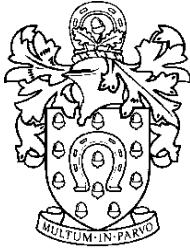


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# Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 25th January, 2024 at 7.00 pm

### **PRESENT**

Councillor R Ross (Chair)  
Councillor L Stephenson (Vice Chair)  
Councillor M Chatfield  
Councillor K Corby  
Councillor H Edwards  
Councillor S Lambert  
Councillor K Payne  
Councillor S Harvey

### **APOLOGIES**

Councillor T Carr  
Councillor R Powell  
Andreas Menzies      Roman Catholic Diocese  
Peter French      Diocesan Deputy Director of Education,  
Dioceses of Peterborough  
Councillor D Ellison      Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health

### **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS PRESENT**

Councillor G Waller      Leader of the Council  
Councillor A Johnson      Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for  
Governance and Resources  
Councillor P Browne      Portfolio Holder for Planning, Property  
and Economic Development  
Councillor T Smith      Portfolio Holder for Children and Families  
Councillor C Wise      Portfolio Holder for Transport,  
Environment and Communities

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mark Andrews      Chief Executive  
Angela Wakefield      Strategic Director of Law and Governance  
(Monitoring Officer)  
Dawn Godfrey      Strategic Director of Children and Families  
Kim Sorsky      Strategic Director of Adults and Health  
Kirsty Nutton      Strategic Director of Resources (S151 Officer)  
Penny Sharp      Strategic Director of Places  
Andrew Merry      Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer)  
Laura Daughtry      Accountant  
Jane Narey (Clerk)      Scrutiny Officer

## **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Carr and Councillor Powell but Councillor Harvey attended as Councillor Powell's representative. Apologies were also received from Peter French and Andreas Menzies, the Education Representatives and Councillor Ellison, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health.

## **2 RECORD OF MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd November 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

The Chair noted for the record that Scrutiny Committee members had submitted written questions at the last meeting regarding Agenda Item 10 - Plan of Health Responsibilities and Key Decisions and that the questions and the responses to those questions had been published with the minutes of the meeting.

No response had been received regarding the question stated in the third point of Question 3 – *Where can Councillors find copies of (the Rutland Strategic Health Development Board's) reports since May 2022?* The Chair informed attendees that the Scrutiny Officer had contacted the relevant officers for a response and that the Q&A document would be updated accordingly and re-published.

## **3 ACTIONS ARISING**

### Action 1

#### **2023/24 QUARTER 2 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST REPORT**

*The Chief Executive confirmed that he would provide a progress update on the transformation initiatives in the next Members' Briefing.*

The Chief Executive confirmed that a progress update on the transformation initiatives had been included in the December Members' Briefing.

### Action 2

#### **Asset Review**

*Councillor Rosemary Powell, Chair of the Asset Review Task and Finish Group to arrange a meeting for the Chief Executive to update the Task and Finish Group on the current situation and possibly identify any actions for the group moving forward.*

Councillor Payne reported that a meeting had been held on the 4<sup>th</sup> January but that no actions could be identified at that time. It had been agreed to review the situation at the end of February regarding how the group could assist the Asset Review.

### Action 3

#### **Levelling Up Fund (LUF)**

*The Chief Executive confirmed that the process for the LUF was on track and that he would ask Councillor Gale Waller, Leader of the Council to send an update briefing to all Councillors.*

The Chief Executive confirmed that an update had been produced and would be distributed week commencing the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

## **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

No petitions, deputations or questions were received.

## **6 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

No questions with notice with notice were received from Members.

## **7 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

No notices of motion were received from Members.

## **8 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE CALL-IN OF A DECISION**

No call-ins were received.

