.1 Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE, Leader of the Council, and Pete Bungard, Chief Executive, introduced the key revenue figures and assumptions, the provisional financial settlement, and the capital budget to members. It was noted that:

- The budget for the 2024/25 financial year was not as comfortable as previous years, however the Council was in a better position than a number of other local authorities.
 - The use of reserves was at a sensible level.
 - The public consultation on the budget had commenced on 7 December 2023 and would end on 11 January 2024.
 - The feedback from today's scrutiny session would feed into Cabinet's consideration of the budget at its meeting at the end of January. Cabinet would then recommend the budget for full Council to consider at its meeting in February.
 - The provisional local government settlement in December had been disappointing. The final settlement from Government was expected early February, and confirmation of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and council tax data from districts was expected late January.
 - Estimated resources for 2024/25 were £609.6m, including £386.2m from council tax.
 - The budget included £73.9m of investment into services, including £21.9m for Children's Services to support vulnerable children; and £12.4m for market sustainability and supplier inflation in Adult Social Care.
 - The budget included £25.5m of budget reductions and increased income. The majority of additional income was derived from the Energy from Waste facility.
 - The budget included a council tax increase of 4.99%, as well as a 3% provision for a pay award.
 - The provisional settlement was expected to be £200k less than estimated at the time of public consultation, however it was anticipated that this figure could be managed subject to further confirmation of NNDR and council tax data from the district councils.
 - Almost £500m was committed to the capital programme for 2024/25 and future years. There was an additional £84.8 million of new capital investment proposed, of which £69.1m was funded by grants, and £15.6m funded from borrowing.
 - The strategy of maintaining borrowing internally would be continued where possible.
- 1.2 One member queried whether the Corporate Strategy should be reviewed, given changes that had resulted from the cost-of-living crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the war in the Ukraine. In response, it was understood that Cabinet had revisited the Strategy last year and decided against a review as it was felt the document provided sufficient scope for progress. It was also explained that the commissioning intentions, which were updated annually, provided the link between the Corporate Strategy and the budget.
- 1.3 Another member asked whether the final budget was expected to increase and whether any additional funds would be received. In response, it was explained that there was flexibility with the use of reserves, however these shouldn't be raided at the expense of future years. It was hoped there

could be a small increase in funds from council tax. It was not anticipated that the final settlement from Government would provide the investment required. It was also noted that no funding was hidden within the draft budget.

2. ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITIES

- 2.1 Cllrs Stephan Fifield, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery, Carole Allaway-Martin, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning, and Mark Hawthorne outlined the commissioning intentions, ambitions and budget changes detailed in the draft MTFS and Council Strategy relating to Adult Social Care, Public Health and Communities for 2024/25. Members noted the following:
- An 11.27% increase was being proposed for the total Adult Social Care budget.
 - A £0.419m increase in spend on in-house services and £2.6m for staff pay increases was being proposed.
 - The continued strategic objective was to transform Adult Social Care services to improve delivery, whilst maintaining control of the budget.
 - Procurement had commenced for a technology enabled care service to improve domestic capacity and improve the quality of care.
 - The Transformation Programme continued to be emphasised, including restructuring governance of the programme.
 - The Data and Intelligence Strategy would be delivered to support the transformation agenda through innovative procurement and data analysis.
 - Market exploration had been carried out for digital kit suppliers.
 - There was a savings target of £9.284m, of which nearly £2m had been achieved to date, with the rest to be achieved over the next 3 years.
 - The Market Sustainability and Investment Fund had enabled the procurement of increased domiciliary care to support hospital discharges.
 - The new CQC regulatory regime began this month. GCC could expect an inspection within the next two years. This would be the first inspection of adult social care in 13 years. The service had therefore been focussing on a self-assessment. An improvement plan had been drafted as a result and focused on quality, performance, and coproduction.
 - From a commissioning perspective, the Adult Social Care market remained fragile, and GCC was investing in the amount it paid providers, particularly for older persons.
 - A new market position statement was being prepared, which would set out the projected care needs of the County's population over the next 20 years, and the provision required to meet these needs.
 - In relation to Public Health and Communities, the overall Public Health budget was estimated to be just under £36.8m for 2024/25, including £26.4m from the ringfenced Public Health Grant, which included the projected 1.3% uplift.

