

THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER, 2014. MINUTE NO. 41 (7) IS NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL - IN."

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON THURSDAY 27TH NOVEMBER, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Dowd (in the Chair)
Councillors Hardy, Maher and Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Welsh

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cummins, Fairclough and Moncur.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr. P. Cowley (Principal Lawyer, Corporate Legal Services) declared a pecuniary interest in the savings proposal reference 78 – Legal Services referred to in the report to be considered under Minute 41 below and he indicated that he would leave the room if any specific discussion took place on that savings proposal.

38. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

39. PROCUREMENT OF HOMELESS AND HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Older People on the proposed procurement exercise to be undertaken in order to replace the Homeless and Housing Related Support contracts that were due to expire on 30 June 2015.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) the procurement process, as set out in the report, for the

replacement of the Homeless and Housing Related Support contracts be approved; and

- (2) the Director of Older People be authorised to award the contract(s) to the highest scoring bidder(s) at the end of the procurement process

Reasons for Decision:

The Homeless and Housing Related Support contracts with an annual value of £1,196,180 expire on 30 June 2015 and any replacement contracts must be procured in compliance with Public Contract Regulations.

The services covered by these contracts are important services for the delivery of the Council's Homeless Strategy.

In light of the Council's reducing financial resources and recognising the current cost of the separate existing services, the anticipated cost-efficiencies that might be gained from the commissioning of a more integrated service and the fact that many of the current services are discretionary services, it is intended to procure the new services at a significantly lower value.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The Council could determine to only provide statutory homeless services and to cease provision of wholly discretionary and preventive service. Implications of deciding not to procure replacement services would be:-

- A reputational and financial risk to the authority by the potential failure to perform its statutory duty to homeless applicants. This could result in expensive litigation including judicial review proceedings.
- An increase in the cost of the Council having to provide temporary accommodation for homeless people in expensive B&B placements that are currently rarely used.
- A potential increase in expenditure for Children's Services for 16-17 year children who are homeless. Many young people need housing and low level support to move on in to independence; if these services did not exist then there would be a greater burden on Children's Services.
- A potential increase in rough sleeping in the Sefton Borough; the accommodation services provide accommodation for residents who would otherwise be street homeless.

The Council could also determine to procure the services but at a lower "ceiling" price. The scale of reduction in provision and the extent to which

the above implications are applicable would depend upon the market and the tenders received.

40. 2014/2015 AND 2015/2016 BUDGET UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which provided details of the progress in the achievement of the approved savings for 2014/15 (and any residual savings carried forward from 2013/14); other financial risks elsewhere within the budget; the latest forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection; and proposals for the implementation of an amended green waste refuse collection timetable for 2015/16, including associated working arrangements.

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT indicated that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting held on 25 November 2014 had considered and endorsed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) The progress to date on the achievement of approved savings for 2014/2015 and residual savings carried forward from previous years be noted;
- (2) the wider financial pressures being experienced in the remainder of the Budget be noted;
- (3) the forecast position on the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates be noted;
- (4) approval be given to the implementation of the amended green waste refuse collection timetable for 2015/16, including associated working arrangements; and
- (5) the Director of Street Scene be granted delegated authority to undertake all necessary arrangements to enable the amended green waste refuse collection to be implemented in February 2015.

Reasons for the Decision:

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the latest position on the achievement of savings for the current financial year and to identify wider budget pressures being experienced elsewhere in the budget. To provide an update on the forecast outturn position on the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates. To enable implementation of the amended green waste refuse collection timetable for 2015/2016, including associated working arrangements. Also, to delegate authority to the Director of Street Scene to undertake all necessary arrangements to enable the amended green waste refuse collection to be implemented in February 2015.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

41. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET 2015 TO 2017

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive and the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which outlined the Council's financial position for 2015/16 and 2016/17; set out the financial position in the context of the Council's priorities; described the process undertaken to deliver a programme of savings options that reflected the need to produce a balanced budget alongside the objective of minimising the impact of the cuts on Sefton communities; provided the Cabinet with the first phase of savings options that would contribute to the forecast budget gap for the next two years; and outlined the gap remaining and the timetable for producing a balanced two year budget plan.

