





Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Progress Update on Recommendations
Interim Progress Report (6 months on)




Select Committee Inquiry Report Completion Date: February 2017


Date of this update: September 2017





Lead Officer responsible for this response: Richard Ambrose

Cabinet Member that has signed-off this update: Martin Tett

Accepted Recommendations	Original Response and Actions	Progress Update	Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status)
<p>1: That Cabinet ensures that all projected savings in future budgets are underpinned by robust business cases.</p>	<p>Business cases have been produced for all proposed savings. More detailed plans are being developed where needed.</p>	<p>COMPLETE Business Cases have been produced for all new proposed budget savings. These business cases are being reviewed for robustness.</p>	<p align="center"></p>
<p>2: That Cabinet receives progress reports on Income Generation targets as part of its quarterly Performance and Finance Reports.</p>	<p>Progress against income generation targets will specifically be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Income Generation updates are provided to the Select Committee regularly. Progress against income generation targets are reported to BU Boards and will be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis going forward.</p>	<p align="center"></p>
<p>3: That Cabinet agrees an action plan on how to ensure that the Council learns the lessons from previous Alternative Delivery Vehicles, prior to establishing any ADVs in future.</p>	<p>The Cabinet has commissioned a review of the various Alternative Delivery Vehicles which will include the lessons learned from these models and actions as appropriate.</p>	<p>COMPLETE The Cabinet considered a report on lessons from ADVs at its meeting on 24 July 2017. A series of recommendations in relation to the development of current and future service models were agreed and a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations will go back to Cabinet in six months (Jan 2018).</p>	<p align="center"></p>
<p>4: That Cabinet ensures that there is an effective management mechanism in place for increased</p>	<p>The Chief Executive's team has developed a series of management mechanisms, including a detailed programme tracker, which will provide</p>	<p>COMPLETE The Council's Corporate Management Team reviews the Corporate Change Register on a quarterly basis. This provides a detailed account</p>	<p align="center"></p>

<p>corporate oversight of large scale cross-cutting reviews (i.e. those which cross different portfolios and/or Business Units).</p>	<p>the One Council Board with increased corporate oversight of cross cutting reviews and transformational projects with high value savings. Any issues will be escalated to Cabinet, as appropriate.</p>	<p>of progress in delivering those projects with high value savings or significant impact. Where appropriate, further reports are commissioned on individual projects/programmes as required. For example, the CMT review the delivery of the Change for Children programme at the Budget Board on a monthly basis.</p>	
<p>5: That Cabinet postpones a decision about the installation of a third lift in New County Offices until both the existing lifts are fully operational; thereafter a detailed usage study should be undertaken to assess the need for an additional lift.</p>	<p>A detailed usage study will be undertaken after the first quarter of 2017/18 to assess the need for an additional lift.</p>	<p>A detailed usage study is currently being undertaken and the results will be reported to Cabinet Members in the Autumn.</p>	
<p>6: That comprehensive training plans are developed and delivered with more urgency to ensure an improvement in commercial skills across the Council. These plans should focus on developing staff skills and knowledge in Procurement, Commissioning, Contracts Management and the identification and exploitation of Commercial Opportunities.</p>	<p>The council is already doing much in this area. It has a programme of activities (e.g. commercial awareness, contract management, applying commercial capability, effective bid writing, risk analysis & management etc.) and all platinum and gold contract managers have been trained.</p> <p>Further work will be undertaken to ensure that the right people are accessing the training to help further develop commercial skills across the Council.</p>	<p>The County Council has delivered a range of commercial skills training programmes aimed specifically at Contract Managers and Commissioning Officers. Generic commercial skills courses have also been made available to other staff. In order to develop enhanced level skill's plans are currently being developed to establish a Commercial Academy with possible sponsorship from a commercial organisation. This activity is considered to be a high priority by the Corporate Management Team and a business case for further investment will be considered by Cabinet as part of the next budget round.</p>	
<p>7: That any business case for building new residential care homes for children is subject to rigorous scrutiny by the relevant</p>	<p>AGREED IN PART</p> <p>The business case will be subject to internal review and challenge initially.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Cabinet approved business case to prudentially borrow up to £2m to fund additional 20 residential places (4 homes) in county. Asset Management identified 2 existing corporately</p>	