- The remaining £10m of the budget was funded by the Council to deliver domestic abuse support services and community and accommodation-based support.
- Agenda for Change within the NHS was a key cost pressure, in terms of increases in staff pay.
- Public Health had its own reserve which could be used to address cost pressures.
- A number of additional grant schemes were coming through, including a grant to deliver services under the Domestic Abuse Act, and the Supplemental Drug and Alcohol Treatment Recovery Grant to augment the drug and alcohol services currently provided.
- No additional funding was predicted under Homes for Ukraine to support asylum seekers within the County, as low numbers of new arrivals were predicted, and funding was per person arriving.
- GCC was expecting a share of £70m per year for the next 5 years, which would equate to £780k per year, to enhance local stop smoking services.

2.2 One member queried where the additional funding from the Supplemental Drug and Alcohol Treatment Recovery Grant would be spent. In response, it was explained that the grant formed part of the efforts to sustain and improve services available. The Government provided a list as to what the grant could be spent on. A list of the interventions funded could be provided to the member.

ACTION – Siobhan Farmer

2.3 The member also queried where the savings from the Adult Social Care budget in terms of services for older people, those with learning disabilities and physical disabilities, were being derived. It was advised, in response, that these “savings” were in fact increases in income due to the average 3% increase in fees and charges applied across the Council. The final Cabinet report would be clarified to avoid this confusion.

ACTION – Paul Blacker/ Sarah Scott

2.4 Clarification was sought as to what the Carers Service budget was spent on, and what the reduction in the real term budget would mean. It was advised that the duty to support carers was commissioned out to the Carers Forum, and an inflationary uplift was included as part of that contract.

2.5 In response to a query, it was understood that the approach to co-production could be met within existing budgets.

2.6 It was explained that addressing poor health outcomes fell under the supporting people part of the Public Health budget, which included a wide range of contracts covering different aspects of Public Health.

- 2.7 One member expressed the view that the outcomes and priorities section within the commissioning intentions document appeared to detail the work which would be progressed during 2024/25 rather than the proposed outcomes and targets for the year. It was agreed that this would be addressed for the following year.

ACTION – Sarah Scott

- 2.8 Questions were raised regarding the funding allocated for hospital discharges. Members were advised that the grant came with specific conditions that needed to be met, and a number of indicators were used to monitor the impact of the additional funds. Officers would share details of the cost of beds and domiciliary care following the meeting.

ACTION – Sarah Scott

- 2.9 A member expressed concern about how the language used within the budget document, such as ‘transformation’, could be perceived by service users that may have had their support reduced or removed.

3. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- 3.1 Cllrs Stephen Davies, Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years, and Philip Robinson, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills, and Bus Transport, outlined the commissioning intentions, ambitions and budget changes detailed in the draft MTFS and Council Strategy relating to Children and Families for 2024/25. Members noted the following:
- A net cost increase of £23.236m was projected for the Children and Families budget for 2024/25.
 - There was continued pressure on the Children and Families budget, which was reflected in the current financial year’s £7.8m overspend.
 - Action was being taken to address the cost pressures. For example, children’s social care was being remodelled to focus on high quality early intervention, which this year would include the development of the family hub approach. High-cost complex needs packages of care were also being reviewed to secure value for money.
 - Further action to address cost pressures was being taken through effectively commissioning independent provision, developing the Council’s own children’s homes and accommodation, and increasing the number of foster families within the County.
 - There were care ladder risks both within and out of the Council’s control which affected the delivery of children’s social care. Those within the Council’s control included good social care practice, good commissioning, the good collection and use of data, and a culture of value for money. Those out of local control included changing demographics, the national economic and social context, statutory guidance on admitting children into care, and asylum seekers.

