

Environment & Housing Scrutiny Panel
Budget Scrutiny – Monday 2nd December 2013
Present: Cllr Alexander, Cllr Bull, Cllr McNamara (Chair) and Cllr Weber

The Panel discussed proposals for investment, savings and capital expenditure detailed in both the Cabinet Budget report (June 2013) and Medium Term Financial Plan (November 2013).

The panel made the following recommendation and observations:

Recommendation 1

Cabinet Budget Report (June 2013)

Adults & Housing Directorate - Proposed efficiency saving: Item 11 - Community Housing Staffing Efficiencies (£77,000)

The Panel noted that this related to the deletion of two front-line posts one of which was in the Private Sector Housing Management Team and the other in the Vulnerable Adults team.

The panel indicated that it could not support this savings proposal because:

- It conflicted with other financial proposals in the Medium Term Financial Plan (i.e. growth proposal relating to 'increased resources allocated to HMO licensing due to dramatic rise in private sector renting in the borough');
- There was an evident need to develop and expand enforcement within private rented sector in Haringey;
- The retention of the post in the Private Sector Housing Management Team may potentially increase enforcement income;
- The post in the Vulnerable Adults team relates to advice provided to vulnerable adults who are homeless and the deletion of this post may significantly impact on the work of the remaining team;
- Officers indicated that there may be likely an over-achievement of procurement savings in relation to Item 12 (Housing Related Support – contract efficiencies) which could be off-set against this and negate the need for the deletion of both these posts.

Observation 1

Medium term Financial Plan (November 2013) Growth Proposal Adults & Health (Item 2) The provision of £995,000 to meet cost pressures and the impact of Welfare Reform

The Panel noted the increasing cost of temporary accommodation in supporting local residents to respond to welfare reforms. The panel wished to highlight the possible use of Cumberland Road (or other soon to be vacant office buildings) for temporary accommodation. The Panel suggested that should similar accommodation become available, this should be considered for use as temporary accommodation within the planned Property Review currently being undertaken.

Observation 2

Cabinet Budget Report (June 2013)

Place and Sustainability Directorate - Proposed efficiency saving: Item 18 – Efficiencies in Veolia Contract and reduction of ad hoc contractual spend (£250,000)

The panel were unclear how the proposed contract variation would impact on local waste and recycling provision. It was noted that this variation was still being negotiated with Veolia, and it was agreed that the outcome would be communicated to the panel.