The Cabinet also considered a supplementary note which set out the following typographical errors in the report:

- Page 67 - 34 Street Lighting Energy total actual budget is £1,447,400 not £1,180,000
- Page 138 - 56 Commissioning Reduction of the Commissioning Service staffing – the text under Indicative Number of Staff at Risk should read: up to 4 - 5 note that where changes and/or savings cannot be achieved through deletion of vacant posts, VR or VER then there may be a need for compulsory redundancies arising from this option.

The Chief Executive indicated that since 2011, the Council had faced unprecedented reductions in its resources as a result of cuts in Government Funding. In the preceding 4 years, cuts of £114 million had been identified and implemented and for the period 2015/16 to 2016/17, it was forecast that savings of a further £55 million would need to be identified. This represented a real term reduction of 45% on the 2011 spending level. She also indicated that the report set out some significant savings proposals totalling £30.288m which would have an impact on the delivery of services for the local community and further savings proposals of £24.418m had still to be identified. All of the savings proposals had been produced in accordance with the Core Principles and Budget Principles set out in the report in order to produce a two year budget plan and the proposals would need to be considered and approved by Members of the Council.

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT indicated that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had considered and noted the content of the report at its meeting held on 25 November 2014 and requested that the following questions be submitted to the Cabinet for a response.

Budget Issue Proposal	Question / Response
Funding from Council Tax and Business Rates	<p>Has the anticipated Council Tax income and business rates income been factored into the Council's predicted income for the period 2015 to 2017 and beyond?</p> <p>The Chief Executive responded that the projected income had been factored in to the report.</p>
36 - Aiming High	<p>Will respite provision still be provided?</p> <p>The Director of Young People and Families responded that respite provision would still be provided but it would be at a significantly reduced level.</p>
39 - Neighbourhoods and Partnerships	<p>Will the co-ordination of the MARAC activities remain in-house and be undertaken by Council staff?</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services responded that it was anticipated that the activities would still be provided by in-house Council staff.</p>

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P. Dowd) commented that the Council had faced unprecedented reductions in its resources as a result of cuts in Government Funding and that he felt that Sefton had been treated unreasonably by the Government in comparison with the much smaller budget reductions faced by Councils in the South of England and should be given more budgetary resources to deal with the demographics of the Borough. The Council would be faced with having to make some very difficult decisions as reasonably and as fairly as they can be made. He expressed thanks for the support of the public who appreciated that the Council was in the difficult position of having to make budget cuts forced upon it by the Government in order to set a balanced budget.

Decision Made:

That:

- (1) the approach to identifying options including the Core Purpose as given in paragraph 2.2 and the Budget Principles as given in paragraph 4.2 of the report be endorsed;

- (2) it be noted that the potential budget shortfalls within the Medium Term Financial Plan as identified in December 2013 are:

2015/16 £ 32.366m
 2016/17 £ 22.340m

Total £ 54.706m

- (3) the work programme timetable set out in Annex A of the report be noted;
- (4) the budget process undertaken by officers to date as set out in paragraph 4 of the report and the process that officers would be undertaking to conclude the budget plan for the next two financial years be approved;
- (5) the items identified as efficiencies in Annex C1 of the report be approved and it be noted that these would be implemented immediately by officers;
- (6) it be noted that the details of the equality impact assessment information, the latest recorded position with respect to consultation, the identified risks and mitigating actions and information; and the impact on the community service users, partners and the Council for each of the proposals contained in Annex C2 of the report had been taken into account in the decision-making process; and officers be authorised to take necessary steps to progress the options pending consideration and decision by the Council in due course;
- (7) the Council be recommended to approve the following budget saving proposals as set out in Annex C2 of the report:

