

## Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**Monday, 13 March 2023**

Present: Councillor Janet Hunter (Chair)  
Councillors D Cox, J Cruddas, D Drummond,  
J Montague, A Newman, E Parker-Leonard, W Samuel,  
J Wallace and M Wilson.

In attendance:  
Councillors K Barrie, P Earley and J O'Shea  
Rev M Vine – Church Representative

Apologies: Councillors L Arkley, M Green, M Hall, M Thirlaway and  
Burton - Parent Governor Representative

### **OV33/22 Appointment of Substitute Members**

Pursuant to the council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute members was made:

Councillor K Barrie for Councillor L Arkley OBE  
Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor M Hall  
Councillor P Earley for Councillor M Green

### **OV34/22 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

Councillor Erin Parker-Leonard declared a non-registerable personal interest in Item 4 Efficiency Savings Programme: 2022/23 Quarter 3: Progress report as they are foster carer for a neighbouring authority.

### **OV35/22 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minute of the meeting held on 16 January 2023 be agreed.

### **OV36/22 Efficiency Savings Programme: 2022/23 Quarter 3: Progress Report**

The Committee received a report that provided an update to key 2022/23 projects and business cases within the overall Efficiency Savings Programme.

The overall target for 2022/23 was £7.257m, with £3.955m already delivered and £3.302m yet to be achieved.

The report provided a summary of the savings, and the focus of the Committee were the projects that displayed a red RAG rating.

A member raised the approach by Children's Services to ensure its associated saving in relation to Fostering Strategy were realised and asked for the reason why they had not been achieved.

In response the Director of Children's Services, provided a greater understanding to the increased demand on the service that included those children in the statutory system with greater complexity of need. There was also the addition pressure to support asylum children, which was also projected to rise. It was stated that there was a similar picture across parts of the country and was recognised by government and additional funding had been provided in the latest financial settlement. It was stated that a range of plans were being developed, however, it was acknowledged that service delivery would continue to be challenging.

A member questioned when the plans would realise the required savings. In response the Committee was informed that in relation to fostering it was likely that the saving would not be achieved with 2022/24, however, it was expected that savings would be achieved within 2024/25. In relation to Children in Care it was projected that a reduction would be realised within the next 12 months.

A member raised that they believed there were additional pressures in relation to the provision of respite to Foster Carers. It was also raised that there was a need to engage with more children to ensure the school meals offer was appropriate to their wants/needs, and this should include nurseries.

Within the Commissioning & Asset Management it was questioned the reasons for the shortfall of £0.502M. In response the Head of Finance informed that paid school meals had not returned to pre Covid-19 take up levels. This was mainly due to more pupils moving to free school meals with the addition impact that a number of schools had become academies or trusts and left the service level agreement since the targets were set.

It was explained that to achieve the set target saving the service area was investigating other areas where savings could be realised.

**Agreed** that the Efficiency Savings Programme: 2022/23 Quarter 3: Progress Report be noted.

## **OV37/22      Annual Scrutiny Report**

The Committee received the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

The report provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee and its seven sub-committees. It also informed the scrutiny in-depth work through the establishing of sub-groups in relation to Storm Arwen, Victims of anti-social behaviour and the scrutiny of the 2023-24 budget.

It was reported that scrutiny continues its engagement with the Elected Mayor and Cabinets and the report provided details of when this had occurred.

The Chair expressed her gratitude to all members and officers for their work throughout the year.

**Agreed** that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report be approved and referred to the Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2023.