

Report of the Director of Customer & Business Support Services

2015-16 Draft Outturn

1. This report provides a year end analysis for the services falling under the responsibility of the Corporate Scrutiny Management Committee, which include all corporate, strategic and business services.

Financial Analysis

2. The council's net General Fund budget for 2015/16 was £119,760k and the net budget for the areas covered by this report is £16,121k. Of this £13,389k relates to Customer & Business Support Services (CBSS) and £2.7m to the Office of the Chief Executive (OCE). The outturn shows an underspend on CBSS of £155k and an overspend on OCE of £283k.
3. Within the Office of the Chief Executive directorate there has been an overspend due to delays in implementing the directorate restructure which has now been fully completed, higher than budgeted redundancy costs and the use of external consultants at the start of the financial year, all of whom have now left. Some of these costs were incurred in order to progress the Councils approach to project management, including the creation of a project management framework.
4. The draft outturn shows an underspend of £155k, an improvement from the Monitor 3 report. There have been increased costs associated with maintaining surplus properties (£144k) and additional posts within Facilities Management (£93k). The delay in implementing the new Customer Relationship Management system has also delayed achievement of the associated saving of £340k. Other overspends have been mitigated by underspends in housing benefit due to improved performance in debt recovery (£273k), savings due to vacant posts within Customer Services (£151k) and Finance and Procurement (£238k) and increased income in Health & Safety (£130k).
5. In addition, there has been an underspend of £468k on the York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS). This underspend has been

transferred to an earmarked reserve to deal with potential future pressures that may arise from ongoing welfare reform. The total of the reserve now stands at £971k. Of this balance, £200k is earmarked for 2016/17 leaving £717k currently unallocated.

Performance Analysis

6. Quarter 4 call service levels saw a small decrease with 75.4% of calls answered in 20 seconds (76.9% Q3) however this arises from the issue of annual council tax and business rate bills in March and the monthly performance was more than 20% higher than in 2015 whilst the annual overall percentage increased to 64.9% (from 47.6% in 2014/15) and continues to improve into quarter 1 2016.
7. In 2015/16 the number of residents visiting the Customer Centre fell to 69,563 (77,549 in 2014/15) but the average wait time increased to 8.49 minutes (7.80 minutes in 2014/15), with 70% of customers served within the waiting time target of 10 minutes (74% in 2014/15).
8. The collection rate for Council Tax at the end of the year was 97.51% compared with 97.55% at the end of 2014/15 and Business Rates 98.43% compared with 98.20% in 2014/15.
9. Housing Benefit performance remains on target at the end of quarter 4 with a combined (New Claims/Change of Circumstance – DWP measure) average of four days.
10. The York Open Data website currently has 630 machine readable datasets available. There were over 12,500 visits during its first year and the platform has had more than 4,600 dataset downloads plus almost 11,000 dataset previews. The council was one of five local authorities to receive top marks from NESTA, for its York Open Data platform, which has opened up data to residents and businesses across the city.

Performance – Employees

11. In 2015/16 61 employees were made redundant, 46 on a voluntary basis and 15 compulsory. In 2014/15 a total of 83 employees were made redundant, 62 voluntary and 21 compulsory.
12. The average sickness days per FTE (excluding schools) has reduced to 10.2 days from 11.4 last year with the number of days lost due to stress also reducing to 2.3 from 2.5 in 2014/15.

13. Overall the number of employees voluntarily leaving the organisation remained static at 7% of all leavers (exc. Schools) in 2015/16, although there was some variation between departments.
14. The number of people employed by the Council (excluding schools) has continued to decrease in 2015/16, at the end of March the headcount was 2,635 (2,104 Full Time Equivalentents) down from 2,812 in March 2015 (2,194 FTEs).
15. Additional salary and overtime expenditure have both decreased between 2014/15 and 2015/16 but spend on casual employees has increased from £4.3m in 14/15 to nearly £5.2m in 2015/16.

Performance – Customers

16. Overall Customer Centre satisfaction increased to 91.5% in 2015/16 from 58% in 2014/15. Satisfaction with face to face and Call Centre services both increased while website feedback, which historically reported low satisfaction ceased to be collected in Q1 after the launch of the new CYC website.
17. The Talk-about panel, a random sample of approximately 800 residents has been reconstituted for 2016/17 and bi-annually views to a standard set of questions will be sought with results published within the relevant scorecard.
18. Executive Member scorecards present a detailed update of the key performance indicators contained in each of the Executive Member Portfolios. These can also be found online alongside other data sources at: www.yorkopendata.org. Work is currently ongoing to look at the performance management reporting arrangements to ensure a transparent and effective system in line with scrutiny arrangements and the Council Plan.

Implications

19. The financial implications are all dealt with in the body of the report.
20. There are no other specific implications of this report.

Recommendations

21. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

Reason: To update the Committee on the 2015/16 outturn.

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