Most Vulnerable

Ref	Service Area	Change Proposal	2014/15 Budget £000	Proposed Budget Reduction £000
30	Children With Disability Service	Continue with the development of, and implement, new eligibility criteria	3,500	210
31	Domiciliary Care	Further explore the use of adaptations, equipment and Assistive Technology Reduce the number of hours, number of calls, or number of carers utilised, where this is appropriate Work in partnership with the voluntary/community sector to facilitate the development and	5,322	1,560

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		utilisation of low-level alternative/preventative community services		
		Explore more outcome-focused commissioning		
			Total	1,770

Core

Ref	Service Area	Change Proposal	2014/15 Budget £000	Proposed Budget Reduction £000
32	Street Cleansing	Further expand the use of electric vehicles and reduce the number of cleansing operatives delivering a manual service	3,670	360
33	Highways Infrastructure	To continue for a further 2 years the reduction of £800k which was introduced as an annual saving in previous years	6,672	800
		Reduction in Highways Maintenance programmes to focus on preventative, critical and high risk works		160
34	Street Lighting Energy	Invest to save in lighting columns and bulbs to allow reduced hours of lighting.	1,447	530
35	Libraries	Review of operation and management of libraries including bookfund and opening times	1,901	270
			Total	2,120

Community Resilience

Ref	Service Area	Change Proposal	2014/15 Budget £000	Proposed Budget Reduction £000
36	Aiming High	Continue with the development of, and implement, new eligibility criteria	1,360	400
		Review and potential cessation of funding for some activities		
37	Housing Standards	Reduction in housing enforcement services including cessation of corporate illegal traveller sites co-ordination	450	60

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38	Supported Living	Alternative and more efficient ways of meeting assessed care needs	18,435	1,200
39	Neighbourhoods	Reduction and re-prioritisation of activity	778	150
			Total	1,810

Economy & Environment

Ref	Service Area	Change Proposal	2014/15 Budget £000	Proposed Budget Reduction £000
40	Planning	Realign and reduce revenue budgets – including consultancy budgets	958	72
41	Planning	Increase in income across parts of the service Development Management, Building Control, and Technical Support [land charges] in light of economic forecast		130
42	Trading Standards	General reduction in enforcement activity. Limit resident service request response	480	55
43	EEMS (Energy and Environment)	Reduction in Carbon reduction service and community energy service	384	84
44	Parks Maintenance	Botanic Gardens shop Closure	2,903 (Total Parks Maintenance Budget)	45
45		Increase allotment fees by an average of £10 per full size plot in 2016/17 and again in 2017/18. Rates per full size plot will increase to £96 by 2017/18		20
46		The recharging of the cost of statutory checks to sports pavilions and repairs and maintenance of sports pavilions and associated hard infrastructure to sports users.		15
47		Further Changes in Style and Standards of Parks Management		144
48		Reduction in GM Contracts		60
49	Coast	Reduction to visitor and site management activities. Extension to the length of the life guard contract on reduced terms. Car-parking income charges	878	150

Total	775
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Health & Wellbeing

Ref	Service Area	Change Proposal	2014/15 Budget £000	Proposed Budget Reduction £000
50	Environmental Health	Reduction in front line environmental health regulatory services. Reduction in pest control services but retain full rat control service	1,812	370
51	School Health	Re-specify/recommission the Healthy Child programme for the whole 0-19 age range	1,388	260
52	CHAMPS	Cessation of health protection/emergency preparedness and social marketing programmes and prioritising work Ceasing Sefton's contribution to cancer information service and CALM (mental health) service	220	57
53	Sports Leisure	Review and Restructure Management/Administration/ Operations including deletion of Service Manager post Retender direct debit collection Reduce agency payments Energy efficiency	1,044	470
Total			1,157	

Running the Council

Ref	Service Area	Change Proposal	2014/15 Budget £000	Proposed Budget Reduction £000
54	Adult Assessments	An end to end review of assessment and review policies, procedures and processes within Adult Social Care.	7,580	300
55	Client Contribution	Restructuring and integrating the above service with the specialist Substance Misuse Housing and Welfare Rights Team	586	36

