



Cabinet

1 February 2012

Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 November 2011

1. Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2012/2013

- 1.1 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee plays an integral role in delivering a sustainable budget for the Council, by scrutinising recommendations for savings and growth.
- 1.2 On 28 November 2011 the Committee considered a report (Report C244) which updated Members on progress made towards setting the 2012/2013 budget. The recommendations emanating from consideration of Report C244 will be included in a composite report to Cabinet on the Budget 2012/2013 for consideration by the Cabinet on 15 February 2012.

2. Review of the Capital Programme

- 2.1 A formal review of the Council's five year capital programme is undertaken annually as part of the budget setting process, with the aim of updating Members on the results of this work to date, and to seek approval of the updated and rescheduled capital programme.
- 2.2 The Committee carried out an initial review of the programme, which had been updated and rescheduled to take into account approved changes to the programme as well as latest estimates on the timing and scheduling of projects. The updated programme also included proposals for capital expenditure growth, details of which were provided in Section 2.3 of Report C245, and an annual net capital expenditure allocation of £250,000 for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015 to fund the Council's contribution to the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant scheme.
- 2.3 Proposed changes to the capital programme were discussed with Members, and discussion took place on a number of areas including the capital investment and income generating schemes outlined at Section 2.4, as well as individual schemes in Appendix 1, including Gainsborough Road, Bury St Edmunds, Recreation Ground, Haverhill Council Offices and welcome signs for Haverhill.
- 2.4 Work on the development of the Council's revenue and capital budgets would continue over the next two months, and details of any further proposed changes to the capital programme, including further updates on the timing and scheduling of projects, would be brought to the Committee at its meeting scheduled for 30 January 2012. The Committee was requested to note the updated and rescheduled Capital Programme at this point.

3. Capital Programme Audited Accounts

- 3.1 In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, the Committee considered a report which notified Members of variations in cost between approved contract sums and completed schemes. The report included key projects (over £25k) undertaken by Property Services for which the accounts had been audited during the financial years 2010/2011 and the first half of 2011/2012.
- 3.2 The projects being reported this year were undertaken between 2007 and 2010. Six schemes were reported, split between the two reporting years, with a total approved budget of £8,174,687. The schemes varied in size and complexity, and included resurfacing footpaths in the Abbey Gardens, the construction of a new depot at Homefield Road, Haverhill, and the refurbishment of Haverhill Leisure Centre.
- 3.3 A discussion took place on the consultation stage for the next Heritage Lottery Bid for the Abbey Gardens, and further information was requested by Members.
- 3.4 An analysis of the figures showed that the total expenditure for the reporting period had a variation of £438,879 or 5.37% below budget. Of the six schemes being reported, two projects varied significantly from the budget allocation, and these were detailed in the report and discussed by the Committee. Members concluded that the reasons given for the variations were acceptable.

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