

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2021 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor KL Rowlands – Chairperson

JPD Blundell	J Gebbie	DG Howells	M Jones
RL Penhale-Thomas	RMI Shaw	JC Spanswick	T Thomas
A Williams	AJ Williams		

Apologies for Absence

D Patel

Officers:

Lucy Beard	Scrutiny Officer
Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny

Invitees:

Councillor Nicole Burnett	
Councillor Huw David	Leader
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Councillor Charles Smith	Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration
Councillor Hywel Williams	Cabinet Member Resources

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

47. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 1 September 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record.

48. BUDGET MONITORING 2021-22 - QUARTER 2 REVENUE FORECAST

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change introduced the Quarter 2 Revenue Budget Monitoring report that had been received by Cabinet in October, and which measured the Council's expenditure against the budget. The budget had been approved by Council on 24 February 2021 and the net budget was £298.9M, and this was the second quarter monitoring report against the budget. She expressed that it had never been such uncertain times in terms of the financial position. She advised she was

happy to give the detail of the current position as Quarter 2 had been at the end of September and things changed rapidly. The report contained some contrary messages as there were significant underspends in terms of the short term position, but some significant pressures in terms of the medium term position.

The Officer explained that table 1 was the summary of the main position and showed a projected net underspend of £2M which included anticipated funding from the hardship fund for the second half of the year. She advised they had been successful each month in getting most of their additional costs back which would increase the projected underspend in quarter three and that the underspend significantly masked the underlying budget pressures that persist in 2021-22 and would undoubtedly continue in 2022-23 and onwards.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change referred to the following points of reference in the report:

- In Paragraph 4.1.4 there was a significant overspend of over £2M on home to school transport.
- Paragraph 4.1.5 referred to the pressures in social care which the Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change advised they had received grant for recovery at the time of writing the report of £1.7M, but it had since gone up to £2.9M.
- In paragraph 4.1.6 the Council had approved over £2M growth for homelessness in the budget knowing they would have significant pressures going forward due to the new regulations and the pandemic. However Welsh Government had provided funding through the COVID hardship fund for homelessness, which the Council had successfully claimed. It had not been expected to continue through the year, so they had a significant underspend on that budget in the short term. In terms of temporary accommodation, about 200 families, 370 individuals, were still in need of accommodation, so, while the budget looked fine, the service delivery in the medium term was a high risk for the Council.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change advised that the Council had established a £1M Covid Recovery fund that continued to be used for issues such as free parking in the town centre and waiver of sports fees. She advised they had been successful in getting more in terms of their loss of income and more in terms of expenditure claims so the quarter three position would improve. Council tax collection and claims for council tax reduction had been closely monitored, with no additional funding likely to be announced by the Welsh Government until later in the year when the position would be clearer. It would depend on the position across the twenty-two local authorities whether additional funding for loss of council tax would be required.

When the budget had been set, CPI had been 0.7 percent and it had gone up to 4.2 percent which would have a significant effect on next year's budget. Funding would be released on teachers' pay, partly offset by grant funding, which had not been expected, and money had been set aside for the NJC pay award when that was agreed. She advised they were still likely to need budget reductions going forward as there would likely be significant reductions in the money that would be received in the next few years going forward, and the likely level of savings needed would depend on the settlement. She explained a summary of the financial position was set out in 4.3 and that went into detail for each of the Directorates and the earmarked reserves shown in table 6. She wished to remind Members that earmarked reserves were for a specific purpose, not to be used for different purposes and particularly not for propping up council tax. They were usable but only for the purpose they were set aside for.

Wherever possible they were endeavouring to add to their capital reserve, they were short on capital receipts as a Council and very ambitious in terms of what they would like

to do. If they did have any short term underspends, they were trying to transfer them into a capital reserve to enable them to fulfil those ambitious plans and programs.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change concluded that school balances were £8.5M at the year end due to receiving significant money from Welsh Government late in 2021 after they had set the budget. At the time of writing the report it had dropped down to £4M and would move further still as some of those balances were used for the purpose for which they had been given to them.

