

Public Questions
Scrutiny for Policies and Place – 06 March 2019

Item 5 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report:

Nigel Behan, Unite Branch Secretary

- i) How much of the financial changes (in fortune?) are attributable to MTFP 1 (February 2018 when a balanced budget was set) and MTFP2 (September 2018) when there was a forecast of a significant overspend for 2018/19 of £20m+ and how much is due to the additional government permitted “flexibilities”, technical adjustments (and CTAX surplus) and “one-off” government (extra) money as a proportion (percentages please)?
- ii) “This quarterly report also sets out a projection of the reserves as at the end of 2018/19. It is encouraging that it is anticipated that the General Fund reserve will reach of total of £11.637m, plus any residual underspend, at the year end, when in September it was thought that it would only reach £7.796m. This improvement is significant in terms of the standing of the Council and for its resilience to deal with the challenges that the Spending Review 2019 (SR2019) and the Fair Funding Review (FFR) might bring for 2020/21.” Assuming the pressures are reasonably predictable, what is SCC “expecting” (lobbying for?) - in terms of at least maintaining forecast service provision (for 2019/20) – for each Service (e.g. Adult Services, Children’s Services etc....) in terms of Revenue (and Capital)?

Item 7 Social Value Policy Statement Refresh

It is stated (in the draft refresh) that:

“Applications to provide services from organisations should demonstrate their and, where appropriate, their supply chains’, ability to add economic, social and environmental value above and beyond simply providing the tendered service and provide evidence demonstrating this.

Measures should be put in place to ensure that agreed social value activity is monitored and tracked as part of any contracting arrangements.

To improve transparency, wherever possible and practicable, steps should be taken to enable SCC to report centrally on added social value achieved across the Local Authority through commissioning and procurement arrangements.

Examples of best practice from both within the Local Authority and other local authorities should be developed to inform future commissioning activity.”

The Councils Constitution (B Contract Standing Orders) – 28. Most Economically Advantageous Tender section states:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

“Award Criteria shall be comprised of both commercial and quality considerations, which shall be represented in the Procurement Documents as a ratio of 70:30 weighted in favour of price, although the Officer may vary the given ratio in favour of price.”

In recent years the **cost: quality ratio** (in the Council's Constitution) has changed from 50:50 to 60:40 to now 70:30 in favour of cost/price. Has the Strategic Commissioning Group (of Somerset County Council) considered how these changes in favour of cost/price have affected (impacted on) the application of the Social Value Policy and what evidence is there to demonstrate outcomes etc.?