

Agenda Item 8

EXECUTIVE – 07 MARCH 2023

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 - QUARTER 3

STATEMENT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

On 23 February 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board unanimously supported the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 - Quarter 3 as set out in the report to the Executive on 07 March 2023.

The following points were clarified for the Board in relation to questions raised by Members:

- In relation to the underspend in Children's Services and Adult Care and Community Wellbeing Members acknowledged that these were areas faced with high cost-pressures and requested a clarification on whether this was owed to inability to recruit health visitors in the first and domiciliary care staff in the other instance. Additionally, it was queried whether the underspend was retained for future potential recruitment costs or whether money was planned to be used towards other expenses. Officers explained that whereas health visitors were employed by Lincolnshire County Council, domiciliary staff were not. Recruitment of support workers was an alternative to ensure that families were visited and remained supported. Nevertheless, it was recognised that the funds derived from a Public Health Grant and where underspend occurred, funds were returned into The Public Health reserve where these remained available to be used until the end of the fiscal year.
- In line with the acknowledgement of the changing nature of economic context and financial mitigation of the anticipated higher levels of inflation, the Board sought assurance that the current picture and near future forecast were the most positive state that could be achieved. Officers reassured the Boards that the anticipation of pressures around inflation back in February 2022 was key towards increasing contingency to £6.5 million, which in turn resulted in forecasting underspend. Hence, Officers were confident that maintaining the contingency at the presented levels as well as carrying out detailed work to ensure that the service budgets reflected the current inflation expected were sufficient provision for maintaining a sustainable position in the next quarter and beyond, in the next year.
- With respect to home to school transport, Members queried what action was being planned to be undertaken in relation to the overspend forecasted. Officers explained that significant work was undertaken in this direction, which included the transformation programme, working with partners towards optimising both the procurement and achieving efficiencies in delivery of transport, as well as maximising of the routes and using passenger assistants more effectively. Officers reiterated that albeit cost pressures reflected still in the next year's budget, a robust plan was in place to deliver sustainable budget going forward, noting the concurrency of challenges facing this particular area.

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