

Cllr S Ward - Report on Strategy and Resource Committee

As part of exercising our financial responsibilities we have:

- scrutinised the Council's spending against budget
- considered plans for next year's budget and
- advised Council on the level at which the precept should be set.

We also oversee governance issues and were pleased to note that the Council received a positive internal audit report and an unqualified external audit opinion in relation to the most recent final accounts for 2017/18.

The Committees strategic function has been wide ranging.

We have established a new Town Centre Regeneration Partnership to bring forward proposals to improve and regenerate the Town Centre. The Partnership combines the many organisations that have an interest in the centre of our Royal Town.

We have responded to the public consultation of BCCs draft Urban Centres Framework on the central role that urban centres could play in delivering the city's agenda for inclusive economic growth.

We have pressed BCC for comprehensive financial and operational information which will enable us to consider the implications of taking on responsibility for Sutton Park. We have recognised that this would be a major undertaking and that we will need external expert advice in order to fully assess the implications.

We have continued to work on defining our relationship with Birmingham City Council. Discussions are underway on the development of a Local Charter / Devolution Deal to incorporate the transfer of responsibility for some key assets within the town and the devolved delivery of certain services to the Town Council.

We have delivered free public WiFi in the Town Centre. This is an important part of a Town's infrastructure and something in which we need to invest to ensure a forward looking, thriving town.

We have taken the initiative to ensure the town's precious archive is safe and accessible for future generations by commissioning archivists and conservationists who will survey the archive and recommend what needs to be done preserve and display the collection in the future.

We are also responsible for the Strategic Plan and will be leading on a full public consultation about which you will hear more later.

My thanks to members of the Strategy and Resources Committee for their hard work this year.