## **9 INTEGRATED BUDGET PLAN (IBP) AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) - 2024/25 AND 2027/28**

Report No. 16/2024 was received from Councillor Andrew Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Governance and Resources. During the conversation, the following points were noted:

- Scrutiny Committee members had submitted a number of detailed questions regarding the budget plan and the MTFS. Details of the questions plus the received responses would be published with the minutes – copy attached.
- Councillor Waller, Leader of the Council stated that, following the announcement from central government regarding an [extra £600 million funding for councils](#), further investigation was required by officers to understand the full implications of the funding.
- Costs involving a Section 19 inspection (under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010) and the provision of flooding expertise would be covered by the £46k (Page 63, Places - PP011).
- The budget included statements regarding factors that might ‘influence’ the figures stated within the report e.g. ‘colder winters and more severe frosts’ (Page 88, Highways – 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point).
- Paragraph 5.1 (Page 180, Investment Policy – Management of Risk) detailed the assumptions regarding grants/monies to be received and explained why funding was noted as increasing from £7,067K in 2024/25 to £9,618K in 2025/26 (Page 61, Total Budgets - General Grants).
- The new Integrated Budget Plan had and would continue to involve all Directors and Heads of Service in the budget setting process to help achieve the savings identified (Page 30, Strategic Financial Approach).
- Each saving proposal had been RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated to show the level of ‘influence’ on the savings identified over the next four years. (Pages 65-67).
- Work would continue to move towards a more digitally expert Council in the provision of online services as Rutland’s population changed and became more IT proficient.
- The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council had a statutory responsibility regarding children/young people with a special educational need

and disability (SEND) but needed to ensure that it was providing a correct and cost-effective service that was beneficial to service users. Work at Uppingham Community College, Edith Weston Academy and Oakham Primary School would result in fewer children attending out-of-county education so reducing the costs involved in the provision of SEND transport.

- The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that the savings identified (Page 66, Places – PS012) included other SEND factors. These related to the 3 interlinked and interdependent programmes which contributed to the overall costings for SEND provision and so the decrease in SEND transport costs:
  1. SEND Change Programme – dealt with the long-term future of SEND provision nationally and locally.
  2. Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme – aimed to decrease the deficit of the High Needs Block funding.
  3. SEND Capital Programme – provided investment in alternative provision in Rutland that met individual needs whilst providing a uniform offer.
  
- The Chief Executive confirmed that the £1.2 million LUF funding was to be used to improve all services at the Rutland Memorial Hospital (RMH) site. The original business case for an enhanced procedure suite at the RMH site had been reviewed by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB) and an updated business case was expected at the end of February 2024. This followed further investigations by the LLR ICB into the provision of same day care and urgent care access at RMH.
- Members were informed that demand changes for residential care had been included in the budget and that the RAG ratings detailed on the Savings Proposals (Page 65) would be reviewed and amended accordingly if required.
- Members queried if any money had been identified within the budget relating to climate emergency and the Chief Executive confirmed that there was a one-off revenue investment included in the budget which would look at a local area energy plan. The local area energy plan would look at possible capital investment via grant schemes and external funding, to provide systems that would be right for Rutland.
- Members queried what would happen with the deficit in the High Needs Block once central government funding ceased in 2026. The Leader of the Council confirmed that this was a national issue but work was ongoing to build in provision to support the funding including the annual transfer of 0.5% funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant to the High Needs Block as approved by the Rutland Schools' Forum. The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that Rutland currently had 302 children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council's priorities had been identified but the budget had to focus on what could be spent from the reduced funding.
- Members stated that there was a need for to ensure that there were details behind the broad headlines including what these details would look like when they were put into practice and what effect they would have on services.
- Members queried what support was being provided following the removal of the Direct Carer's Grant. Kim Sorsky, Strategic Director of Adults and Health stated that the carer's offer was currently being reviewed so that more resources and extra funding could be identified to provide a better offer of support to carers.
- Members noted that the budget for 2024/25 did not recognise the risk of any possible additional costs associated with the Section 19 inspection (Flood and

Water Management Act 2010) or the scrutiny review. Members proposed that the Chair write a report for presentation to Cabinet highlighting the budget areas discussed by the Scrutiny Committee and the possible 'influence' any additional costs for the Section 19 inspection/ scrutiny review may have on the budget figures for 2025/26.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the contents of the Integrated Budget Plan (IBP) and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – 2024/25 to 2027/28, as set out in Report No. 04/2024.
- b) **PROVIDED** comments and views for Cabinet to consider in the finalisation of the budget on the 13th February 2024.
- c) **AGREED** that the Chair would write/present a report to Cabinet on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 recommending that Cabinet note the budget areas discussed by the Scrutiny Committee including the possible 'influence' any additional costs for the Section 19 inspection/scrutiny review may have on the budget figures for 2025/26.