- In terms of the Children and Families capital budget, £160m had been allocated to the Schools Programme, and £12m to the Non-Schools Programme.
 - Under the Schools Programme, funding would be allocated for an additional special school and alternative provision capacity to assist supply of High Needs places and reduce reliance on out-of-county provision.
 - Under the Non-Schools Programme, a range of social care facilities that would assist the Council in meeting needs more locally and allowing less reliance on the external social care market would be funded, including supported living facilities in Stroud, a parent and baby assessment facility in the Forest of Dean, and children's homes in Gloucester.
- 3.2 Clarification was provided regarding how the Council would look to reduce the number of children in care and support the return of children to birth families more quickly.
- 3.3 There was a discussion relating to carbon reduction in schools. One member expressed concern that the £300k allocated within the budget was not sufficient and queried whether there were any further funds to address the issue. Clarification would be sought on this.

ACTION – Ann James

- 3.4 The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills, and Bus Transport shared a member's frustration over two unsuccessful bids for funding for special schools in the County, despite the Department for Education deeming them to be compliant. It was understood that the need for funding had been greater elsewhere. The Council would be using alternative investment to fund the new special school which would be developed in Abbeydale, Gloucester.
- 3.5 A member sought assurance that the Council had the capability to be commercially efficient in negotiating and managing contracts to ensure good value for money. In response, it was understood that the development and delivery of the sufficiency strategy would look to ensure the resilience and confidence of the Council in the market.
- 3.6 One member highlighted the limited detail on outcomes for Children and Families within the commissioning intentions document. It was agreed that these would be strengthened for the following financial year.

ACTION – Ann James

- 3.7 Details on fostering capacity and the support being developed for foster families as part of the refreshed corporate parenting strategy would be strengthened within the commissioning intentions.

ACTION – Ann James

- 3.8 Following a query relating to the use of other pupils as translators for refugees within schools, it was determined that it was up to the schools to decide how they used their resources to best support these children.
- 3.9 One member sought clarification as to what had changed in this year's budget from last year's, expressing the view that there was little difference between the two and expressing concern that the service area would overspend again. The member felt that there needed to be more investment in early intervention and prevention work to promote change.
- 3.10 In response, the actions being taken to address the cost pressures were highlighted to members, such as the delivery of the sufficiency strategy. In terms of focusing on early intervention, members were informed of the PAUSE programme which provided support to parents who had had more than one child removed from their care. However, it was recognised that the budget would continue to be under pressure and would need to be closely monitored next year and in future years, because of the need to meet statutory obligations, to continue the journey to improve the service, and to do the right thing for the children.
- 3.11 Assurance was sought that children in care were able to receive the required medical care, in light of the pressures on NHS services. In response it was explained that the Council was working with partners to address the challenges in this area.
- 3.12 In response to a further query, it was noted that the timeliness of the production of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) was improving, and additional money had been allocated in the budget to continue this improvement. It was also noted that there were not enough special school placements within the County to meet demand, resulting in the high budget to fund out of county and independent settings. This was therefore why the new school at Abbeydale needed to be developed.
- 3.13 Members were informed that the Council did not compare itself to statistical neighbours when developing its ambitions, focussing instead on ensuring the right outcomes for children within the Country.
- 3.14 Clarification would be provided on the current status of the project to develop a supported living facility at Southfields.

ACTION – Ann James

- 3.15 It was explained that the recent Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bid for improvements to Gastrells School was not detailed within the Council's capital programme as the bid had not yet been fully approved by Stroud District Council.

- 3.16 The challenges relating to housing developments and the impact they had on increased demand for school places and home to school transport was recognised.