<p>Boards e.g. Asset Strategy Board and the relevant Select Committee, prior to a key decision being taken.</p>	<p>Depending upon the outcome of this review it will then be considered by Cabinet. The Select Committee can then scrutinise the business case if required.</p>	<p>owned properties in Aylesbury and a plot of land in Wycombe for development. The remaining home will be located in Buckingham, purchased on the open market. First home due to open early next year.</p>	
<p>8: That processes for recruiting and retaining foster carers should be streamlined and the schedule of allowances reviewed. Fostering and Adoption should be more actively and effectively encouraged and Children's Services should simplify as much as possible, (within legal and safeguarding requirements) the application processes for prospective Foster Carers and Adopters.</p>	<p>The Fostering Service has had an improvement partner, Core Assets, undertaking a diagnostic review which has included the development of an action plan that addresses recruitment and retention processes including fostering allowances.</p> <p>Significant improvement has been made within the Adoption Service on its performance in timescales for recruiting and matching children with adopters.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire is also part of the Regional (Central East) Adoption Agency Innovation Programme where this activity will transfer to Fostering and Adoption.</p>	<p>COMPLETE Fostering Meetings with current foster carers are underway to widen the range of children that they can foster. Processes and recruitment priorities reviewed and monthly case progression meetings now in place. Closer working between the fostering teams is leading to greater specialisation and simplified processes. Fostering allowances are being benchmarked and reviewed. Recruitment campaign underway; currently targeting foster carers for teenagers</p> <p>Adoption Adopters now experience consistency of social worker. Adopters approved since April 2015 with our new process wait on average twelve months less for a match than those approved before that date. We have maintained our clear adoption recruitment criteria. This has reduced applications but improved our conversion rate and matching. This was recognised as outstanding practice in another authority. We have run a Facebook campaign for adoption recruitment.</p>	

<p>10. That the provision of Home to School Transport, both mainstream and SEND, by the Council meets national statutory guidelines only, and that parents/guardians are provided with reasonable notice for any policy changes.</p>	<p>We will only provide the statutory provision for transport and ensure changes are communicated to parents with reasonable notice.</p>	<p>Two elements of Post-16 charging reviewed: SEN transport for colleges brought in line with mainstream transport arrangements. Post 16 charging benchmarked with other authorities. Business case being prepared to outline realistic levels of savings to be achieved and options for delivery.</p>	
<p>12. That Cabinet should provide funding from outside of the portfolio, to extend the Wellbeing Project into Aylesbury.</p>	<p>The Cabinet Member is strongly of the view that the success of the Chesham project should be repeated in Aylesbury in recognition of the demographic pressures. However, this needs to be subject to a rigorous business case.</p>	<p>COMPLETE A business case has been produced and agreed on a one year basis. Continuation of the project would be subject to a strategic review of the learning and impact from all the wellbeing projects and their alignment with the Early Help strategy and Adult Social Care transformation programme.</p>	
<p>13. That there should be no further reduction in the number of Local Area Technicians and that funding for this should be reinstated in the MTFP, given that they are a key access point for both Members and the public.</p>	<p>There will be no reduction in Local Area Technicians from the current establishment for at least the next 3-years.</p>	<p>COMPLETE As per the original response, the funding for Local Area Technicians has been incorporated into the MTFP for 2017/18 to 2019/20. No further reductions are proposed in the 2018/19 MTFP.</p>	
<p>14. That the Council's approach to gully cleansing is urgently reviewed and if appropriate, further resources reallocated to ensure there is full provision across the County. This should be considered as an invest to save approach.</p>	<p>Cabinet recognise the funding challenges to maintaining highway drainage across the county and will be increasing the budget by £300k per annum for a period of at least 3-years. This funding will be used for a range of drainage maintenance activities to support improving the condition of the drainage asset.</p> <p>An implementation plan will be signed</p>	<p>COMPLETE A programme of works has been viewed and approved by the Cabinet Member for Transportation and contains a variety of work types that will show steady improvements in the standard of highway drainage across the County. Works have now commenced on the ground with an immediate focus on small element works. Design of larger scheme type work is ongoing. It is anticipated that the majority of the programme will be completed by the end of</p>	

	off by the Portfolio Holder by the end of the first quarter of the 17/18 financial year.	December with a small amount of budget being carried forward into Q4 to deal with any other issues as they arise.	
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Please note – Recommendations 9 and 11 were not agreed by Cabinet

RAG Status Guidance (For the Select Committee's Assessment)

	<i>Recommendation implemented to the satisfaction of the committee.</i>		<i>Committee have concerns the recommendation may not be fully delivered to its satisfaction</i>
	<i>Recommendation on track to be completed to the satisfaction of the committee.</i>		<i>Committee consider the recommendation to have not been delivered/implemented</i>