

**Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel Update**

**1. Remit of the Panel**

The overarching purpose of the Panel is to ensure that the Council's budget, corporate and service improvement arrangements are effective and efficient.

**2. Introduction**

The Panel is focused on contributing to the budget process and annual improvement process by providing a critical friend for the Cabinet, and helping to ensure accountability.

**3. Key Activities**

The Panel held 6 meetings between August 2018 and January 2019. These meetings included the End of Year Performance Monitoring Report 2017/18 and two new items – the Equality Review Report 2017/18 and the Planning Annual Performance Report 2017/18. There were various presentations from a range of officers about performance, improvement and budget monitoring. This has resulted in 5 convener's letters being sent to Cabinet Members. The items covered in meetings were as follows:

<b>August 14th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of Year 2017/18 Performance Monitoring Report</li> </ul>
<b>September 11th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling and Landfill - Annual Performance Monitoring</li> </ul>
<b>September 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Review Report 2017/18</li> <li>• Q1 2018/19 Performance Monitoring Report</li> </ul>
<b>October 29th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2018/19</li> <li>• Revenue Outturn and Savings Tracker 2017/18</li> <li>• Revenue Outturn 2017/18 (HRA)</li> <li>• Capital Outturn and Financing 2017/18</li> </ul>
<b>November 13th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Review of Performance 2017/18</li> <li>• Reserve Update</li> <li>• Mid-Year Budget Statement 2018/19</li> </ul>
<b>December 11th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Update</li> <li>• Q2 Budget Monitoring</li> <li>• Annual Review of Well-being Objectives and Corporate Plan 2018/22</li> <li>• Planning Annual Performance Report 2017/18</li> </ul>

#### 4. Achievements / Impact

Over the last year the Panel have looked more closely at budgets and the link with performance given the substantial austerity faced by the Council. The Panel are asking detailed questions in their letters about specific projects and in particular underspends on projects and the impact of this.

##### Budget and performance monitoring

The Panel regularly receives quarterly and annual performance and budget reports. This enables it to maintain a good level of understanding of performance and budgetary issues. It is closely monitoring a number of key issues and has suggested areas for improvement in monitoring and reporting of information including:

**Reserves:** The Panel are still closely monitoring the Council's reserves and what they are allocated against.

**Budget:** The Panel understand that difficult decisions need to be made in respect to the budget again this year but the Panel will be looking intently at the changes and impact of these decisions including the formal budget meetings in February.

**Welsh Audit Office Reports:** The Panel are closely monitoring all areas but have identified 6 current and upcoming reports which will be accommodated into the work plan for scrutiny over the next year. The first one will be the Welsh Housing Quality Standards due in March 2019.

**Sickness:** The Panel were concerned to read about high levels of staff sickness. The Panel received a breakdown from the departments but this item will be checked going forward.

**Capital Spend:** The Panel are monitoring the Capital Spend closely and the impact of this on performance. They are also looking at any slippage in the Capital Spend and will be asking questions relating to this.

#### 5. New Items

The Panel also have some new items coming to the Panel for monitoring in the remainder of this year, including but not limited to:

- Commissioning Review Overview
- Review of Community Groups and Community Centres
- Wales Audit Office Reports

#### 6. Action for Scrutiny Programme Committee - None.