

Extract from minutes of Cabinet meeting - 15 February 2012

35. Wiltshire Council's Business and Financial Plan Update 2012/13

Councillor Jane Scott, Leader of the Council presented a report which provided an assessment of Cabinet's draft proposals to Council to set a budget for 2012/13, and the impact on Council Tax, rents, fees and charges, the capital programme, schools, as well as reserves.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny had met on 9 February 2012 to appraise and scrutinise the proposals, as well as officers' conclusions, and comments from this meeting were presented in a tabled report, copies of which had been made available to the press and public.

The Leader, referring to the recommendations as set out in the report, moved an amendment that the free swimming would be offered to all under 16 year olds during the Easter and summer holidays. This proposal was to contribute towards the County's legacy from the London 2012 Olympics and to address issues identified in the recent Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA), tackling child obesity and child poverty, as well as keeping children active during the school holidays. It was emphasised that schools did an excellent job of keeping children active during term time. The cost of this proposal would be around £145,000, depending on take up, but it was reported that the publicity would be targeted at those who needed it most, and also through GPs and school nurses.

In response to a question, it was noted that the Council received a "bonus" from the government for keeping Council tax to a 0% increase. This bonus was the equivalent of a 2.5% increase, or £5.5 million.

Resolved:

That Cabinet, following consideration of comments and recommendations arising from the Director of Finance and Corporate Directors' statements, Scrutiny and public consultations, makes the following recommendations to Council on 28th February 2012:

- a. **To endorse the update of the 2012-15 Business and Financial Plan.**
- b. **To recommend to Council, for approval, that the savings and investment proposals summarised at Sections 9 and 7 respectively of this report and Sections 4 and 5 of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report, provides a net revenue budget for 2012/13 of £326.655 million.**
- c. **TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO:**
 - i. **Freeze Wiltshire Council's element of the Band D council tax for 2012/13 £1,222.43, as calculated in accordance with statute, as set out in Section 10 of this report.**

- ii. **Set the Council's total net expenditure budget for 2012/13 at £326.655 million.**
- iii. **Adopt the changes introduced by Government and move from the current subsidy funding system to one of self-financing when local authorities take on responsibility for the current debt & repayment;**
- iv. **Set a 6.4% increase for dwelling rents in accordance with rent restructuring;**
- v. **Set the HRA Budget for 2012/13 (original) as set out at Appendix F of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report;**
- vi. **That all other rent or service charges related to the HRA be frozen at 2011/12 levels.**
- vii. **The Capital programme proposed at Appendix E of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan, attached to this report at Appendix 1.**
- viii. **Set the changes in fees and charges set out in detail at Section 6 of Cabinet's proposed Financial Plan at Appendix 1 of this report.**
- ix. **To provide £145,000 to offer free swimming for under 16 year olds during the Easter and summer holidays.**

Reason for Decision

The Cabinet, following Scrutiny and consultation, is required to forward recommendations to Council to enable it to:

- Set its revenue, capital, housing revenue accounts, fees and charges, levels of reserves and resultant Council Tax for 2012/13 to then issue Council Tax and rent bills.
- Provide the Council with a strong business and financial plan for sustainable delivery for the remaining three years of those plans.