The Chair thanked the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change for her presentation, following which Members of the Committee asked the following:

A Member highlighted the pressures on the home to school transport budget irrespective of Covid and questioned whether Officers and Cabinet Members felt there ought to be a longer term perspective in that area, and whether home to school transport to a certain extent could be brought in house to avoid some of the procurement issues which were dictated by external factors. It was a recurring problem that they had a significant overspend in, and the Member was interested in hearing Officers' points of view on what they could do going forward.

A Member added that there had been a continuous increase in additional taxis and minibuses.

The Corporate Director of Education and Family Support advised that the situation was very much in hand, the issue being there were additional demands and pressures regarding budgetary needs within the area. With regard to the long-term perspective, they were trying to look at longer term contracts extending in more recent procurement rounds. He advised that the long-term view needed to be steered by policy and they were waiting with some anticipation for the Welsh Government's home to school transport report which had been delayed but would inform and influence their policy position going forward. He explained there were a couple of elements that were complex, referring Members to Appendix one which referred to the previous year's pressures, operational issues which were causing concern within the budget, in addition to wider policy implications regarding nursery travel and all aspects of non-statutory spend in that area.

With regard to the point made regarding minibuses and taxis, the Corporate Director of Education and Family Support advised that in all cases they are demand led. He explained they have a range of duties and as a Local Authority need to make sure they meet the statutory requirements. There had been additional small transport needed regarding nursery provision and again it had added to the cost of providing the home to school transport for learners, but he concluded in all cases they were monitored very closely.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration advised it was necessary to take a long-term view as four or five years ago they had taken an austerity decision on school transport to cut back in a phased approach of which the outcome was still affecting young people now. He explained that school transport was a complex issue and not as simple as it looked and there were all sorts of obvious and not so obvious unintended consequences of proposals. Cabinet had decided not to make a cut recently and decided that they would tolerate the pressure on budgets for the time being as they were waiting for the review of home to school transport from Welsh Government. He concluded that whilst waiting for that review it would not be wise for them to make any huge decisions on home to school transport which might have to be reversed if the criteria changed.

A Member expressed that they needed to be looking at safe routes to schools as they were paying for buses where there were no safe routes. She felt they needed to have a joined up one Council approach and look at the catchments.

A Member commented that the report was for Quarter 2, up to the 30 September, and that they were two months into quarter three, so they were to some extent just reflecting on the previous spend. He highlighted that paragraph 9.1 of the report stated, 'asking members to note the projected revenue position for 2021-2022.' But he thought perhaps it could have read 'note the current position of quarter two as they moved forward to the end of budget for 2021-2022 and the figures to date.' He referred to the considerable underspend and the report highlighting a number of budget pressures that could change that, so suggested it could have been outlined what the projected revenue position could be at the end of the year. He was aware it was an open question in uncertain times and as things were changing so rapidly, they had significant underspends in the short term but budget pressures in the long term. He concluded that it might be time to consider suspending the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) until they knew where they were, especially as they moved through the pandemic.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change advised that she could not overemphasise the difficulty in estimating where they might be at the end of the year. She expressed her gratitude for the support from Welsh Government and could not pretend that they would have survived easily through those difficult times without it. The difficulty was managing and dealing with it if it was short term and needed to be spent by the end of the year it would only be of a temporary nature and more than 75% of their budget was on people and staff and getting staff into place quickly. She explained that, in terms of timing, she did not think there was a huge delay and they had tried to bring up to date where possible the position that had changed. All the changes at that moment on the short term were increasing that underspend so they would have significant sums of short term funding, many that would inflate their underspend position. Undoubtedly by quarter three they would be saying that the year end position would depend on how successfully they had spent some of the money that had been received for the right purposes, so it would not be a case of just getting rid of money, it would all have a specific purpose and they had to carefully try and get themselves into a place where they can spend it successfully. She did not want to give the impression that they were not on top of it and was not something she thought they should consider in terms of suspending the MTFS. They still needed to plan and forecast where the significant pressures were, the underlying position and the accuracy on where they were was still intact, however, the huge amount of short-term funding for the different areas masked the position.