4. FIRE AND RESCUE

- 4.1 Cllr Dave Norman MBE, Cabinet Member for Fire, Community Safety and Libraries, outlined the commissioning intentions, ambitions and budget changes detailed in the draft MTFs and Council Strategy relating to Fire and Rescue for 2024/25. Details of the coronial services and trading standards budget proposals were also addressed at this point of the meeting. Members noted the following:
- The official report following the most recent HMI inspection of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) was expected in Spring.
 - There was a £2.191m overall budget increase, excluding pay inflation pressures.
 - £172k had been allocated to update the business-critical software for trading standards to a cloud-based solution.
 - £4.596m had been allocated to fund front line appliances, boats and associated equipment, the environmental protection unit, and thermal imaging cameras.
- 4.2 One member sought clarification that the increase in resources to fund additional staff were permanent. It was confirmed, in response that there had been an increase of 6 additional posts permanently to support GFRS in its improvement journey, however some resources had been redeployed once certain areas of work had been addressed.
- 4.3 Clarification was also sought on the costs of implementing the new airwave radio scheme. It was explained that the fire authority would be expected to contribute to the costs of the scheme, and this was built into the proposed budget.
- 4.4 Following a question as to whether the allocated funds for trading standards were sufficient to address the challenges of recruiting to senior roles within the team, it was noted that succession planning was taking place, including pursuing an apprenticeship scheme. However, it was critical that funds for this financial year were spent on the cloud-based software solution to ensure the team was more efficient on the ground.
- 4.5 There was a further query as to whether resources should be included in the 2024/25 budget to fund mortuary equipment, given that there was a high risk of failure. In response, members were informed that there was a scheme of work within the AMPS plan to update the generators and equipment at the mortuary, and a bid would be submitted in 2025/26 for additional staff.

- 4.6 Clarification was provided as to where the £8k in income targets were derived. This was understood to be a 3% increase in fees and charges across all directorates to take account of inflation. This included charges by GFRS for providing non-humanitarian special services.
- 4.7 One member expressed disappointment that the commissioning intentions for the service for the upcoming financial year were almost identical to the previous year. It was explained, in response, that the reason for the repetitive nature of the commissioning intentions was that they were produced in line with the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which covered a three-year period, however, this would be addressed in future years.

ACTION – Mark Preece

- 4.8 An update on the reasons for the delay in receiving previously purchased fire engines was requested. Reasons for the delay included a shortage of raw materials due to the war in the Ukraine and a legal challenge from one of the potential providers. It was explained that funds in the budget for 2024/25 was to purchase an additional 10 vehicles to the 10 previously ordered. Whilst some appliances had gone over their working life span, all appliances were fully maintained and were road safe.

5. ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- 5.1 Cllrs David Gray, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, Dom Morris, Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood, Philip Robinson, and Dave Norman outlined the commissioning intentions, ambitions and budget changes detailed in the draft MTFs and Council Strategy relating to Environment and Economic Growth, including Road Safety and Libraries, for 2024/25. Members noted the following:
- The service area was in the process of delivering £100m worth of capital projects through external funding, such as the M5 junction 10 and junction 9 projects and the Gloucester Cycle Spine.
 - The Highways Transformation Programme had increased the number of potholes filled by 50% over the last year and delivered 30k non-safety defects.
 - An additional £100m on top of the national settlement had been allocated to maintain and improve the efficiency of the road network within the County.
 - Priorities for the upcoming financial year included completion of the Arle Court Transport Hub, delivery of further phases of the Gloucester Cycle Spine, and the extension of the current Demand Responsive Transport trials to include the areas of Tewkesbury, South Cotswolds, Berkeley Vale, and Stroud.
 - A bid had been submitted for ZEBRA, which would provide the County with 58 electric buses if successful.
 - £1m was dedicated towards tackling climate change, including supporting Climate Leadership Gloucestershire, delivering the

Gloucestershire Tree Strategy, and accelerating the delivery of electric vehicle charging points.

- 50% of waste was being recycled within the County and the Energy from Waste facility was profiting from the high energy prices.
- The Library Service had been awarded £750k from the Arts Council over three years for projects that would diversify the service.
- Library visits reached 1.25m up until the end of November 2023 and stock loans topped 1.5m.
- In terms of road safety, provisional casualty totals up until the end of November 2023 showed fatalities reducing by 43% and serious injuries reducing by around 3%.
- Money had been allocated within the budget for phase 3 of the Community Speed Watch.
- The Road Safety Partnership was developing a safe systems approach to casualty reduction, with all partners endorsing this approach.
- There would be an £800k increase in capital investment to target the most dangerous roads within the County. Speed limits would be scrutinised on these routes and where appropriate speed reductions would be recommended.
- £4.4m of funding had been allocated for buses over two years, with the ambition to introduce 21 new or improved services.
- The interchange hub strategy was nearing completion.
- Adult Education would be receiving £102k to cover the pay uplift.
- The Adult Education Service had been judged 'good' by Ofsted against the new framework.

