

Mayor Ros Jones
Floor 4
Civic Office
Waterdale
Doncaster
DN1 3BU

Councillor John Mounsey, Adwick and Carcroft Ward

Home Tel: 01302 710814

E-Mail: john.mounsey@doncaster.gov.uk

Date: 20th January 2017

Dear Ros

Overview and Scrutiny's Response to the Mayor's Budget Proposals 2017/18

I am writing to confirm the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's (OSMC) response to your Budget Proposals 2017/18 that were agreed at its meeting on the 19th January 2017.

Following publication of your budget proposals, OSMC Members initially reviewed your details at a budget review session on the 13th December, 2016.

At both meetings the Committee used the following lines of enquiry to help develop its response:-

The four key areas for consideration are:

- i. To what extent are the Mayor's proposals in line with central government policy, pressures and directives?
- ii. To what extent will the Mayor's proposal ensure that the Council is able to contribute to the outcomes set out in the Borough Strategy, Corporate Plan bearing in mind the constraints detailed at i. above and Medium Term Financial Forecast?
- iii. To what extent do the Mayor's proposals demonstrate that the results of any consultation, research or other evidence have been taken into account?
- iv. To what extent are the challenges in delivering the savings within the timescales and the capacity to deliver services with reduced resources being addressed?

Having taken account of the information provided at both meetings the Committee was supportive of the proposals. The Committee's response is attached to this letter and I would welcome the opportunity to present this to your Cabinet meeting on 14th February 2017. I would also be grateful if you could take account of OSMC's response when you present your final proposals to Council on the 2nd March 2017.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Directors and Assistant Directors for attending our budget review sessions, answering questions and providing clarification on issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Mounsey', with a stylized, cursive script.

Councillor John Mounsey
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

cc OSMC Members
Cabinet Members
Jo Miller, Directors and BAs.
Simon Wiles
Steve Mawson
Scott Fawcus

APPENDIX A OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET REVIEW OUTCOMES

In respect of the Mayor's budget proposals, OSMC:

1. Recognised the difficulties in setting a balanced budget that delivers £23.5M savings in 2017/18 and seeks to protect services delivered to the most vulnerable in the Borough. Additionally the delivery and implementation of the proposals, once agreed are crucial to delivering a balanced budget.
2. Welcomed its early involvement in the budget process and particularly the opportunity to review the proposals to meet the future funding gap. The Committee wish this early involvement to continue in future years. The Committee also requested that it continue to receive regular updates on the implementation of the key budget proposals and how any slippage or key risks are being addressed.
3. Acknowledged the effectiveness of the financial strategy in building up and utilising reserves in 2017/18 to spread the burden of the more significant pressures that arise during the year. The Committee also welcomed the recent announcement relating to the White Rose Way scheme, which reduces the risk on the reserves position.
4. Noted that the effectiveness of the Service Transformation Fund in assisting Directorates to achieve savings targets in a timely and well managed way, and fund any shortfall on planned programmes.
5. Accepted, in terms of Council Tax, that the Government had created an option to increase the Adult Social Care Levy to 3%, however, it noted that the Mayor had confirmed the proposal was for it to remain at 2%, as this was consulted on.
6. Recognised the ongoing positive and commendable work undertaken to address budget pressures in Adult Social Care whilst ensuring improved outcomes for adults. It was noted for this to continue, effective plans needed to be in place to reduce overspends in Adult Social Care and to control the amount of spend over coming years by redesigning services and modernising. The Committee accepted the need to balance support for vulnerable people through prevention and early intervention.
7. Noted that key risks to the delivery of the budget continued to be identified and effectively managed to make sure they did not adversely impact on the Council's ability to meet its savings target, in particular:-
 - Possible non-delivery or delayed delivery of key projects/savings;
 - Risks within Adult Social Care, for example, not managing demand and people leaving and not being able to recruit the right calibre of professionals; and
 - Children's Trust financial overspend position. This is an ongoing concern, therefore the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is due to give consideration to the financial recovery plan on 15th February, 2017.

8. Acknowledged that when developing and agreeing savings targets, consideration should be given to how the delivery of services will impact on the most vulnerable residents in the Borough. Members therefore support a continued approach to meaningful robust consultation and engagement with the wider public and other stakeholders where major service transformation is taking place, to ensure any decisions are well informed.
9. Recognised that Directorates were regularly responding to and monitoring the constant change in landscape and identifying how services could be enhanced in future years. With regards to being confident in delivering services, making savings and generating income, Members recognised the need for continued relationship building, more joined up ways of working and particularly the importance of the Team Doncaster approach.