
SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES AND PLACE COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

11 September 2018
(Published on 20 September 2018)

| Declarations of Interest - Agenda item 2 | Action |
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| <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>Ruth Hobbs declared that she was present as a co-opted Member of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children & Families Committee and represented School Governors.</p> | |
| Minutes from the previous meeting held on 10 July 2018 - Agenda item 3 | Action |
| <p>The minutes of the meeting on 10 July were accepted as being accurate by the Committee.</p> | |
| Public Question Time - Agenda item 4 | Action |
| <p>There were 10 Public Questions in relation to Item 5.</p> <p>Lyn Goodfellow asked how Somerset County Council proposes to cope with the impact of cutting core funding from Citizens Advice services in Somerset? She received a brief verbal response from the Junior Cabinet Member, Adults Social Care and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Bob Ashford asked a question expressing concern over the impact of savings proposals on families in the Frome area particularly with regard to the following services: early years support; youth services and youth offending services; children and adults with disabilities; young carers and Citizens Advice services. He asked Members to consider how to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable residents. He received a brief verbal response from the Junior Cabinet Member, Adults Social Care and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Sarah Baker asked a question expressing concern over the proposed savings to young carers services and questioned whether Voluntary Community Sector Organisations would be able to provide sustainable and continued provision for young carers. She received a brief verbal response from the Cabinet Member, Children & Families and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Alison Adlam challenged the proposed cut to funding for the Young Carers Project run by SCC and asked if the consequences of closing this</p> | |

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| <p>service have been fully considered? She received a brief verbal response from the Cabinet Member, Children & Families and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Ruth Hobbs questioned whether sufficient time had been allowed for members of the public to read and comment on the proposals. She received a brief verbal response from the Council’s Monitoring Officer and will receive a written response. Ruth asked further questions expressing concern regarding cuts to young carers services and questioning the robustness of data and impact assessments. She received a brief verbal response from the Cabinet Member, Children & Families and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Neil Richards expressed concern regarding cuts to young carers services and questioned how young carers will receive the support they need. He received a brief verbal response from the Cabinet Member, Children & Families and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Poppy Sparkes asked in regard to the proposal to cut Get Set level 2 services and given that it is well acknowledged that a child’s early years are crucial to their life chances, what provision will there actually be for families that need extra support but are not a crisis point requiring intervention from social services? She received a brief verbal response from the Cabinet Member, Children & Families and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Gem Salter asked a series of questions expressing concerns over proposals to cut services in Get Set, The Portage Home Visiting Service, SEN transport, short breaks service and early intervention services. She questioned how vulnerable and disabled children and their families will receive the support that they need in light of the proposals. She received a brief verbal response from the Cabinet Member, Children & Families and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Alison Campbell asked a question expressing concern over proposed cuts to children’s SEND services. She questioned how children’s SEND needs will be met. She received a brief verbal response from the Cabinet Member, Children & Families and will receive a written response.</p> <p>Alan Debenham questioned Councillor’s lobbying efforts to central Government regarding the withdrawal of the revenue support grant. He also questioned why the Council was having to make such drastic in-year savings having set a balanced budget in February 2018. He received a brief verbal response from the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and will receive a written response.</p> | |
| <p>2018/19 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Agenda item 5</p> | <p>Action</p> |
| <p>The Committee began by considering the Cabinet report which was introduced by The Deputy Leader of the Council and the Interim Director of Finance.</p> | |

The Deputy Leader set out the financial pressures faced by the Council and the reasons for the savings proposals. Members heard that the budget is under significant pressure and that reserves are not adequate to support the overspend.

The Interim Director of Finance highlighted that if no action is taken the Council's revenue budget will be overspent by at least £11m and that local government bodies are prohibited from having unfunded overspends. He provided an explanation of capital receipts flexibility, earmarked reserves, General Fund and contingency and informed Members that a fuller review of the capital programme and its funding will be undertaken over the autumn period.

During the debate Members discussed: the use of capital receipts for transformation and capital loans interest payments; confidence in delivering the proposals; levels of reserves; negative earmarked reserves including the reserve for the transfer of the Learning Disability contract.

The Committee then agreed to consider the savings proposals by service area using the summary in Appendix C1 as a guide.

Adult Social Care proposals.

During the debate Members discussed: the use of the Better Care Fund to support the Discovery negative earmarked reserve; whether the proposal for unpaid leave was fair or achievable; the level of progress with the Discovery contract and what action would be taken if savings were not realised; concern that cuts to Citizens Advice services would create further problems and expense in the future and what support would be given to source funding from other public bodies.

The Director of Adult Social Services agreed to provide a briefing for members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults & Health Committee to explain the financial mechanism for the Discovery contract in more detail.

The Committee agreed the following recommendation:

1. Proposed by Cllr L Leyshon, seconded by Cllr John Hunt

In relation to ASC 03, the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee recommends that the Cabinet considers the possibility of a stepped decrease in funding for Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) services to allow the opportunity for the CAB to undertake their own transformation.

Children's Services proposals.

During the debate Members discussed: publication of the People2 report; the impact of the proposals on those most in need; whether cost will be a consideration in placing a child; the need to consult with service users and

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| <p>providers to make the right decision (particularly with regard to early help services, early years activity and young carers); concern that cuts to Get Set services were based on inaccurate data; concern over cuts to young carer services; concern that a reduction in preventative services will result in more children requiring care; concern over support being withdrawn for youth services.</p> <p>The Director of Children’s Services reassured Members that despite challenging conditions the proposals will not prevent the Council from delivering its statutory duties and will not undermine the Council’s ambition to deliver a good children’s service.</p> <p>The Committee agreed the following recommendation:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2. Proposed by Cllr M Lewis, seconded by Cllr John Hunt</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">With regard to CAF 20, The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee recommends that the Cabinet reconsiders the Young Carers element of the savings proposals until a robust business case has been developed and put forward.</p> <p>Corporate Services proposals.</p> <p>During the debate Members discussed: the reduction in resource in the commercial and procurement team; sought clarification on the reduced contribution to reserves; sought clarification on the reduced spend by the Chair of Council.</p> <p>Economic & Community Infrastructure Services proposals.</p> <p>During the debate Members discussed: the future arrangements for the Park and Ride services; changes to salting and the provision of salt to rural communities; concerns were raised over reductions to jetting services, flood prevention measures and building maintenance; the importance of considering parish council precepting timetables when consulting.</p> | |
| <p>Customer Experience Annual Feedback Report 2017/18 - Agenda item 6</p> | <p>Action</p> |
| <p>It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.</p> | |
| <p>Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Work Programme - Agenda item 7</p> | <p>Action</p> |
| <p>The Committee considered and noted the Council’s Forward Plan of proposed key decisions.</p> <p>Following debate, the Committee requested the following addition to the work programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Experience Annual Feedback Report 2017/18 (Oct 2018) | |

| Any other urgent items of business - Agenda item 8 | Action |
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| There were no other items of business. | |