5.2 Confirmation was provided of the amount allocated under the Highways Local Scheme, which would remain the same as the current financial year.

5.3 Confirmation would be provided ahead of the February Council meeting as to whether there were plans to increase the cost of resident parking permits by 3%, in line with the income targets increase.

ACTION – Colin Chick

5.4 Several members expressed concern that the budget for footways and Public Rights of Way (PROW) was insufficient, particularly in comparison to the budget for carriageways. In response, the Cabinet Member deemed that the budget would be sufficient to maintain the safety and quality of footways, based on the analysis of data. The budget for footways and PROW for the current financial year, if not already spent, would be by end of the year. It was also advised that funds were used efficiently in this area, materials were low cost, and work was often carried out with voluntary partners.

5.5 Further details on the delivery of the Community Speed Watch scheme were provided, which was felt to have positive outcomes for towns and parishes for a small amount of investment.

- 5.6 An update on the delivery of improvements to the Strand on Cheltenham High Street would be provided following the meeting.

ACTION – Colin Chick

- 5.7 In response to a query relating to the split budget for pelican crossings, it was explained that this was to allow some focus on crossing facilities from an accessibility point of view, as well as from a road safety perspective.
- 5.8 A concern was raised regarding the low level of funds allocated for community libraries. It was confirmed that the Community Libraries Grant funding review was not due until the following financial year, however the issue was recognised and the options for one-off funding were being considered.
- 5.9 Concern was also raised about the reduction in the baseline budget for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs). Officers advised that funding would enable the continued employment of 1 experienced full-time member of staff. The Council had until 2031 to progress all DMMOs, which provided sufficient time to understand and adjust resource requirements in this area if required.
- 5.10 In response to queries regarding the budget for the decarbonisation of Council buildings, it was explained that £500k had been allocated within the capital budget to address this. Proposals included looking to increase the amount of solar energy generated by the public estate. AMPs was also considering which schools could have solar panels installed on them to provide an income stream for the Council.
- 5.11 Details on the allocation of funds for bus interchange hubs across the County would be provided following the meeting.

ACTION – Colin Chick

- 5.12 An update on proposals for a bus service covering Wotton and parts of the West of England Combined Authority would also be provided following the meeting.

ACTION – Colin Chick

- 5.13 A member commented that there was a lack of narrative as to what the Road Safety budget would be spent on. It was noted that the total budget for Road Safety was £1.9m, which included an extra £800k for the upcoming financial year. It was recognised that Road Safety within the County had suffered previously, and the Road Safety Partnership was now trying to rebuild to ensure significant road safety issues in both rural and urban areas were addressed.

- 5.14 A member requested an update on the Fastershire broadband scheme. It was explained that the project had delivered high speed broadband to over 97% of the County, and a grant scheme had been introduced to support provision to the outstanding properties.
- 5.15 Several members queried the sufficiency of funds allocated within the flooding budget. Officers confirmed that the whole budget allocated to address flooding was spent every year, the proposed budget was deemed sufficient to deliver schemes for the upcoming financial year, and over £30m had been spent in this area since the 2007 floods.
- 5.16 A member highlighted the importance of ensuring people felt safe to travel actively over short distances.
- 5.17 In response to a query, the Cabinet member would look into arrangements with Herefordshire on potential cross-border Household Recycling Centre use.

ACTION – Colin Chick

- 5.18 Clarification was provided as to how funds for cycle route maintenance would be spent.
- 5.19 Further details regarding the Road Safety capital budget and where this would be spent would be communicated following the meeting.

ACTION – Colin Chick

- 5.20 Following a query, it was estimated that of the total Highways and Transport budget, at least 80% of funds were predetermined by Government grants.

