

**Report of the Director for Customer & Business Support Services**

**2014/15 Monitor 3**

**Purpose**

1. This report analyses the latest performance for 2014/15 and forecasts the outturn position for the services falling under the responsibility of the Corporate Scrutiny Management Committee.

**Financial Analysis**

2. The council's net General Fund budget for 2014/15 is £124,186k and the net budget for the areas covered by this report is £19,414k.
3. Following on from previous years, the challenge of delivering savings continues with £11m to be achieved in order to reach a balanced budget. £2,539k of these savings fall within the services covered by this report. The forecasts outlined in this report reflect a prudent view of how that challenge is currently being met.
4. All budgets are reviewed on a quarterly basis and some are monitored monthly. Those that are monitored monthly are high value or high risk areas. The latest review has not identified any major variations that require action or mitigation and all savings proposals are progressing. Overall the areas covered by this report are forecasting a small underspend of £61k.

**Performance Analysis**

5. The performance delivery is analysed against the key delivery priorities of the Council Plan and the cross-cutting organisational priority themes. This report therefore covers
  - Create jobs and grow the economy
  - Core competencies

## **Create jobs and grow the economy**

### **Delivering key infrastructure projects**

6. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with Network Rail and a feasibility study completed for York Central, which is York's largest potential development site.
7. The BioVale Centre, an innovation centre at Heslington East, is underway through Local Growth Fund investment, but national delays to the European Programme could prove problematic for the programme and the Council is working with Local Enterprise Partnerships to mitigate the risks. The building will provide 85,000 sq ft of space with facilities to help biotech companies develop and grow. It will also create a new home for the Biorenewable Development Centre.

### **Fall in average incomes**

8. Average weekly gross earnings of York residents has fallen to £479 from around £520 in the previous two years. Nationally, average gross weekly pay has increased to £521. This is a concerning trend for the city and we are looking at how we work with businesses to address this trend and promote high value jobs. Bringing forward York Central, with the potential to deliver significant additional Grade A office space, will be a major boost to our ambitions.
9. Part of the answer to this is also promotion of the Living Wage. There are now 11 accredited Living Wage employers in York and Quarter 3 saw the announcement of the new living wage rates for the UK. During the quarter, events were hosted at Nestle and the Golden Ball community co-operative pub, providing opportunities for business leaders to discuss the benefits and offer advice for those thinking about paying the Living Wage.

### **Lord Mayor's Young Entrepreneur Business Breakfast**

10. The Business Breakfast was organised by City of York Council and welcomed 45 young business people from across the city to meet each other and hear from other successful York Entrepreneurs.

### **York Business Conference**

11. The York Business Conference was held during Quarter 3 and attended by over 180 people. The event was held at City Screen and was free of charge, allowing delegates to network over a working breakfast.

## **Access to Finance and Business Support**

12. City of York Council teamed up with the Manufacturing Advice Service (MAS) to help York and North Yorkshire manufacturers take advantage of new multi million pound opportunities and 21 York businesses attended.

## **Growth Accelerator**

13. City of York Council hosted a free breakfast “Growth Accelerator Event on 16<sup>th</sup> October at which companies found out how to engage an expert Growth Coach to boost business turnover. 33 York businesses attended.

## **Core Competencies**

### **Improve the whole customer service experience**

14. New speech server telephony software has been introduced which improves the experience of both internal and external callers when using the automated speech recognition route. Further uses of speech server technology are being explored with the aim of enabling customers to navigate themselves to information they require without having to talk to a member of staff.
15. A mock peer assessment was undertaken in preparation for the Council’s planned Excellence level assessment in March. The outcome and feedback was positive which means preparations for the accreditation are progressing well.
16. A week of activities to support the National Customer Services Week was completed during Quarter 3, involving service areas across the Council. It was the first time events were held, with the aim of raising awareness of customer importance and how all employees can contribute to great customer service.

### **Roll out a new offer to young people on apprenticeships, work experience placements and internships**

17. The York Apprenticeship Hub Recruitment Service for smaller businesses, run by City of York Council, is an independent talent match service and is supported by government funding via Leeds City Region. The service has supported 100 small businesses that are new to apprenticeships in the city creating 63 new jobs for local young people.

## **City of York Trading Company**

18. The company continues to show growth and has invested in structures, systems & processes to ensure that growth can be sustained and increased. The Company's market position is being reviewed to ensure strengths are built upon and opportunities fully explored.

## **Deliver an organisational change programme**

19. The Council has a detailed action plan to support the work of the transformation programme, including the development of a Rising Stars programme aimed at the Council's highest performers.

## **Develop a more strategic approach to Talent management**

20. The Council has introduced talent ratings for all employees as part of the new Performance Management Framework. Managers now rate team members according to their performance, attitude and behaviours on an annual basis. The Council is defining which roles are 'critical' to ensure the most talented staff are working in highly critical roles with succession plans being implemented.

## **Volunteering**

21. The Council has signed up to the charter for volunteering and submitted a self assessment that will rate the quality of volunteering experiences provided. A celebratory event for Council volunteers will take place in 2015 to recognise the contribution that volunteers make to the city.

## **Update on progress on Single Equality Scheme**

22. Further to the Single Equality Scheme Update and Refresh report submitted to scrutiny on 8<sup>th</sup> September, members requested further statistical information be provided which is attached at Annex 1.

## **Consultation**

23. There has been consultation with Trade Union groups on the ongoing implications of the council's financial situation and performance improvement issues.

## **Council Plan**

24. The information and issues included in this report demonstrate progress on achieving the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

## Implications

25. The financial implications are covered within the body of the report. There are no significant human resources, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, information technology, property or other implications arising from this report.

## Risk Management

26. The risk management processes embedded across the council continue to contribute to managing the risk issues associated with major projects and key areas of service delivery.

## Recommendations

27. As this report is for information only there are no specific recommendations.

Reason: To update the Committee on the latest finance and performance position for 2014/15.

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Kay Crabtree	<b>Report Approved</b>	✓	<b>Date</b> 25 March 2015
<b>Wards Affected: All</b>			
<b><i>For further information please contact the authors of the report</i></b>			

Annex one – Workforce Equality Scorecard