

To: City Executive Board

Date: 12th. March 2014

Report of: The Scrutiny Finance Panel

Title of Report: Quarter 3 Spending 2013 - 2014

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Finance Panel on budget spending at quarter 3 contained with the Integrated Performance Report.

Key decision: No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Simmons.

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Turner.

Policy Framework: Efficient, Effective Council.

Recommendations: For the City Executive Board to say if it agrees or disagrees with the following recommendation:

Recommendation

To explore the use of Framework Agreements to provide project management and delivery of Capital Programme schemes.

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Finance Panel considered budget spending at quarter 3. They were supported in their debate by Nigel Kennedy, the Panel would like to thank him for his time and advice.
2. The Panel agreed that the Council's finances are in a robust state. In particular the Panel congratulates officers on the collection of rent arrears in what is a challenging environment.
3. The Panel offers comment on the Capital Programme.

Conclusions and Recommendation

4. The Panel discussed the slippage in the Capital Programme matched against the overall delivery ambition. Officers outlined actions that are being taken to more accurately profile spending in the budget so a more accurate picture can be presented. Whilst the Panel welcomed these actions, they are proud of the Council's ambitions within the Capital Programme and do not want the Council's overall ambitions to be undermined in any way. On this basis the Panel would like to see a focus on more effective provision of project management and for the Council to explore the use of Framework agreements to provide this.

Recommendation 1

To explore the use of Framework Agreements to provide project management and delivery of Capital Programme schemes.

Comments from the Director and Board Member

We are aware that delivery of the Council's Capital Programme has in recent years fallen short of the assumptions agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan. This has resulted in a significant amount of re-profiling of projects and slippage carried forward to future years. That having been said the slippage on projects is not always within the Councils control, one such example being the construction of the new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys.

The Council's Programme for 2014/15 is significant and totals around £68 million. Consequently, officers have recently undertaken work to clarify roles and responsibilities, strengthening client focus, provide project management training and re-enforce processes, procedures and documentation, to ensure that resources are in place to deliver the capital schemes identified. Hence we are more confident that the Programme will be delivered on time and within budget as profiled and where necessary external project managers have been and will be brought in to lead on schemes to ensure that this happens. Where external project managers are appointed they are/will be overseen by client officers to ensure the Council secures value for money.

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 2