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56	Commissioning	Reduction of the Commissioning Service staffing	Budget within Most Vulnerable	144
57	Attendance Welfare Service	Improved administration of legal procedures. Reduced eligibility for service interventions. Increase income	473	192
58	Youth Offending Team	Merge services and potential to reduce management capacity	661	120
59	Outreach Respite Recovery	Restructure the delivery team	635	96
60	Locality Assessment	Redesign of Common Assessment Framework team Implement a stronger Lead Practitioner model Implementation of electronic – common assessment framework (E-CAF)	299	132
61	School Standards and Effectiveness	Reduction in the Local Authority support provided to schools which are not in receipt of statutory intervention, requiring improvement or are assessed at risk of being less than good	530	60
62	Schools Regulatory Services	An end to end review of activity, policies, procedures and processes.	449	60
63	14-19 Services	Changes to commissioning arrangements for Information, Advice & Guidance	938	120
64	Children's administrative support	Service redesign	167	42
65	Highway management, development, design and safety.	Changes to charges Service reorganisations	1,135	300
66	Parking	Review of service and charging regimes	-1,524	547
67	Property Management	Closure and disposal of operational properties	1,052	60

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68	FCERM (Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management)	Reduction in service, Reduced response times Reduction in works delivery	362	82
69	Regulatory Services Support	Reduction in administrative support due to changes in working practices and increase to online services	219	24
70	Public Conveniences	Closure of all public conveniences	74	74
71	Bulky Items	Increasing collection charge from £7.50 to £10 per collection	48	48
72	Arts	Review management and opening times at the Atkinson	1,417	240
73	Sports Leisure-Active Sports	Increase in income due to increased charges and new programmes	0	36
74	Sports Leisure Aquatics	Maximise pool time at Meadows offering more swimming lessons to meet demand	-234	36
75	Public Health	Internal restructure to reflect the need to strengthen the influencing role of the team, and reduced need for commissioning capacity	822	278
76	Corporate Communications Team	Deletion of vacant posts and Team restructure	400	204
77	Transformation	Reduction of Transformation resource	204	75
78	Legal Services	Restructure of the legal management department Removal of the Monitoring Officer's budget.	914	134
79	Finance & ICT Services	Restructuring Finance and ICT services after implementation of new financial system in 2015 Reduce ICT, printing and telephone costs in line with general Council reductions	2,812 552	500 190
80	Learning & Development	Reduction in activity associated with learning and development	623	188
81	Personnel	Reduction in Personnel resource and efficiency savings	1,600	100
Total				4,418

TOTAL BUDGET REDUCTION	12,050
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- (8) it be noted the officers would comply with Human Resource policies and procedures and this would include regular Human Resource monitoring reports to the Cabinet Member - Corporate Services and Performance.
- (9) it be noted that the figures in Annex C2 of the report are working assumptions of proposals to be considered by the Council and the figures should not be seen as predetermining any decisions;
- (10) it be noted that further options were being developed and assessed and a further report would be presented to Cabinet for consideration in January 2015; and
- (11) it be noted that the Cabinet and Council would be required to consider the coherence of the proposals when taken as a whole at the Council meeting to be held on 5 March 2015 in setting the 2015/16 budget and the two year financial plan.

Reasons for the Decision:

To ensure that the Cabinet was fully aware of the latest Medium Term Financial Plan position; to enable the consideration of £30.288m of savings options which would need to be phased over the two year budget plan and support the Council in its duty to agree a budget for 2015/16 and the level of 2015/16 Council Tax before the statutory date of 10 March 2015, and maintain a sustainable financial future for the Council by agreeing a balanced two year financial plan for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Additional budget savings and options will need to be identified over the coming months to ensure that future years' budgets can be balanced. It is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget and to ensure the medium term financial position is robust.