The Member advised that some members of the public believed the Council had substantial funding and suggested that it was an opportunity for them to discuss what earmarked reserves were and provide reassurance to members of the public that the Authority was prudent in its expenditure and management of reserves and not criticised for not spending money.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change explained that earmarked reserves in simple terms was money they could set aside for a specific purpose and carry that forward provided the money that they have available enables them to do so. Where they know they cannot spend it or they do not need it until the next year, or indeed in future years they are then able to set money aside, which is an earmarked reserve. She advised they are scrutinised by herself firstly, then the Team and through Corporate Management Board each month going through the detail and every quarter they report through the budget monitoring reports the position on earmarked reserves. She stressed that there was huge scrutiny of what was in there and conversations with Directors about what they needed for the future. They were also scrutinised by Audit

Wales who had given them a clean bill of health for the last few years and were content with their financial position.

The Chief Executive wished to build on a couple of points. Firstly, he advised that it was a public meeting, giving both members but also the public the opportunity to have a better understanding of the overall position. He advised they could not possibly suspend the MTFS as they need to plan and prepare for a range of scenarios, and it is almost certain they would have an underspend this year. Although what they did not know was the extent of that underspend, as they were receiving money which was difficult to spend in the way that they had to spend it because they could not always recruit staff. He advised they could not always commission work and could not spend the money in the timescale which masked the long term burdens that they had which was also difficult to represent to the public as well. He advised that they anticipated a time when the Welsh Government funding would stop which could be as soon as the end of March, and that they effectively had post pandemic a different pattern of demand on the Authority's services, increased expenditure, and uncertainty at that point about what the future settlements would be. All the forecasts he had seen in the longer term were that not only would inflation go up, but that settlements would go back to the sort of level they had been historically. They needed to plan for the fact that it was a misleading position at present, they had money to spend but for specific purposes and would not have the same level of money moving forward, which made it hard to get a common understanding both within the Council, Officers and Members, but also outside the Council as well.

A Member queried the provisions of additional learning needs for Heronsbridge School and whether they expected to recoup the funds from local authorities. He noted the number of primary schools in a deficit position and asked if they could outline the number of secondary schools that were in a deficit position as well. He acknowledged that the Council was satisfied with funding for the homelessness, and it may be a waiting game due to the uncertainty of the future settlement from the hardship fund and Central Government funding but asked was the intention if they did receive the funding to reallocate that budget. He concluded that recent announcements regarding the uplift in the living wage would have an impact on all staff within the Council, so it would be essential that central government funding was forthcoming otherwise they would have a significant impact on their Local Authority budget and wondered whether any assessment was being made.

The Corporate Director of Education and Family Support responded that with regard to additional learning needs for school budgets yes that was the case. It was a service they operated across local authorities where places become available and obviously other local authorities purchase places in Heronsbridge School and other facilities within Bridgend and vice versa. He advised that when places were predominantly filled with Bridgend learners there were not the places available to other local authorities, it was a demand led service. He advised that it was a difficult time for school budgets, but the last he had seen none of the secondary schools were in any significant deficit. However, a lot of the grants had come for a specific purpose in the main to deal with some challenges of the pandemic, schools were using the money now principally around staffing to support some of their need, but it was an ongoing challenge, which they would continue to monitor.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change advised they had pre-empted the significant pressure on the housing budget. They had successfully claimed back what they had spent but they were still not in the position they needed to be. She advised they were able to balance the budget in terms of keeping people in temporary accommodation which fulfilled part of the duty placed on them by Welsh Government, there had been a number of letters from the Minister regarding homelessness and

housing and the Welsh Government were committed to eradicating homelessness. She explained they had a temporary solution then which they could fund but did not know if it was sufficient to fund it going forward. The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change explained that they did not have sufficient accommodation but were working with their partners Valleys to Coast to explore what they could do in terms of void properties, as well as working with private landlords and had a number of policies in place to try and obtain accommodation. They were also looking at small developments through the Local Development Plan. She concluded that they did not have enough properties and although at that moment there was enough temporary accommodation, it could not continue as it was not a satisfactory solution.

The Deputy Head of Finance advised that it had been recently announced that the national living wage was going to increase from April 2022, from £8.91 to £9.50 which was a 6.6% increase and more than they had anticipated. The biggest impact for the Council would be the increase on their commissioned services in Social Services and also the impact internally within the Council as there would be knock-on effect on the pay and grading structure from bringing the bottom end pay grades up. In terms of the estimate for externally commissioned services, they were looking at nearly £1.5M, which was something they had brought into the MTFs as one of their pressures. Going forward for next year they would need to consider the increase in National Insurance contributions as the new health and social care levy that the Government was bringing in would have implications for the Council, both on employers and employees which was another pressure of over £1M, so there were a number of pay related pressures. What they did not know was whether they would get any separate / additional funding from Welsh Government towards any of it and would need to wait for the settlements at the end of the month to see what funding was included to meet some of the pressures.

