

Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Progress Update on Recommendations
Progress Report (12 months)

Select Committee Inquiry Report Date: 15 December 2015

Date of this update:

Lead Officer responsible for this response: Richard Ambrose, Director of Assurance

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

Accepted Recommendations	Original Response and Actions	6 month Progress Update	12 month Progress Update	Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status)
<p><i>1: The outcomes based budgeting methodology should be finalised and agreed by Cabinet in time to be used fully in the 2016/17 budget setting process.</i></p>	<p>In part - Learning from the experience in the current year, the Cabinet will review the budget setting process and confirm its approach in good time for the 2016/17 process. As part of this the Cabinet propose a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan priorities to County Council in order to provide a strong steer about relative priorities. Cabinet will continue to look for genuine efficiencies in all service areas.</p>	<p>Completed. Cabinet Members have agreed their approach to the budget setting process and this is now underway. Linked to this a review of the Strategic Plan has been undertaken, including taking account of Government policy announcements since the General Election. A report on the Strategic Plan review will be presented to County Council in July.</p>	<p>Completed. Refreshed Strategic Plan approved by County Council in July.</p>	
<p><i>2: Consideration of risks, including use of the Council's risk registers, should form an integral component of every stage of the 2016/17 budget setting process and subsequently, with budgetary allocations being considered in</i></p>	<p>In part - Risks are one of the considerations used to inform budgetary allocations. However, budgetary allocations are about balancing our priorities, as set out within the Strategic Plan, with the risks of delivering services. The level of reserves and contingencies is informed by the budget risks identified. A more formal process will be considered for the 2016/17 budget setting process.</p>	<p>In progress. MTP guidance sent out to Business Units / Cabinet Members includes specific requirements around the consideration of risks (including review of risk registers) and also any identified gaps within their assurance frameworks. Furthermore, the template asks specific questions around the impact of any proposed</p>	<p>In progress. See 6-month progress update.</p>	

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<p><i>terms of impact on risk profile.</i></p>		<p>changes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the anticipated impact on service performance from this change? • What risks are there associated with this change (type/cause/event/impact)? • How will these risks be monitored, managed and mitigated? • Are there any knock-on consequences on other services within BCC? <p>Reference will be made to the new Assurance & Risk Strategy and identified risks will be required to be scored. Furthermore, there will be a review of all completed templates by the Business Assurance Team to ensure that proper consideration has taken place and to ensure consistency across Business Units.</p>		
<p><i>3: All reductions to voluntary sector funding, regardless of amount, should be subjected to an</i></p>	<p>In part - In proposing any reductions, services do consider the impact on the viability of voluntary sector bodies as part of normal business planning. The</p>	<p>In progress. Business Units have been asked to produce impact assessments for budget proposals at an earlier stage of the process. This will provide</p>	<p>In progress. See 6-month progress update.</p>	

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<p><i>assessment of impact on service delivery covering the impact of removal on the resilience of both the organisation and services it provides.</i></p>	<p>current policy of the Council is to prepare and publish full impact assessments for reductions in excess of £100k. The Cabinet supports this approach which minimises the burden on the organisation. We will also work to improve the quality of information within the budget papers about possible reductions to voluntary sector funding so that there is greater transparency and more opportunities for the voluntary sector to raise issues at an early stage.</p>	<p>more opportunity to review the information and ensure it is clear and accessible to the voluntary sector and other stakeholders.</p>		
<p><i>4: We recommend that major capital programmes should be project managed by specialists, obtaining private sector support if in-house expertise is not available, thus minimising capital slippage to the greatest possible extent.</i></p>	<p>Yes - We do have in-house expertise and the majority of projects do go to plan. However, for complex major capital schemes then specialists will be considered in an attempt to ensure that the capital project is completed to planned timescales. A process around the lessons from the re-provision of Day Centres has started and the conclusions from this will be used to better manage future capital programmes.</p>	<p>In progress. In order to minimise Capital slippage a dedicated Capital Programme Manager has been appointed as part of the Future Shape arrangements. A Gateway process has also been introduced to provide more detailed oversight. The Council continues to use external support where most appropriate, such as Architects on major build projects as well as legal and financial advice on more technical projects. Although, for example, there has been some slippage in spend between financial years on the Schools build</p>	<p>In progress. Recommendations from the external independent review of the Hughenden Quarter have been considered by both the Asset Strategy Board and the One Council Board. Several workshops have recently been held to consider how best to further enhance project management across the Council (revenue and capital).</p>	

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		<p>Programme it should be noted that in recent years all new builds and extensions have opened on time. The much delayed Hughenden Quarter project is currently subject to external independent review and the lessons learned will be applied to the wider management of the capital programme.</p>		
<p>5: We recommend that a full options appraisal evaluating the value for money argument for prudential borrowing as a means to fund road improvements should be submitted to a Cabinet meeting at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>No - The Council will only consider borrowing where a good business case exists. This must show that the borrowing will either generate income or savings that at least cover the cost of the financing of the debt. With roads there is no income generated and the amount saved on maintenance is relatively small and short term. The policy proposed over the next three years is to re-profile the £45m budget so that £25m is spent in the next financial year (2015/16). This will significantly help to tackle the current maintenance backlog.</p>	<p>Completed. Report on the value for money argument for prudential borrowing is going to the Select Committee on the 14th July 2015.</p>	<p>Completed. Report due to be submitted to Cabinet.</p>	
<p>6: Measures to improve the speed and ease of the Council's recruitment and retention process for social work staff, in</p>	<p>Yes - A team of people have now been established to provide dedicated resource into the difficult area of attraction and retention of social workers. The team are focussing on a number of high</p>	<p>In progress. Significant progress has been made on this recommendation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 new permanent members of staff appointed into 	<p>In progress. See 6-month update.</p> <p>Currently also looking at recruiting to a team of 'Newly Qualified Social Workers'</p>	