## **10 REVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN**

The work plan and the list of proposed items were reviewed. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- At the Special Council meeting held on the 16th January, Council had agreed to request that the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee help investigate the flooding issues recently experienced by the Rutland community. The Committee, guided by the Council's debate, would assist the investigation and make recommendations to Cabinet and Council regarding the role of Council as Local Lead Flood Authority. The Chair confirmed that the matter stood up to the PAPER test as it was a matter of public interest, affected a number of Rutland residents and that the Scrutiny Committee would have the ability to have an impact on the issue.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- a) **AGREED** to the Council's request for the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee to assist in the investigation of the flooding issues.

## **11 ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

## **12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

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**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.58 pm.**

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# Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Committee: 25 January 2024

Agenda Item 9: INTEGRATED BUDGET PLAN (IBP) AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) - 2024/25 AND 2027/28

Link to the agenda - [Agenda for Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 25th January, 2024, 7.00 pm | Rutland County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

IBP – Integrated Budget Plan

MTFS – Medium Term Financial Strategy <https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=429&MId=2782>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p><b>Question 1</b>  <b>Page 30</b>            3.1.1 – policy of minimum General Fund balance of £3m – but what about inflation over the budget period?</p>	<p>An assessment of the risk factors (as advised by CIPFA) and known areas for the Council are provided in the following sections of the IBP &amp; MTFS document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Finance Officers (CFO) Robustness (S25) Statement</li> <li>• Appendix H – Financial Risk Register</li> <li>• Appendix I – Reserves Strategy</li> </ul> <p>The Reserves Strategy includes an assessment of risk, to which inflation is one. This is specifically considered as part of the balance required for the Risk Reserve, where a balance of £7.1m - £6.7m is estimated over the life of the MTFS.</p> <p>Point 5.4, of the Reserves Strategy, provides a description of all the Reserves with a detailed explanation provided for the General Fund. It would be used for inflationary risk if the risk could not be contained within the Risk Reserve.</p> <p>It should also be noted that inflationary pressures have been included as part of the updated assumptions in the IBP. Point 4.1 of the Cabinet report shows the level of budget that has been included in the base budgets, ranging from £1.3m to £5.0m over the course of the MTFS, and therefore it is hoped that the risk of further inflationary is mitigated. Point 10.1.7 of the Cabinet report provides some sensitivity analysis in order to gain an understanding of the risk and possible exposure that would require mitigation.</p>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
	<p>Should the Council be faced with in year budgetary pressures, mitigating actions will be undertaken to remain within the budget set and funds from reserves will only be used where these mitigations cannot be taken in the immediate financial year. This is in line with sound financial management of service provision and budget performance.</p>
<p><b>Question 2</b> <b>Page 33</b> 4.1 MTFS 2025-28 includes a huge reliance on savings to balance the budget. What is the level of confidence in delivering these and what is the mitigation if we don't deliver?</p>	<p>This is covered in the Chief Finance Officers (CFO) Robustness (S25) Statement within the Cabinet report, specifically point 7.3.3 which includes an explanation of the level of confidence and reasons why the CFO feels the level is appropriate, albeit challenging. If opposition members would like to consider further cuts to the budgets, this can be explored with Directors, the CFO and proposals put forward to Council as part of the budget debate.</p> <p>In summary the CFO has provided her opinion as to the confidence in the level of savings required, and the strategic use of reserves to manage capacity and risk of savings achievement, as part of the Financial Sustainability Strategy &amp; Budget Risk Reserve – see the Reserves Strategy for further consideration.</p>
<p><b>Question 3</b> <b>Page 35</b> 5.1.1 Core Funding Assumptions. Pixels analysis (RSN presentation 15th Jan) assumes a roll-over of this year's budget for 25/26 following a general election. We are assuming an increase of £2.608m. What is the impact to the MTFS if Pixels prediction holds true?</p>	<p>The information presented in 5.1.1 uses Pixels latest model on funding from Government.</p> <p>The Council will continue to monitor the funding situation with the Final Confirmed Settlement, and any updates to the Pixel modelling.</p> <p>The allocations shown are the best estimates at the time of publishing the proposals and are kept under review throughout the period to Full Council at the end of February.</p>
<p><b>Question 4</b> <b>Page 37</b> 5.4.2 – please explain treatment of health grant allocations and direct financial benefit to RCC?</p>	<p><a href="#">Appendix C for Adults &amp; Health Directorate contains the Service Ambition for Public Health</a>. There is no direct financial benefit to RCC as this grant provides public health services as per the terms and conditions of the grant awarded. The Council is not able to spend the funding on non-public health activities.</p> <p>Services this grant covers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open access sexual health provision</li> </ul>



Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substance misuse services;</li> <li>• infection control and health protection;</li> <li>• smoking cessation; and</li> <li>• children's 0-19 health provision.</li> </ul> <p>Should the Councillor who has asked the question wish to know more, the Director and Portfolio holder will be able to answer more detailed questions. Further background information on the public health in local authorities can be found here and has been within Local Government remit for over decade:  <a href="http://www.gov.uk">Directors of public health in local government: roles, responsibilities and context - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>  <a href="http://publishing.service.gov.uk">Public Health in Local Government: Local Government Leading for Public Health (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a></p>
<p><b>Question 5</b>  <b>Page 41</b>  6.3.5 – noted possible increase in Adult Social Care Capacity – is this included in budget?</p>	<p>This point was included as to reference the fact that this assumption was being checked with regards to current provision and likely future demand. This is part of the ongoing assumptions of preparing a budget. To date there is nothing which, following review, would indicate additional budget provision is required, though it is recognized that a re-balance of budget priorities may be required with the Adults &amp; Health Directorate. Budget proposals will be updated in the next Cabinet papers where appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Question 6</b>  <b>Page 47</b>  7.3.3 – bullet one – communications/ teaching e.g. Primary Care service changes, what lessons are to be learnt?  Bullets two and three – Adults &amp; Health and an aging population and the forecasting of future demand. How is this done?</p>	<p>Do not understand the points raised in reference to 7.3.3?</p> <p>Explanations can be provided, and this can be walked through with the relevant member. However, it would be beneficial to understand the political context for this questioning to help shape any policy development that may be being developed.</p> <p>Regarding Adults &amp; Health in summary an estimate is made based on historic trend data, a projection made of likely future impacts, alongside prevention measure that may be adopted, as well as using knowledge from the national position as well.</p>
<p><b>Question 7</b>  <b>Page 49</b></p>	

