

## CABINET

28 FEBRUARY 2013

### 119. TWO YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN AND REVENUE BUDGET 2013 /14

Further to Minute No's 107 and 108 of the meeting held on 14 February 2013, the Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which:

- provided an update on the final Local Government Settlement and confirmed the budget gap of £50.8m over the next two years;
- provided further details on the outstanding budget savings options relating to the Review of the Library Services, Street Lighting and Public Conveniences and the proposed changes to the fees and charges for youth sports pitches; learning and development; car parking and public conveniences;
- provided updates on other budget savings options detailed in the report and requested consideration of what should now be included in the final two year Budget Plan;
- set out the full list of budget savings options to meet the £50.8m budget gap over the two financial years in Annex A to the report.

Following the Cabinet meeting held on 14 February 2013, the proposals for the Transformation Programme and Revenue Budget 2013/15 had been considered in detail at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) held on 19 February 2013.

The report indicated that the two year budget plan, as summarised in Annex A would enable a budget for 2013/14 to be approved and identified the policy changes required to deliver a sustainable and robust two year budget plan. Due to the mixture of efficiencies and significant policy changes, some of the options could and would not be realised within a 12 month period and would contribute to the 2014/15 budget as illustrated in the report. This would require the implementation of major change programmes and appropriate capacity would need to be dedicated to ensure deliverability. Given the scale of the budget reductions any slippage or underachievement would have implications for the financial management of the Council and as such robust management and monitoring arrangements would continue to be operated.

The Chief Executive referred to the amendment sheet setting out the typographical errors to Annex A of the report which had been circulated and indicated that there were 7 options within the report that had been specifically highlighted as having a different status to all other options. This was for options where work was in progress including consultation and equality assessments. This information was made clear in Annex A by reference to the Status Column and one example of this was Day Care and Respite Care for Adults. She also indicated that Members would be advised

accordingly should any significant implications arise from this ongoing work before a final decision was taken.

The Chief Executive also indicated that further details were available on every budget option and would be made available upon request before and during the Budget Council meeting.

The Chair thanked the officers for the work undertaken on the budget and referred to the Joint Further Submission on the Review of the Library Services endorsed by the Friends of Ainsdale Library; Birkdale Library Action Group (BLAG) and the Friends of Churchtown Library, which had been circulated with the supplementary agenda prior to the meeting. He indicated that the Council was always willing to consider any sustainable and feasible options for the future operation of services impacted by the savings options including libraries.

The Chair also reported that since the publication of the agenda, the Department for Communities and Local Government had published supplementary guidance entitled "Openness and Accountability in Local Pay: Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act 2011" and as a consequence of that, he indicated that amendments should be made to the text in paragraph 3.4.4 of the report.

This was a Key Decision and was included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

**Decisions Made:** That :

- (1) the updated information on the Review of Library Services, set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report and the Further Joint Submission be noted; and the Council at its Budget meeting on 28 February 2013 be recommended to approve Option B, as set out in paragraph 1.5 of the report to the Cabinet meeting held on 14 February 2013 in respect of the future library service for the following reasons:-
  - (i) the Council has taken into account its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service in accordance with Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and considers that the adoption of Option B for the future library service would meet the requirement for a comprehensive and efficient library service;
  - (ii) the Council had engaged in an extensive public consultation exercise and the analysis of the 3,026 questionnaires received indicated that 43% of responders supported Option B; 41% supported Option C ; 14% did not support any option and 2% supported Option A. Thus, the highest percentage of support amongst responders to the questionnaire was for Option B;

- (iii) the Council had considered its Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality of opportunity in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and has produced a comprehensive Public Sector Equality Duty Analysis Report . A key finding of this analysis was that Option B met the Public Sector Equality Duty;
  - (iv) the review process had demonstrated that doing nothing would create an unsustainable network of provision located in buildings that required significant capital investment; and
  - (v) officers pursue the activities, discussions and lines of enquiry referred to in paragraphs 3.29 to 3.35 inclusive of the report to the Cabinet meeting held on 14 February 2013.
- (2) the final outcome of consultations held on budget saving option D1.32 – Public Conveniences be noted and approval be given to the increase in the charges for pay to use facilities and where feasible, the introduction of a charge for use at all public convenience facilities.
  - (3) approval be given to the implementation of the recommendations of the Street Lighting review as outlined in the budget option form in Annex A of the report;
  - (4) the Council be recommended to give approval to the two year budget plan for 2013/14 and 2014/15 contained within the report, which incorporates the decisions set out in resolutions (1) to (3) above; and
  - (5) that the Council be recommended to give approval to the addition of the following text as the penultimate sentence in paragraph 3.4.4 of the report:

“Members will note that supplementary guidance has been issued by the Secretary of State namely the Openness and Accountability in Local Pay: Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy will be amended so as to make clear that any decision taken with respect to severance payments will adhere to this guidance.”

**Reasons for Decision:**

The recommendations in the report would enable the Council to agree the 2013/14 budget and a two year budget plan.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

All currently feasible / viable options had been put forward for consideration. A number of non viable budget options had been dismissed by Members.