A Member asked whether there would be an effect further up the line as well, if the pay was raised for the lower paid would they expand the levels further up as well. He fully supported being a living wage employer but wanted to make sure they had all the information.

The Chief Executive advised that moving forward it may be timely to have a look at the whole pay grading structure but that was not the immediate intention. He thought there was probably sufficient flexibility immediately to accommodate the real living wage proposal but moving forward due to the actual pressures in terms of workforce issues and recruitment retention, it could be the case that they needed to look at the pay and grading structure to remain competitive.

A Member asked whether they were seeing an increase in applicants for the council tax reduction scheme with furlough ending at the end of September, or would it be too soon to tell if it was making a difference.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change advised that over the last year there had been an expectation that they would, but the answer was probably no, not as significant as they had been anticipating however it was still early days, and they would be in a much better position towards the end of the year.

A Member referred to the increased demand upon the homelessness service, and the Welsh Government policy that required en-suite accommodation and asked whether they thought that would change or the provision would continue.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change informed the Chair there had been no indication that it would change, it was still a duty on them and was a complicated requirement. For temporary accommodation the regulations were quite

complex, and their ideal situation would be to get people into sustainable, more medium to long term accommodation.

The Cabinet Member for Communities advised that although Welsh Government had changed the Regulations with the removal of priority need, it had been something they had been looking at for some time but had been brought in a little quicker due to the pandemic. Welsh Government had looked at a variety of different options around suitable temporary accommodation going forward but it been impacted on by the fact the pandemic had happened, and they needed to get things in place to make sure they removed people from sleeping on the streets and putting them at greater risk of contracting Covid. He expected to see a lot more changes coming forward around what would be suitable, practical, and affordable temporary accommodation.

A Member felt that the Communities Directorate had taken the brunt of the cuts made over the years and that from talking to colleagues, the number of referrals received by the Communities Directorate far exceeded other areas. He wondered about the possibility of them looking in the future to improve investment in that area as they received a lot of criticism from members of the public regarding them paying their council tax and areas of their community not being cleaned, and though the challenges they had over the years needed to be recognised, these should be looked at as part of a longer term strategy.

The Chief Executive replied that he did not know whether the Communities Directorate had been disproportionately cut, but inevitably the Authority prioritised education and social care so there may have been a greater impact on some other services. He advised he had been in discussions regarding how they could improve the responsiveness of the Department to a range of issues, particularly in referrals but really to improve the responsiveness of frontline services. He believed there was to be a greater investment trying to address those issues, however ultimately it would come down as well to political choices and where to put their money and prioritising moving forward. He advised that he had heard the view the Member expressed from others, and it could be time to think about greater investment in some of the frontline services. The point he always made to Members was that it would generally require them to offset that against something else, so it would always require for them to think what they do not want to invest in.

The Corporate Director Communities supported what the Chief Executive had said and advised the Communities Directorate receives around 83-85% of all the Member referrals that came into the Council. They had a lean team and there were some referrals not ending with one response but multiple exchanges. She advised that they were working with the centralised business support team for the Communities Directorate and the Chief Executive's Directorate. They were looking at referrals to try and close those that had been open for the longest amount of time and also the new Member Referral System should be implemented shortly where there would be an element of self service, meaning they could focus on more complex enquiries and there should be information on the Members' portal for self-service for some of the easier queries. She clarified that work was ongoing to address the large number of referrals the Directorate received.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change reminded Members that with regard to investment, a few years ago they had put aside £2M for investing in Communities, it had been a capital fund and the year before last they put in a recurring budget of £2M for public realm, so there had been quite significant investment internally. She concluded there had also been some huge amounts of grant funding on issues such as highway maintenance and regeneration.

A Member added that complaints also going through to them would also make a big impact on the referrals in Communities.