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p>7.4.7 – the Local Plan cost of £1.7m. What happens if we require a third attempt?</p>	<p>It will likely cost more; however additional information would be required as to what a 'third attempt' means.</p> <p>If a decision for a 'third attempt' meant additional costs Cabinet would consider alternative budget proposals and Councillors will be required to debate these alternative proposals. In summary Full Council would need to debate all aspects of the decision and possible resulting impacts on the priorities put forward in the budget proposed by Cabinet.</p>
<p><b>Question 8</b>  <b>APPENDIX A – Page 61</b>  Children &amp; Families: SEND, Inclusions and Learning – expenditure is flat over Budget period; realism?  Culture, Leisure &amp; Registration Services: how is the tourism experience promised by Levelling Up going to be delivered within this level of funding?  <u>NOTE:</u> Pay Award and Risk Management Contingency – shown as a combined figure. Why, given materiality?</p>	<p>The current MTFs plan demonstrates that the Council is 'living beyond its means' – i.e. the cost of services is greater than the income received.</p> <p>Therefore, the Council needs to reduce its expenditure. Directors have put forward solutions to Cabinet. Cabinet have considered these proposals and put the resulting solutions, alongside what is felt is an appropriate balance of priorities within the funding available.</p> <p>Therefore the budget proposals are 'real' given the alternatives available. Given that the Council has been operating beyond its funding streams it remains true that the services and / or performance of services will change to that experienced in the past. A lack of funding necessitates the need for change. Proposals put forward are focused on transformation of services and the way services are consumed, rather than stopping or making cuts in the main.</p> <p>Levelling Up is a capital scheme and the budget is shown in the Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix K. As the funding represents investments in assets, how these assets facilitate changes in service provision is a focus. A direct example of this is the Transport Saving linked to the buses (assets) that are purchased using the grant. <i>** it should be noted that there is a typing error with regards to the LUF scheme that will be corrected in future papers. As this is a grant-funded scheme it is a presentational error only and does not impact on the overall strategy. It has been correct in all future budget papers.</i></p> <p>The Pay Award is currently a risk, and the majority of the balance shown and hence disclosed as both. The uncertainty created by both the delay in the 2023/24 pay award</p>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
	<p>and the move away from a flat % increase means that modelling for future pay awards has become more challenging. Given the amount of uncertainty in future years in turn is reflected within the balance shown. As the years of the MTFS progress, the assumptions and plans are updated to form a more detailed IBP.</p>
<p><b>Question 9</b>  <b>APPENDIX A – Page 61</b>  Total Budgets: Please explain why General Grants move from £7.067m in 24/25 to £9.68m in 25/26. What is the underpinning assumption please?</p>	<p>An explanation is provided in Section 5 of the Cabinet report, with point 5.4 specifically considering Grants, and 5.6 Longer Term Funding Reform. Point 5.6.2 provides the explanation to this question.</p> <p>Question 3 above provides information as to how the Council has approached the development of funding estimates.</p>
<p><b>Question 10</b>  <b>APPENDIX B - Page 65</b>  AS002 – given scale of savings to be delivered, should these actions not be considered separately, notwithstanding possible inter-dependencies?  AS003 – how can on-going savings be assumed from a one-off contract renegotiation?</p>	<p>Yes, this could be a presentational change that is considered.</p> <p>However, overall, it was felt that there was enough information disclosed in order for Councillors to debate policy choices and for opposition members to work with Directors should alternate service provision be designed and proposed. As well as key stakeholders to be consulted on proposals put forward.</p> <p>This is in relation to the budget increase that was implemented as part of the 2023/24 budget. Therefore, as this has been experienced – i.e. a reduction in base budget, this saving reflects an amendment to budget assumptions based on work undertaken in the current financial year.</p>
<p><b>Question 11</b>  <b>Page 66</b>  PS009 – does this not mean that overall standards are reduced to the lowest current denominator?</p>	<p>No. This represents an option for the Council to operate within the funding envelope available and what Cabinet feel are balanced proposals to deliver the Corporate Strategy.</p> <p>The Council must 'cut its cloth' accordingly as the current level of service provision across the whole organisation is not affordable as seen by the budget gaps and use of reserves to underpin revenue expenditure seen in the previous MTFS.</p>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p><b>Question 12</b>  <b>Page 67</b>            RS002/7 – Procurement – savings assumed to arise from Buildings Insurance/ Employers Liability/ what else?</p>	<p>The ICT saving assumes a part year impact in the first year and hence the increase in later years.</p> <p>The Insurance saving does not increase and represents a saving based on the previous budget assumption based on a re-negotiated contract. Due to the complexity of the Insurance market some of the saving reflects the prevailing economic conditions of the insurance market at the time of contract renewal. The risk profile of the Council has not materially changed over the years. The Insurance contract covers Employers Liability, Motor, General Property, Commercial Properties &amp; Public Liability.</p>
<p><b>Question 13</b>  <b>Page 68</b>            PI008 – explain?</p>	<p>This investment reflects the transfer of the Highways contract between suppliers. There is a risk that onboarding a new supplier may need additional focus as the contract embeds. This investment helps mitigate this risk and ensure a smooth transition of the service between suppliers.</p>
<p><b>Question 14</b>  <b>Page 68</b>            NP1009 – explain?</p>	<p>In order for the Council to meet one of its core corporate priorities of tackling climate change an investment proposal has been put forward for a Carbon baseline to be completed for the County. This work will facilitate a clear strategy for Council to debate and proposals put forward that focus on the opportunities within the County and not just within the responsibility of the Council.</p>
<p><b>Question 15</b>  <b>APPENDIX C – ADULTS &amp; HEALTH</b>  <b>Page 71</b>            Nationally recognised Falls Prevention project within Local Care Homes – why can this not be part of the local care homes service agreement?</p>	<p>A more detailed discussion with the Director for Adults &amp; Health with regards to the service specifics of this question rather than budget specific.</p>
<p><b>Question 16</b>  <b>Page 74</b>            Better Care Fund – why are there no plans for the use of RMH?</p>	<p>The budget is for Rutland County Council, and the responsibilities of the Council. The Better Care Fund is a joint fund that enhances health services and social care services working together. Whilst health and social care have links in terms of care provision, the Council has no recourse for Health decisions.</p>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p><b>Question 17</b>  <b>Page 76</b>  AS002 – a huge saving – please explain assumptions?  AS003 – why will this remain static when we have an aging population?  AI002 – what are these savings and how are they delivered?</p>	<p>A series of actions as listed will accumulate over the period. This aims to offset the Demand allocation assumption applied in AO002.</p> <p>See explanation provided to Q3 above.</p> <p>The investment relates to the savings contained in AS002. Overall these proposals are based on the transformational workstream of integrated care where it is recognized that efficiencies in the way the Council works with its partners should lead to an improved care provision and savings realised.</p>
<p><b>Question 18</b>  <b>APPENDIX C – CHILDREN &amp; FAMILIES</b>  <b>Page 77</b>  Bullet Point 3 – Past 12 months has seen an increase in demand...How is this manifest in future costs?  Summary Budget Table – SEND, Inclusions &amp; Learning...appears to assume a decline in out of county provision? What assumptions underpin this forecast outcome?</p>	<p>This forms part of the budget allocated for demand 'CO002'</p> <p>An explanation is provided within the Ambition element of this service. In summary this is based on the change brought about to services such as from the Delivering Better Value programme and continuation of the SEND recovery plan and initiatives where assumptions include a growth of parental confidence, delivering a graduated response, developing mainstream provision, and improving data systems to better predict need and inform commissioning intentions.</p>
<p><b>Question 19</b>  <b>Page 78</b>  Bullet Point 2 - assumes no agency workers; is this realistic?</p>	<p>That is the underlying aim. It is recognised that the use of agency provides less opportunities than if permanently staffed. There is no significant saving directly attributed to this ambition though CS005 does look at the deployment of human resources. CI003 investment is proposed to reduce the use of agencies and create a stable workforce.</p>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p>Bullet Point 4 - need to invest in technology – is this provided as IT Refresh in Capital Budget (APPENDIX K - Page 159) – seems modest cost? Quality Assurance &amp; Practice Improvement – explain bullets 2 and 3 in terms of resources and costs?</p>	<p>This does for part of the Enabling transformation workstream with the recognition that the IT assets can be 'sweated' more. There is investment within the Resources directorate that would support this ambition and is from revenue reserves rather than capital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed quality assurance framework focusing on the voice of children and families in receipt of services.</li> <li>• Respond to national emerging policy, such as the social care reforms, and align functions and form to reflect key priorities.</li> </ul> <p>Both of the above bullet points are being met within the cash limits budget. They form part of children's Services ongoing development planning and officers are well engaged with both regional and national forums to assist in forward planning. Children's Services structures were reviewed and aligned more effectively in December 2023 as a result.</p>
<p><b>Question 20</b>  <del>Page 79</del> – Chamber of Commerce should have a mention?</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p><b>Question 21</b>  <b>Page 80</b>  CS003 – a challenge?</p> <p>CS004 – what costs?  CI001 – expected return on investment of £105k?</p>	<p>This saving should be seen in the context of the additional demand allocation that has been provided above in CO002 and not just applied to current year budget. All savings are challenging however Officers are acutely aware of the need to make savings to live within the funding envelope available.</p> <p>Costs are shown in CI001 where there is investment provision in support to deliver this saving (CS004).  To help delivery of a strategic priority in Tackling the Climate Change as well as the additional burdens from government on biodiversity.</p>
<p><b>Question 22</b>  <b>APPENDIX C – LAW &amp; GOVERNANCE</b>  <b>Page 82</b></p>	

