

Agenda Item 5

EXECUTIVE
03 OCTOBER 2017

REPORT: REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2017/18

SCRUTINY OPINION FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – 28 SEPTEMBER 2017

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board met on 28 September 2017 and considered a report concerning the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2017/18. The Board supported the recommendations contained in the report.

In addition, the following comments were made:

- **Children are Safe and Healthy (page 14)** – in relation to the in-house transfer of the 0-19 health services from 1 October 2017, it was queried if the one-off transition costs were being managed. It was confirmed that a proportion of the 1% carry forward was being used to cover the costs for staff transfers and IT. Capacity had been built in to manage any unexpected costs. It was highlighted that it was a gradual process and there would be more definitive costs next time round.
- **Adult Safeguarding (page 15)** – in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs), it was queried what the impact had been on the Council. It was highlighted that since the Cheshire West ruling, the number of assessments had increased from around 40 per year to around 40 per week. In conjunction with Lincolnshire Community Health Services, additional investment had been provided for more assessors and back office staff to deal with the reviews. Funding had been allocated to the Council to help cover the costs for clearing the backlog, but funding was still required to deal with the assessments. It was noted that legislation would be needed to clarify the position and reduce the impact of the ruling, but there was nothing included in the current legislation programme.
- **Adult Frailty and Long Term Conditions (page 15)** – in relation to budget pressures, it was questioned whether it would be more significant in a difficult winter. It was noted that winter brought specific pressures such as increased attendance at A and E particularly with elderly people, but there were pressures all year round. There were also pressures in summer due to high temperatures as well as in winter from cold weather and slippery conditions. However, funding was available to cope with any peaks in pressure.
- **Adult Frailty and Long Term Conditions (page 15)** – with regards to the increase in unsecured debts, it was questioned whether the debts could be recovered from the people themselves. It was highlighted that before the Care Act 2015, the Council was able to charge against probate for outstanding debts, but the Care Act removed that right. As a result, there was now an increased risk to the Council. Other councils responsible for adult social care were having similar issues and were having to safeguard against the cost of unsecured debts. There was an expectation of a Green Paper during the next 12 months which would look at establishing funding for adult social care in future.

- **Other Budgets (page 19)** – it was queried why there was an underspend of £4.603m on the National Living Wage. It was explained that the Better Care Fund had changed over the last few years which had enabled the Council to be in receipt of an allocation to protect adult social care. The Government had allocated £1bn for the Better Care Fund nationally, of which the Council received £2.1m. Subsequently, there was the supplementary Better Care Fund of £2bn nationally, of which the Council received £15.3m. There were conditions of receipt for the additional funding and the Council had to show how the funding was being utilised. As the majority of National Living Wage pressures were in adult social care, it was decided to fund the costs to the Council and providers arising from the introduction of the National Living Wage. There were three priorities given nationally for the use of the Better Care Fund which were the stabilisation of the market, stabilisation of the system, and reduction in delayed transfers of care. The Council was expected to deliver the terms agreed to receive the funding, which were set out in the Better Care Fund Plan. This was currently going through the assurance process and was expected to be approved.
- **Council's General Funding (page 19)** – with regards to Partners in Practice, it was queried if all the funding had to be spent this year. It was noted that this was a four year programme and the funding was under strict control with strict key performance indicators. In 2017/18, the Council would receive £2.678m of funding for the programme and had certain actions it had to complete to continue to receive the rest of the funding over the next two years.
- **Council's General Funding (page 20)** – in relation to the Independent Living Fund, it was questioned whether all this funding would have to be spent this year. It was highlighted that the funding had been transferred from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to the Council and it was used for payment for delivery of care services initially funded by the DWP. An assessment process had been carried out with service users which had identified some duplication. As a result of reassessment, the package of care received by some service users had been reviewed. It was noted that all the funding would be utilised.