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<p><i>conjunction with efforts to reduce the reliance on agency staff in social care, should be implemented urgently.</i></p>	<p>priority initiatives such as sourcing staff from overseas, developing a pipeline of Social Worker Trainees, developing a more attractive package of benefits, etc. The work of the team will be overseen by the Ofsted Improvement Board and KPI's will be measured on a regular basis to monitor success.</p>	<p>Children's Services over the past 6 months with a further 21 in the pipeline awaiting commencement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful campaign to recruit social workers was undertaken in Romania with 9 people due to commence work in the summer • A campaign to attract social workers has been undertaken in Northern Ireland • Significant changes have been made to recruitment and retention packages for Children's Social Workers, to enhance our ability to attract and retain staff • A complete review of the end to end recruitment process has been undertaken and changes made to simplify the process. 	<p>(NQSW) supported by a dedicated team manager and unit co-ordinator. The expectation is that once the NQSW's have been fully developed (after about 1-year) then they can replace agency workers.</p>	
<p><i>7: The reablement provider marketplace should be developed in Bucks, both to provide the County Council with</i></p>	<p>No - The reablement service is a county wide service and to split this into smaller geographic areas would be less efficient. We would need to more than double the level</p>	<p>N/A. Recommendation not agreed by Cabinet.</p>	<p>N/A. Recommendation not agreed by Cabinet.</p>	

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<p><i>a range of alternative providers, but also to subject Bucks Care to commercial pressures that would fuel innovation and provide an incentive to further drive down costs.</i></p>	<p>of activity we are commissioning to gain benefit from a more diverse provider base.</p> <p>The assumption that more providers would create a more competitive market place is not substantiated from past experience of contracts of this size. This can be evidenced through the last 5 years' experience of the domiciliary care market.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that innovation is being stifled by the current service structure and significant technology driven improvements have been made within the last 6 months.</p> <p>We are exploring the evolution of the reablement service into a more integrated provision with health as part of our proposals for closer integration and reduced duplication in relation to the deployment of the Better Care Fund. We are working on an integrated service pathway bringing together the Adult Community Health Teams and Reablement Service into a Multi-disciplinary delivery team, through a single point of contact. The delivery date for this is July 2015.</p>			
<p><i>8: The support costs for Local Area Forums and accompanying rules and</i></p>	<p>Yes - The proposal to reduce the Local Priorities Budget available to the Local Area Forums from £880k</p>	<p>In progress. A LAF review is being undertaken at present and is expected to conclude in</p>	<p>In progress. A LAF review is being undertaken and is due to conclude in the Spring (with any</p>	

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<p><i>procedures should be reviewed to consider the case for further efficiency savings, in particular to consider the appropriate ratio of support costs in comparison to the grant funding provided by LAFs. There should be no further reductions in Local Area Forum grant in this year's MTFP. Further grant funding reductions serve to highlight the disproportionate overhead costs of supporting LAFs for the County Council.</i></p>	<p>this year, to £780k next year reflects the financial pressures right across the Community Engagement Portfolio. Whilst there are currently no future plans to reduce the budget further, this will have to be kept under review in the current financial climate. We are currently scoping a review of our broader Localities work, and reviewing and improving the value for money from this funding will be a key feature.</p>	<p>early Autumn. This forms part of a wider Localities review to be completed later this financial year. The LAF review will include an examination of the costs involved in running LAF's. With respect to the support costs associated with the Local Priorities budget we seek constant improvement in how this is managed to both reduce the administrative cost and achieve best outcomes for the funding. However, without significant change in the expectations of LAF's and County Councillors in how they can use this funding, any improvements will be incremental and probably minor.</p>	<p>financial implications being built into the MTP). The LAF review includes an examination of the costs involved in running LAF's as well as the operating framework. With respect to the support costs associated with the Local Priorities budget we seek constant improvement in how this is managed to both reduce the administrative cost and achieve best outcomes for the funding. However, without significant change in the expectations of LAF's and County Councillors in how they can use this funding, any improvements will be incremental and probably minor.</p> <p>With respect to the Local Priorities budget (which is allocated on the advice of Local Area Forums) in response to the non-essential expenditure freeze, 32 schemes were stopped yielding an anticipated in-year saving of approximately £185k. The schemes selected had either not started or could be stopped without loss of the investment so far.</p>	

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<p>9: An options appraisal for the use of the residual heat from the Energy From Waste plant as an income stream should be considered by the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>We are already working with FCC to produce a Combined Heat and Power options study which will be presented back to the EfW contract team during February. Early outcomes show that there are currently no viable options to utilise the heat in the locality. The electricity generated of course will be sold to the grid.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member will provide an update to Cabinet colleagues during March 2015.</p>	<p>In progress. A report produced by FCC showed that there were no short term prospects of heat off being viable. However, medium to longer term options will be investigated further towards the end of the EfW construction.</p>	<p>Completed. There has been no change since the earlier report produced by FCC which showed that there were no short term prospects of heat off take being viable. The heat off take opportunities are reviewed and updated every year but the short term picture still looks blank. However, medium to longer term options will continue to be investigated further. This will be more relevant as the EfW is in the operational phase from March 2016 onwards.</p>	

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>