The Cabinet Member for Communities replied that member referrals were in addition to the complaints system. He advised that sometimes referrals were not answered on time given the impact of the volume received within Communities, and further referrals chasing a response submitted caused duplication. Referrals could be repetitive and often a previous response had been received which applied to the same question being asked again in a new referral. Officers were spending more time answering referrals and the increase in Member referrals meant that they were reducing the amount of time that Officers went out. He advised that the new member portal being worked on could provide a more hands on approach and may potentially in some instances reduce the number of referrals.

The Member responded that he did not make the comments as a criticism of the Directorate and the staff as he recognised that the resources were not adequate to meet the demands and that this was the opportunity to try and address some of the issues going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Communities advised there had been some frank and honest discussions around the performance of the Directorate regarding responding to referrals. Staff reduction and increase in demand had put pressure on them and following discussions they were looking at how they could cleanse the member referral system so that they could take out some of the older ones. From an Officer point of view, he asked for more consciousness of the number of referrals that are being submitted, to which often the answers are similar.

A Member felt that there had been disproportionate cuts in the Communities Directorate, effects of those cuts was being seen and wanted to understand why those cuts were made. He referred to the capital investment made, whereas to address resilience in some sections of the Directorate and the impact on the backlog of referrals would need revenue investment, officers and staff.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change clarified that the Public Realm fund was a recurring revenue fund and the Investing in Communities Fund had been a one-off capital fund. These would be political priorities and the choice of what their budget was supporting, where they wanted to allocate money and where their political priorities were. Therefore, if they wanted to invest significant sums in Communities then the money would need to come from somewhere else.

A Member asked for clarification with regard to the discussions that there had been by Cabinet about whether they should roll back on some of those commitments to provide statutory services to be able to invest more money in the areas that had been highlighted. He was not sure whether the question was necessarily for this forum to be discussing but thought it would be discussed at a future point and wondered if they had any comments.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change advised that it was a political choice. Officers would put forward options, suggested reductions, and pressures and then it would be for Members to make their choices, including council tax and all the things that go into a balanced budget.

The Cabinet Member for Communities advised a lot of it had to do with statutory and non-statutory provision and so whilst an element of it is political, they needed to make sure that they continued to provide a balanced budget and continued to meet the needs of the statutory services that they are required to deliver. He advised that none of them

went into Council wanting to cut services and budgets and that people are impacted on things that are visual to them, so looked after children or care experienced children may seem less visual to people unless it impacted them directly. That was the careful balance and what they needed to look at every meeting and when they were discussing services.

The Deputy Leader advised that the budget setting process was a political choice, and they could only distribute what they had and that depended on the settlement from Welsh Government which also depended on the revenues that came from Westminster. They prioritised keeping people safe and where resources allowed, they included a public realm fund to recognise that spending in the community was important and was what the people looked for and noticed. He reinforced that they could only distribute the amount of revenue allocated, and the budget setting process was the forum to discuss those priorities. He concluded they had just had a public consultation and they would get a response from that in due course.

The Chair referred to Appendix 2, monitoring of 2021-22 budget reductions COM 1, page 42, and the statement that full savings had been achieved on the operative budget with the level of parks and playing fields being capped so they did not exceed the available budget and asked for clarification of whether this was part of the recovery fund or two separate budgets.

The Corporate Director, Communities advised it was two separate budgets, there had been a saving within Communities of £300k, in the main predicated on the Community Asset Transfer program which would be transferring assets to community groups, and they were looking at the generalised parks budget to see whether there had been any other savings achieved. At the same time, they were also implementing concessions on sports pitch fees during Covid, so they were not charging for the facilities and that income they had lost as a result had been recovered via the Covid recovery fund. There was a saving itself by transferring assets via community asset transfer, which they had achieved, and that income had been covered off separately.

A Member queried what had been achieved entirely through CAT transfer process and asked if the calculations could be shared.

The Corporate Director, Communities advised the main saving had been achieved via community asset transfer, and that the information could be provided.

A Member commented that while there had been a lot of text on page 34 of the report there was little financial detail, and no breakdown of the £7M that he thought would be useful for the public to see. He referred to the earmarked reserves on page 35 and commented that it may be unclear to the public what was being done with those reserves, and how it would have been originally calculated that much was needed. He understood that Capital Schemes could not be used on revenue, but there were figures in the report that had built up and stayed the same year on year. He thought the public should know how they had been calculated and what they were going to be used for.

The Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change advised that when they were anticipating those sorts of settlements that they were projecting which were negative, and they were anticipating that they may have to reduce staffing numbers, restructure, and change the way they delivered services, they then had a couple of years of slightly better settlements. She advised they did not know what this year was going to bring up or the next few years as someone was going to have to pay for the pandemic and she would not predict that they would have good settlements for many years going forward, so it was set aside to allow them to reduce staffing numbers if they had to. She expressed that in the role of Section 151 Officer you were expected to be

prudent and not expected to spend every penny that you had. Audit Wales had asked them to be long-term in their thinking and so the earmarked reserves that were set aside would enable them to do that. She advised she was to review what they needed for the future in terms of change management as that was the issue facing everyone not just the public sector, in how they work, how they change, so those funds would be reviewed and as explained the earmarked reserves are looked at constantly. Her concluding advice would be that they did not remove the earmarked reserves.

The Deputy Head of Finance explained they had tried to present the information in the report, and they could have included more detail but then it was a balance between making it too detailed and difficult to understand. They tried to capture the main messages for example table six in the report, earmarked reserves summary, there were twenty lines, but in terms of the actual number of reserves they had about three hundred lines, meaning for each line of the report there were a number of schemes, projects and commitments behind them. Going back to the question regarding the Council wide budgets, she explained most of that was in respect of their pay prices and pressure budgets, which for this financial year they had not really paid out any pay awards yet as the teachers had only been agreed at the end of quarter two and they had still not got agreement on the non-teachers' pay award for the financial year. It was highly unlikely that it would be agreed during the financial year, so that budget could remain there until towards the end of the year. What they did not know was whether it was going to be enough as what had been set aside was based on an assumption and the unions had rejected the latest offer, so it could be higher than they anticipated.

The Deputy Head of Finance also advised they had a council wide contingency which they used to fund things like inclement weather during the during the winter period. She explained there were not a lot of separate budgets within that but what they had tried to set out in the report was the uncertainties, inflation as an example was changing every month. She advised there was one big provision and what they did not know at that moment what the call on all of them would be so had made assumptions as to what they thought they might need based on historical spend in terms of what they had funded and the projection. She concluded that anything could happen over the next few months, and it was difficult to give figures in those areas as there was so much that had not been determined for the year.

The Member gave thanks for the explanation but felt that the public perspective would only see the figure projecting an underspend and they would not accept or understand that it was made up of various elements, it would just be seen as £7M spare or underspend. He understood the difficulties and that they did not know the figures but felt there could have been more included in the section to show the public more positivity.

The Chairperson advised that there were no further questions for the invitees, thanked them for their attendance and advised they could leave the meeting.

Following consideration of the report and appendices, the Committee made the following Recommendations:

1. The Committee requested that consideration be given to the rescheduling of Budget Monitoring - Quarterly Revenue Forecast reports in the future to enable the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider reports first and its comments to be fed back to Cabinet to be considered along with the report.
2. The Committee requested that a breakdown of the £300k savings likely to be achieved for Budget Reductions Proposal COM 1, Appendix 2 - Monitoring of 2021-22 Budget Reductions, including the CAT Transfers that had taken place and to be progressed, be circulated to Members of the Committee.

49. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny advised that following on from the Committee's consideration of the Forward Programme at the previous meeting, the updated Forward Programme for this Committee was attached as Appendix A and the Forward Work Programmes for Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees 1, 2 and 3 were also attached as Appendices B, C and D, as this Committee had responsibility for coordination and oversight of the overall Forward Work Programme.

The FWP's had been updated to take account of the announcement at November Council that December Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates would be postponed to new dates in January, and extra meetings of COSC added on 19 Jan and 1 Feb, to accord with the timing of the Welsh Government budget settlement to local authorities.

She also advised that's the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations from previous meetings was attached as Appendix E.

There were no requests to include specific information in items for upcoming meetings and there were no further items identified for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Committee considered and approved its Forward Work Programme in Appendix A; noted the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees following consideration in their respective recent Committee Meetings in Appendix B, C & D and noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings in Appendix E.

50. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

The meeting closed at 11:26