6. CORPORATE RESOURCES

- 6.1 Cllr Lynden Stowe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Change, outlined the commissioning intentions, ambitions and budget changes detailed in the draft MTFs and Council Strategy relating to Corporate Resources for 2024/25. Members noted the following:
- The modernisation of ICT systems would continue to be prioritised, in order to improve efficiency, customer service and to enhance cyber security.
 - Focus would be on leading the delivery of Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion.
 - New systems for payroll, HR, procurement, and payments would be implemented.
 - Developing the use of the Council's data and analytics would ensure the delivery of better outcomes for residents.
 - The Council's estate would continue to be reviewed and rationalised and included plans to improve the heating system within Shire Hall.

- Focus would be given to the recruitment and retention of staff and workplace planning.
 - In terms of new investments, these included £875k to move ICT applications to the cloud; £168k to increase analytical capacity to support service improvement; £425k for complex legal cases; and £25.569m of capital investment into the Council estate and ICT.
- 6.2 It was clarified, following a query, that there was a contingency in the budget for the staff pay award. An assumed 3% had been built into Directorate salary budgets with an additional 1% contingency held centrally to cover above estimated pay and price inflation in 2024/25. The details of the actual 2024 pay award were not yet known.
- 6.3 It was noted, following a further query, that the option for external borrowing had been built into the budget, given that reserves had reduced and there was less flexibility. However, the Council would continue to use internal borrowing wherever possible and pay off external debt as it matures.
- 6.4 It was noted that several legacy references within the commissioning intentions document needed to be tidied.

ACTION – Rob Ayliffe

- 6.5 A member highlighted the enthusiasm of the Committee for looking into the options for the use of solar panels on school buildings. The Cabinet member informed members that a pilot to install solar panels on five schools was currently being developed, which would also include developing a system for Council reimbursement from the investment.
- 6.6 It was queried why the Responsible Investment Policy for Treasury Management had not been referenced in the budget. In response, it was explained that no new investments had been taken out with fossil fuel exposure. The reference to the Responsible Investment Policy would be added back to the Treasury Management Strategy.

ACTION – Paul Blacker/ Rob Ayliffe

- 6.7 One member commented that it was difficult to scrutinise any new spending resulting from the recommendations of the LGA Peer Review if members were not informed of the outcomes. Following this comment, an overview of the draft recommendations from the LGA Peer Review was provided. A report on the recommendations would also be brought to the next Committee meeting in February.
- 6.8 There were several queries relating to the cost reductions of pension contributions. In response, it was understood that these related to a historic deficit. Further details on the what the figure should have been historically would be provided following the meeting.

ACTION – Paul Blacker

- 6.9 One member highlighted their concerns regarding staff morale at the Council, and the stress and work-load expectations faced by staff. They suggested that the narrative about how this was being addressed should be expanded within the commissioning intentions.

ACTION – Rob Ayliffe

- 6.10 It was confirmed that the results of the recent staff survey would be presented at a future Committee meeting, once they were available.

7. SUMMARY

- 7.1 The Committee had the opportunity to feed back to the Chief Executive and Leader of Council on the themes and trends that had been identified over the course of the day.
- 7.2 The following significant issues which had been raised by members during the meeting were highlighted:
- Concerns over cuts to the DMMO budget.
 - The need for increased investment into solar panels.
 - Concerns over how sensitive issues were addressed within the budget, such as cuts to children in care and the use of funds from the Energy from Waste facility.
- 7.3 In response to the issues raised, clarification on the DMMO budget proposals would be provided following the meeting.

ACTION – Colin Chick

- 7.4 The narrative relating to the children in care budget and the complex issues involved would be reconsidered.

ACTION – Ann James

- 7.5 Following a query relating to the challenges expected in future years, it was acknowledged that some difficult financial years were expected and the challenge for local government over the next 5 to 10 years would be how to deliver increased demand for services with the same resources and a reducing workforce.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

CHAIRPERSON

The meeting ended at 4.25 pm