

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 JULY 2016
COMMENTS REGARDING THE 2015/16 FINAL OUTTURN REPORT

The Committee discussed the report of the Chief Operating Officer on Thursday 7 July. Councillor Peter Groves was present, as was Alex Thompson representing the Chief Operating Officer.

The committee was informed that the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee had recently received presentations from the Borough's two CCGs about the challenging financial circumstances projected over the next four years which would lead to both CCGs having to make significant efficiency savings. The Committee expressed its concern that there may be consequences for this Council in future years.

The Committee raised the following additional points in relation to the final outturn report:

- The Committee acknowledged the £1.9 million overspend in children services which related to increased and continuing demand as more children came into care. The Committee noted that whilst additional funds had been included in the 16/17 budget to stem those pressures, it requested additional information about the actual spend on SEND costs for placements outside of the Borough;
- The number of fixed penalty notices issued for littering and dog fouling offences during the year appeared to be low. However, the Committee was pleased to hear that the number of enforcement officers employed by the Council was under review and that plans for an education programme were in place;
- The reduced reliance on agency staff was welcomed but the Committee felt that efforts should be made to reduce the number further particularly in relation to children's services in Crewe, however the committee also acknowledged that the Council's 'grow your own' initiative was on the right trajectory and should alleviate reliance on agency staff in future years;
- That plans should be developed to identify potential risks resulting from the outcome of the referendum for the UK to exit the EU;
- The progress in reducing slippage in the Capital programme and future plans to better reflect the phased spend on capital schemes was welcomed;
- The Committee supported the continuing review of the situation regarding the increased number of schools becoming academies, specifically in relation to the level of support required from the Council;
- That additional information should be provided to explain in full what the objectives of the Council's ASDVs would be in future years.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That the forecast underspend be noted and the Committee's congratulations be conveyed to all those involved;
- (c) That Cabinet be requested to consider preparing contingency plans to mitigate any risks identified arising from the referendum result to exit the European Union;
- (d) That Cabinet be requested to submit a draft efficiency plan in connection with the Government's four year spending settlement proposals to this committee prior to it being considered by Cabinet by October 2016, or earlier if available;
- (e) That the work currently being carried out by South and Eastern CCGs to address their individual reduced spending allocations for the next four years be acknowledged and Cabinet be requested to consider contingency plans to prepare for any consequential additional pressures that this may place on the Council's own budget;
- (f) That whilst the Committee acknowledges that spending within Children Social Care is demand led, the Committee nevertheless wishes its concern to be placed on record that there is a projected overspend in Children Services;
- (g) That Cheshire East Residents First (CERF) be requested to provide detailed information to this Committee on the ASDV objectives referred to in appendix 12 of the report.