

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 6TH NOVEMBER, 2017

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 12TH OCTOBER, 2017

“ REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO
31ST MARCH 2017 (DEH) –

In presenting the report, the Departmental Accountant advised that the service currently projected it would outturn within target at year end, although expenditure would in part be funded by reserves.

Under Highways and Engineering there was currently a £129k favourable variance against the profiled budget. The main reason being due to vacant posts currently within the department, however key posts had recently been filled on a temporary basis by Agency staff therefore it was currently projected that the budget would outturn on target.

For Waste Management there was currently an adverse variance of £132k to the profiled budget, due to overspends on staffing and transportation costs. The Waste Management budget had been reduced in 2017/18 for further vehicle savings however the department was unlikely to be able to make these in the short term due to the increased distance that had to be travelled as all waste disposal points were now situated in Cardiff. Due to this £200k had been set aside in the Visible Services Reserve, from the underspend in 2016/17, to offset any pressures in 2017/18 within Waste Management. It was currently anticipated that the budget would outturn on target.

For transportation – There was currently a favourable variance of £16k against the profiled budget. Staffing costs within the division were lower than budgeted to date. There was also a slight underspend within the supported buses budget which was assisting the current favourable position. At this stage of the year it was currently anticipated that this service would outturn within budget.

Visible Services Reshaping Services Savings Target – In 2017/18 there was a savings target of £525k allocated to Visible Services from the current Reshaping Services programme. The proposed means of achieving this saving had been approved by Cabinet on 24th April, 2017 and was through the introduction of a new target operating model for the service. This savings target had yet to be allocated to specific services and was being held centrally within Visible Services. Staff consultation ended on 31st July, 2017 and a number of changes were currently being considered as a result of the consultation. It was anticipated that the structure would start to be populated from late October 2017. It was envisaged that the shortfall in savings for 2017/18 would be met from the Visible Services Reserve.

The Regeneration budget covered the Countryside, Economic Development and Tourism and Events functions. There was currently a favourable variance of £23k against the profiled budget for August, due mostly to staff vacancy savings whilst re-appointments were being made. Income due to be generated from commercial opportunities at Country Parks and car parking at Cosmeston had not yet been implemented. All non-urgent repair works at the Council's Countryside sites were on hold as a consequence in order to achieve a balanced budget at year-end.

Development Management – There was currently a favourable variance against the profiled budget for August, due mainly to higher than anticipated building regulation and planning fees to date. It was anticipated that the position would level off going into the winter period so at this time it was forecast that this service would outturn on target.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed a list of savings to be achieved in the current year and Appendix 3 detailed financial progress on the Capital Programme as at 31st August, 2017.

A Member commented on the work required for the Coastal Path and what would happen in the future if the grants were not available, acknowledging that having delivered the schemes, they would be only as good as maintaining them.

Another Member commented that when the All-Wales Coastal Path was being drawn up, it had been obvious that some of the work detailed had been undertaken via a desktop analysis and that he would not want to see a section of the Coastal Path in the Vale being “dumped” on the Vale with the responsibility for maintenance falling to the Council. He suggested that all types of funding were looked at in order to maintain the Coastal Path and that, in particular, the Welsh Government's attention be brought to this being an issue for the Council. The example referred to related to the recent erosion of the coast and the road that had to be moved at Dunraven Bay at a significant cost.

In noting that 20k had been earmarked for Llandough cycle stands and was a considerable sum, the Officer agreed to look into the matter and report to Members on the detail of the scheme.

For the Visible Services Reshaping Services savings targets, Committee was advised that staff consultation had ended on 31st July, 2017 for the service restructure and a number of changes were currently being considered as a result of the consultation. It was anticipated that the structure would start to become populated from late October 2017, however Members were concerned as to the impact this would have on targets. The Officer advised that the main costs within the Department were in relation to Agency staff and filling the posts was proving difficult. Members stated that they wished to receive a report to Committee as soon as it was possible.

Following a query as to the Neighbourhood Services Model, Committee was advised of the new approach. It being noted that £200k had also been set aside from the Visible reserve in relation to Waste Management, the Accountant advised that this

was in the main in relation to the number of journeys and the cost from getting the recycled waste from A to B. Currently co-mingling was going to Cardiff for a number of years and the compost tender had recently been retendered and this was also going to Cardiff, which had had considerable impact on the budget. The Council was looking to develop a new waste strategy which would, together with a WRAP report, come to a future meeting of the Committee.

In referring to the work being undertaken at the Merrie Harrier junction, a Member queried the end date with officers advising that it was due to finish that weekend. With regard to work at Culverhouse Cross, this was due to commence on 22nd October, but would be undertaken at night.

It was reported that the Coldbrook Catchment Flood Management Scheme was substantially complete, which was anticipated for late October. However, Members queried the reference to the scheme being substantially complete with the Head of Service advising that she would provide a written response to all Ward Members on the detail.

Following consideration of the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Chairman on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, write to Welsh Government seeking clarification on the plans Welsh Government had in relation to the Coastal Path, with particular regard to maintenance issues and that Cabinet be requested to do the same.

(2) T H A T the position with regard to the 2017/18 revenue and capital monitoring be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) In order to raise with Welsh Government the issue of finance for the maintenance of the Coastal Path.

(2) That Members are aware of the position with regard to the 2017/18 revenue and capital monitoring relevant to the Scrutiny Committee.”