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p>Commissioning &amp; Voluntary Sector: Ambition – first paragraph. Welland Procurement – explain what they do?</p>	<p>The Council does not have a full in-house procurement service but is instead supported by Welland Procurement, a shared service hosted by Melton Borough Council. For more information please visit the Welland Procurement website using the link <a href="http://wellandprocurement.org.uk">wellandprocurement.org.uk</a> and disclosed on the Council's website here - <a href="#">Transparency Code Jan Feb Mar 2023.pdf (rutland.gov.uk)</a></p>
<p><b>Question 23</b> <b>Page 83</b> There appears to be a lack of confidence that the savings can be delivered, other than through a reduced service. Does this really make operational sense?</p> <p>15</p>	<p>More information is required to answer this question.</p> <p>As noted in the responses above the Council's S151 is required to advise all members of the Council the robustness of estimates contained within the budget. This is done through the Chief Finance Officers Robustness Statement (section 25) – section 7 of the Cabinet report.</p> <p>In the previous MTFS the Council was forecasting expenditure to exceed income receipts forecast. Therefore, the Council needs to assess the current level of performance of services and redesign them to be affordable. In this way the Council will deliver financial sustainability, a key Council Corporate Priority. To continue to operate in the current manner is unaffordable.</p>
<p><b>Question 24</b> <b>Page 85</b> LS002 – is this realistic? LI001 – is there double counting with Adult Social Care?</p>	<p>Yes No. This investment relates to procurement suppliers. The ASC related investment relates to opportunities with service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Question 25</b> <b>APPENDIX C - PLACE</b> <b>Page 88</b> Safe &amp; Active Public Realm &amp; Director costs: Highways – is the budget realistic given the size of</p>	<p>More information is required to answer this question, it is not clear what evidence is used with regards to the 'backlog'. Performance indicators, both nationally and locally, indicate a performing service.</p>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p>the Fix My Streets backlog alone, or are we assuming that we will push the bow wave forward?</p> <p>Highways - 'colder winters and more severe frosts' – what is this assertion based on?</p>	<p>A more detailed discussion with the Director with regard to the service specifics of this question rather than budget specific.</p>
<p><b>Question 26</b> <b>Page 92</b> PP006 – why static?</p> <p>PP011 – what are they going to do? PS009 – how realistic is this and what will change? PS012 - ?</p>	<p>This is to baseline the service to current service levels – the budget area also includes elements of Demand allocation (PO002) and inflation allocation (PO003)</p> <p>The grounds contract has already been tendered and changes approved by Cabinet. The changes to Public Realm will emerge as the revised strategy is formulated.</p>
<p><b>Question 27</b> <b>Page 93</b> P1009 - we are going to spend £150k to develop a Carbon baseline. What level of detail is required to develop such a baseline and what would be different if we were part of Leicestershire?</p>	<p>The work will provide a view for the County as a whole and help deliver the Corporate Strategy of Tackling Climate Change.</p>
<p><b>Question 28</b> <b>APPENDIX C - RESOURCES</b> <b>Page 99 – What are we doing to meet this ambition:</b> What is the existing percentage use of online forms vs the target assumption? Is the timescale realistic?</p>	<p>Not clear which part of the report this is referring to. A more detailed discussion with the Director with regard to the service specifics of this question rather than budget specific.</p>
<p><b>Question 29</b> <b>Page 100</b> RS020 – maintenance – assumed saving. What are we maintaining, and why would this arise?</p>	<p>Property Services have transferred into Resources and this relates to the property assets of the Council</p>
<p><b>Question 30</b> <b>APPENDIX D – GRANT REGISTER</b></p>	



Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p><b>Pages 111/112</b> Assumed all or majority ring fenced? RC4252/3 – assumed that forecast level of spend (based upon Ukraine) always EQUALS Grant income?</p>	<p>Where the grants are more general in nature, they have been assigned the 'Corporate' directorate.</p> <p>Yes, this is the correct assumption.</p>
<p><b>Question 31</b> <b>FEES AND CHARGES POLICY</b> <b>Page 103-109</b> Use of Recycling Centres vs successful management of fly tipping – Is there a case for a small charge for cars/cars with trailers? Do commercial vans/pick-ups pay?</p>	<p>A more detailed discussion with the Director with regard to the service specifics of this question rather than budget specific.</p>
<p><b>Question 32</b> <b>APPENDIX G – FINANCIAL HEALTH INDICATORS</b> <b>Page 121</b> Capital expenditure and capital appreciation - surely RCC are not in the business of planning based upon capital appreciation?</p>	<p>Not clear which indicator this relates too.</p> <p>The Council does not plan for appreciation directly – i.e. the Council holds no investment assets held for a return or appreciation. However, the Council does hold assets that may appreciate over time i.e. Office Accommodation and some Land values, and therefore should the asset require replacement, or sold, the asset may appreciate, and value realised.</p> <p>This is a reflection of the standard accounting concept, which the Council must apply, and does from part of the overall strategy if not directly. It is important to note that the investment in assets the Council has made are not generally those that will appreciate i.e. infrastructure assets such as roads. Therefore the strategy is such that where further investment is required it is likely to be on assets which do not attract appreciation that can be realised in value at a future date.</p>
<p><b>Question 33</b> <b>APPENDIX K – CAPITAL PROGRAMME SCHEMES</b> <b>Page 159</b></p>	<p>The capital programme reflects the current policy adopted by the Council.</p>

