

Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee

12 June 2017

Executive Leader (Finance and Performance) - Portfolio Priorities

Financial Management - complete accounts, effective financial monitoring, and preparation of revised Financial Strategy February 2018.

We delivered an underspend of over £1m last year demonstrating that we are in control of our finances, at a time when the challenges are very significant, and one does not need to go too far to find some other public organisations struggling.

Our financial strategy approved in February of this year set out a wide range of affordable investment, with investment in adult care, winter maintenance, ensuring provision to maintain the park and ride service, and investment in financial inclusion.

This was further to a large additional programme of capital investment and moving forward ensuring we deliver on a wide range of capital schemes, from drainage/highways to community stadium, new facilities at the Guildhall, and of course using our financial strength to deliver schemes such as York Central. Total capital expenditure in the present 5 year programme is forecast to be £215m. It is through having strong financial health that we are able to then make the required prioritised investments we need to make for the City.

During the last year we have joined the West Yorkshire Transport Fund, but only on the basis that York received certain protections to limit exposure to any unaffordable increases in the payments we would make. This will see us attract some £80m of funding for York Central and the Outer Ring Road.

Customer Services - ensuring effective collection of income, benefits administration and improvement in key customer performance measurements to demonstrate improvements in customer experience.

Customer satisfaction has remained high all year, with an average of 92.5% across all channels which is an improvement on the last two years. We have successfully moved 14 highly transactional revenues and benefits services on line over the past year

Collection levels are high in relation to Council Tax (97.6%) and Business rates (99.0%), with some £200m collected per annum.

We will be implementing a brand new system from July 2017 for customers who benefit from British Sign Language (BSL) support. This will give our residents who require BSL interpretation:

- Access to services face to face. If someone comes to West Offices and requires BSL from customer service we will take them to a private room and video link the interpretation service
- Access by phone from home. If someone has the appropriate equipment (web-cam and internet access) the person can use a link from our website, contact the interpretation service who then contacts CoYC customer service by phone

One of our main challenges include managing the effect of Universal Credit which is being fully implemented in York in July this year, and is expected to bring greater work pressures along with an expected increase in the number of citizens asking for financial support either through Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) or through our social fund (YFAS).

HR sits in the portfolio and ensuring we support and develop our employees to be able to perform to the best of their ability is a key priority.

We have introduced new values for the Council, developed a workforce plan, and we will continue to support staff wellbeing. However, I also recognise that we need to at times develop a stronger approach to issues such as absence – we have many areas of the Council who have very low absence rates that compare with the best organisations in the private sector – but also there are some areas where performance is not as I would like and we will look to provide targeted support in these areas.

In addition, I am keen to increase the number of **apprenticeship opportunities** and maximise the use of the apprenticeship levy, which is a key element of the People Plan (our workforce strategy).

Asset Management

The agenda regarding the use of our assets and the regeneration of parts of the city in the coming years is extremely active, with a number of major projects shaping up for delivery (many of which such as York Central and Castle Gateway have been stalled for many years and we are now actively engaged in delivery). In addition, we are taking stock of how we use our remaining assets, with a proposal for a review of community assets in the next quarter and a report on the continuing work we are doing to deliver increased income from our commercial portfolio to deliver the large budget targets allocated to this work to generate an additional £1m income from our commercial estate by 2020/21.

Major Projects

There are a number of major projects already in train such as York Central - partnership delivery of up to 2500 homes and 100,000 sq m of commercial office. Work is progressing well and will be the subject of a number of reports over the coming months with large scale public consultation on the developing masterplan.

Castle Gateway - development of the area around Piccadilly, Coppergate, Castle Car Park and St George's Field car park to expand the city centre and create new commercial and residential opportunities. Business case development is underway with a view to a report late 2017.

Guildhall - moving into construction phase for a managed office space to support small business growth with supporting commercial development and ongoing civic use of the space.

Mansion House - in construction with reopening targeted for Autumn 2017.

Housing delivery - working in a strategic partnership with the HCA to deliver accelerated housing construction on public land. A report will be brought to Executive in the Autumn, setting out a business case containing proposals for site development and delivery mechanisms. This has significant cross over with the Housing Portfolio.

Delivering Efficiencies across the Directorate - key areas include restructuring across a number of areas, and generating more income

across a range of services.

ICT

Further development and implementation of the **Digital Services Programme**, enabling service transformation, easier customer interaction, and providing a greater range of services available on line.

ICT Programme – the programme this year as well as the delivery of specific projects, is mainly focussed on maintenance and upgrade of infrastructure, and ensuring information security as part of ICT's ongoing commitment to protect CYC from new and ever changing cyber security threats we identified, procured and implemented Trend security during 2016/17. It provides a constantly evolving suite of protection products including anti-ransomware.

As we are continuing to maximise the potential and use of digital technology it is bringing a change in customer behaviour, for example there has been a significant reduction in call volume eg

- Council tax; 30%
- Waste, highways and environment; 38%

Going forward we will be bringing in webchat and a social media suite which will help us assess the types of issues that residents are concerned about.

Revenues on-line forms were launched in July 2016 and Benefits in September 2016, and we are processing 1000 forms per week electronically with 60% automation.

Review of Administration, Accommodation, including West Offices and Hazel Court – the financial strategy sets out a requirement for significant income from our facilities and we are well on track with this through letting space out to external partners such as Network Rail at West Offices. I would thank our Council staff who have being extremely flexible in their working arrangements to ensure we maximise utilisation of space. Every desk at West Offices has a value of around £4,000 so we have to use these resources effectively. To continue to deliver efficiencies will however require us to consider the utilisation of other buildings, and opportunities for further rationalisation.

The Portfolio also deals across all areas of the Council, providing a range of support and I would touch upon just a few matters within this Portfolio

- Supporting Savings and Change - supporting all directorates in delivery of savings plans, including changes in service delivery
- Effective Governance - working with Directorates on information security, complaints, performance data
- Procurement Compliance - supporting all services on Procurement issues, ensuring effective controls and compliance, and completion of a new procurement and commissioning strategy
- Compliance and Assurance - ensuring effective internal audit, , HR processes, and other systems and controls including ICT security
- Ensuring Effective Risk Management/ Project Management Across the Organisation

This is clearly a very wide ranging portfolio – ranging from leading the financial strategy, collecting council tax, providing a range of professional support, ensuring compliance, and managing our facilities. I am confident that we can approach the next year with optimism, built on a sound financial basis, and with an emphasis on the customer throughout everything we do.