

**MEDIUM TERM SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANS 2014-15 – SUMMARY OF
COMMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND
SCRUTINY PANELS**

Resources PDS Panel – 10th November 2014

Andrew Pate – Strategic Director of Resources introduced the report and explained that it presents the “year-3” update in a three year budget planning process. He highlighted only three areas where the report shows savings are not on track:

- Corporate Assets Consolidation;
- Tourism Levy;
- Additional Advertising Income (only a proportion of this).

Panel Members asked the following questions and made the following points:

Councillor Macrae asked about the impact of the three areas above. The Strategic Director explained that not delivering these amounts has been allowed for.

Councillor Gerrish asked about the 20% reduction in the educational support grant from the government – he asked if this is due to academies. The Strategic Director explained that this reduction is across the board. The Cabinet Member stated that the government has cut 20% of the local authority support grant but much of the work continues such as admissions.

Councillor Gerrish stated that the commercial estate income has not increased but it has been offset by the rise in housing benefits – he feels that these two areas should not be connected. The Strategic Director explained that the Property situation should be largely on track by the end of the financial year. One area does offset the other one on the bottom line.

Councillor Gerrish referred to page 33 in the report and asked questions around the following:

- ICT Corporate – is there an update?
- Customer Service – are their staffing implications?
- HR and Payroll – are savings in line with reductions?
- Libraries – is this just through streamlining?
- Finance – what is the ‘higher risk item’ mentioned?
- Policy and Partnerships – is the information contradictory?

The Strategic Director explained that the central column is a repeat of what members have seen before and the right hand column is the updated information. He addressed the points raised above:

- ICT Corporate – there has been a centralisation of budgets and the service is back in house, this is on track and very good progress made.

- Customer Service – there are no staff impacts.
- HR and Payroll – yes savings are in line with target reductions.
- Libraries – there has been a lot of staff turnover and positions are evaluated each time. This is being picked up by the customer service programme.
- Finance – the demand on this service is increasing rapidly and there is regular reporting. This needs further analysis and is a higher risk saving.
- Policy and Partnerships – estimates now allow for this, the saving on Christmas lights is not going forwards.

Councillor Gerrish thanked the Strategic Director for the information.

(Note: Councillors Bellotti and Roberts left the meeting at 7.10pm)

Councillor Anketell-Jones asked about the Tourism Levy and why the voluntary contribution has not been considered. The Strategic Director explained that the visitors have to “opt in” to pay this contribution and the view has been taken that this new legal requirement means it would not even generate enough income to cover the administration costs.

Councillor Barrett asked about reductions in the Christmas Lights budget, he also asked if businesses are paying towards the lights. The Strategic Director explained that business within the remit of the Place directorate. He stated that there is no plan to remove funding for the lights and business contributions towards the lights should be explored. Councillor Macrae added that at some point the way Christmas lights are funded must be addressed as some residents effectively pay twice as a result of the way parish precepts work.

The Panel noted the report.

Planning, Transport and Environment PDS Panel – 11th November 2014

The Strategic Director for Place introduced this item to the Panel, she highlighted some key points from within the report.

- The Core Strategy has now been adopted. This provides a platform to progress the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and complete the Placemaking Plan.
- The adoption of the Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area masterplan and its incorporation within the Placemaking process will ensure that grants and other forms of external funding can be effectively targeted as well as provide developer confidence.
- The production of the Getting Around Bath and Keynsham Transport Strategies is an important aspect of the growth agenda identified within both the Core Strategy and the Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area masterplan.
- Rail electrification and the proposed Metrowest project will have a positive impact on Bath and North East Somerset in terms of future connectivity opportunities. The Place Directorate will continue to work with key partners

including Network Rail and First Great Western to ensure that these opportunities are built upon.

She explained that the Place Directorate had gone through a fundamental restructuring process and that the implementation of the new senior management structure had enabled the Directorate to:

- Meet the challenging management savings target as set out in the MTSRP for 2013/14 and 2014/15 (£600k);
- Review values and priorities through the development of a Directorate Business Plan;
- Ensure that key services are linked together to provide value for money and a One Council/One Place approach;

She stated that the Place Directorate had made good progress on the £2.4m 2014/15 savings target.

- Management savings for 14/15 are on track as well as service level efficiencies through restructuring.
- Heritage Service and Destination Management have successfully achieved their targets with additional income and reductions in expenditure.
- Improvements in parking management, enabled by significant investment in systems and technologies have resulted in increased deployment of staff on the ground, increasing parking availability and resulting in more income being recovered.

She stated that the Place Directorate had been instrumental in implementing the Council's significant Capital Programme allocation, with a forecast spend of c£45m in 2014/15, in order to meet the Councils' priorities such as increased capital maintenance to the highways infrastructure including surfacing work to the 683 miles of road network that BANES maintains, implementing Rossiter Road and Radstock regeneration schemes, Bath Transportation Package and Bath Western Riverside. She added that other elements of the 2014/15 programme would also bring improvements to public transport infrastructure, open spaces and walking/cycling schemes.

She spoke of the significant efficiency targets in the plan and those arising from the changes in management and service restructures. She said that the need to increase income opportunities was very challenging to achieve, especially when the call on many services is increasing.

She explained that future financial plans include an aspiration to provide further management savings whilst also delivering a large programme of capital projects, the impact of this and emerging new priorities will have to be considered as part of the restructuring process.

She stated that the majority of the Place Directorate plans remain on track with efficiency in some areas helping to offset expenditure in other areas which will result in the overall budget for the Place Directorate for 2014/15 being met.