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p>Nothing in here regarding flood remediation/preventative maintenance, should there be? Also, 'Tackling the Climate Emergency' is noted as a new corporate priority but there is no money earmarked. Should there be an allocation regarding my comment above about flood risk preventative maintenance or an earmarked reserve? We have £17m in reserves!</p>	<p>The use of reserves is outlined in the reserves strategy for risk mitigation and investment.</p> <p>The Cabinet report to be considered on the 13 February contains updated investment requirement where S19 reviews are committed against the Innovation Reserve.</p>
<p><b>Question 34</b>  <b>APPENDIX N – CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY</b>  <b>Page 195</b>  Pipeline: Asset Review – HQ &amp; et al  £2.25m - What does this comprise?</p>	<p>This reflects the direction of travel with regards to the transformation workstream for Assets Review. It has been classified as pipeline in recognition that there is a proposal in development, and therefore provides Council with an understanding that activity is underway, and future more define proposal will come forward for further debate.</p>
<p><b>Question 35</b>  <u>Capital Spending Contingencies</u>  Council has approved a significant investment programme of replacement waste vehicle and public service vehicles over the current year. In order that future 'bulk costs' for replacement are avoided, has a contingency been made for future replacement costs within any of the reserve accounts?</p>	<p>No. The Council is focused on creating a sustainable budget with the first priority to reduce the reliance of reserves to underpin 'day to day' expenditure. Future provision in assets to be funded in advance of need can be a strategy when revenue costs are under control. Or alternatively additional savings can be designed, however this is not the Cabinet proposal at present given the balance of savings required and the timeframes.</p> <p>Adding an additional savings target to fund future asset purchases is not deemed achievable at this point.</p> <p>It should also be noted that there are alternative models of funding capital investment, such as borrowing whereby the cost of the asset is spread over the asset's economic use. Whilst this may increase interest costs (if financed from non-cash balances) it provides alternative options which may provide a better strategic fit to the Council's finances.</p>
<p><b>Question 36</b>  <u>Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit</u></p>	

Members' Questions	RCC Officer Response
<p>I note the creation of the East Midland Change Programme Partnership (CPP) in order to mitigate future deficits concerns. Please can we have more information with regard to its role and the likely timescale before any recommendations or changes are likely to be implemented? Should Scrutiny be following this progress?</p>	<p>The Change Programme Partnership is part of the Department for Education (DfE) national reform testing programme for SEND and Alternative Provision. This programme runs until September 2025.</p> <p>It is separate to the DfE Delivering Better Value Programme which is committed to reducing the deficit on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. This programme runs until the end of academic year 24/25.</p> <p>An update on both programmes is on the Scrutiny Committee forward plan for 22 March 2024.</p>
<p><b>Question 37</b>  <u>Alternative Income Streams</u>            By necessity, the budget focuses on transformation and efficiency savings, however we should not lose sight of any potential income streams. For example, business rates for solar farms over the lifetime of the project, working with NGA's to development more investment opportunities in tourism/nature conservation projects? What is being done to develop separate income opportunities?</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>As part of the budget setting exercise the Directors have considered alternative income streams. Examples include charge full costs of collection for green waste, additional income from a redesign of heritage services, and street permitting scheme.</p>

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