She said that it would not be possible to achieve the £300,000 saving in Management Structure Changes through further reductions in the management team and that the Directorate will continue to consider how this saving can be achieved.

She explained that the £100,000 reduction in level of spending in Planning Policy and Environment would be challenging because of the increasing level of work, however, it is anticipated that this saving will be achieved across the broader Development services.

The Chair recalled that in Year 1 of this MTSRP the budget for Environmental Services was reduced substantially and asked if they were at further risk this year.

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services replied that no sudden shifts were planned in this area for Year 3. The approach to food hygiene inspections has been completely revised in order to better use available resources although there is a balance of cost savings and risk.

Councillor David Martin asked if through the rail electrification work Network Rail could be approached to financially assist with repairs to bridges etc. even though Section 106 funding is not available.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that the Council has a positive relationship with Network Rail and that Section 106 funding was now available on matters of Listed Building Consent.

Councillor Liz Richardson asked how much of the Planning budget was spent on consultants.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that she would source a response on that matter from the Divisional Director for Development. She added that further income was hoped to be gained by engaging in the Pre-Planning Application process and they constantly monitor and balance the need for consultants with the need to increase the staff resource.

She said that regarding the earlier comments made by Councillor Hartley that he needed to engage in the Placemaking Plan.

The Chair asked the Panel to note the comments made by Councillor Hartley.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report.

Housing and Major Projects PDS Panel – 18th November 2014

The Strategic Director for Place introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that as the Core Strategy had now been adopted it provided the Council a platform to progress the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and complete the Placemaking

Plan. She stated that the CIL is required to ensure that the Council continues to receive relevant developer contributions in order that key infrastructure requirements can be met. She added that it is proposed that this will be in place by April 2015.

She stated that the adoption of the Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area masterplan and its incorporation within the Placemaking process will ensure that grants and other forms of external funding can be effectively targeted as well as provide developer confidence. She added that the development of these sites is crucial if the Council is to meet its housing and job creation targets.

She informed them that the Place Directorate continues to work with the HCA and key registered social landlords to provide affordable housing particularly in relation to Bath Western Riverside, the former Ministry of Defence sites and Radstock.

She explained that the Place Directorate had gone through a fundamental restructuring process and that the implementation of the new senior management structure had enabled the Directorate to review values and priorities through the development of a Directorate Business Plan.

She stated that there were potential funding opportunities through new housing including an increasing New Homes Bonus.

She informed them that there are significant efficiency targets in the plan and those arising from the changes in management and service restructures and the need to increase income opportunities are very challenging to achieve, especially when the call on many services was increasing.

The Chair asked for parking to be considered in the context of regeneration. She also asked officers to investigate the merits of charging Council Tax to people living on the waterways within the Council.

She also acknowledged the risks identified by the changes in management and service restructures.

Councillor David Veale asked how the CIL was to be evaluated.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that a paper was out for consultation currently and had been seen by the Local Development Framework Steering Group. She added that a hearing would take place in December to qualify the judgement that the Council makes.

The Chair commented that she was unhappy in the proposed reduction in the Planning Policy Team because of the upcoming five year housing need review and the implications of Placemaking.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that it was anticipated that this saving would be achieved across the broader Development services.

The Chair asked for the Panel's comments to be passed onto the Resources Panel.

Economic and Community Development PDS Panel – 20th November 2014

The Chairman invited Louise Fradd (Strategic Director for Place) to introduce the report.

Members of the Panel debated the report and highlighted the following issues:

- Restructure of services – It is about delivering better service but it should not happen all the time.
- Support for introduction of Heritage Tax
- Suggestion for an increase of 50p to Roman Baths entry
- Support for the River Corridor funding
- Victoria Art Gallery – charging for special events
- Support for inclusion of Bath Pavilion into leisure programme
- Suggestion for creation of formulae to attract more one-day visitors to stay in Bath
- Support for £100k allocated to Sawclose pedestrianised highway space
- Risk and needs assessment of the Rail electrification and Park & Ride
- Voluntary Tourist Tax – officers had been looking into that
- A request for a breakdown on figures for Zero Waste Policy
- Suggestion for income source – energy generation for waste
- Suggestion for income generation, such as more effective use of officers' and shared services.
- Support for existing income generators, such as parking, pre-planning applications and building control.

It was **RESOLVED** for officers to take on board comments made by the Panel

Early Years, Children and Youth PDS Panel – 24th November 2014

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He highlighted some of the key policy context changes for Children's Services.

- Ongoing implementation of the Children & Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, setting out wide-ranging changes including for social care and in respect of children with special educational needs and disability;
- Ongoing changes in the education landscape with a limited increase in the number of schools becoming academies and the creation of new entities such as Teaching Schools and Studio Schools;
- Publication of the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy and also the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment that supports it;

- Population changes creating localised pressures on primary school places;
- Changing statutory inspection frameworks

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that it was sad to see the level of cuts imposed on the service especially involving Children's Centres where specialist services such as breastfeeding, speech and language, infant mental health and post-natal parent/child attachment may cease.

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that discussions were on-going with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to replicate these.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked his thoughts on the current Staff Mutual proposals.

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that he saw some positive opportunities within it.

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services added that a will exists to help staff with this process and that he was optimistic.

Edward Joseph asked if four Divisional Directors was enough for the People & Communities Department.

The Chair replied that she had confidence in the officers undertaking those roles.

Wellbeing PDS Panel – 28th November 2014

The Chairman invited Jane Shayler to introduce the report.

The Chairman said that there have been no issues to raise or scrutinise at this meeting considering that no additional savings had been identified.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.