

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2014 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Stewart Dobson, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Simon Killane (Chairman), Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr John Walsh, Cllr Bridget Wayman and Cllr Roy While (Vice Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Glenis Ansell, Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Terry Chivers, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Richard Gamble, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Sheila Parker, Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Dick Tonge and Cllr Christopher Williams

16 **Apologies**

There were no apologies.

17 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

18 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman indicated that he would be taking a couple of urgent items at the end of the meeting in respect of the proposals for scrutinising youth services and parking.

19 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

20 **Explanation of Procedure**

The Chairman outlined the procedure by which the Financial Update would be presented and scrutinised, as detailed in the agenda papers.

21 **Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2014/15**

The draft Wiltshire Council Financial Plan Update for 2014/15 was presented by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Risk and the Associate Director (Finance) ahead of its submission to Cabinet on 11 February and Full Council on 25 February 2014.

Details of proposed investments and savings were outlined within the context of reductions in the government revenue support grant to the council and the planned freeze on council tax.

The Committee, along with other members in attendance, discussed the presentation as attached to these minutes as Appendix 1, and sought clarification on several issues as well as commenting upon the proposed budget, with full details contained in the report at Appendix 2 to these minutes.

Areas of discussion included the deliverability of proposed savings, the communication of those savings throughout the council's management structure, the reduction in the council's reserves for one year as a result of a technical adjustment, balancing the budget in the face of increased pressures upon vulnerable older person and young person services, and the proposed strategic savings as detailed in the report.

At the conclusion of debate, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) To thank all those who attended the meeting and contributed to discussion and, in doing so, to acknowledge the work done by the officer team in drawing the budget documents together and the challenges faced by the Executive in difficult financial circumstances.**
- 2) To recommend that Council take into account the main points made by the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as outlined within the attached report at Appendix 2 when determining the 2014/15 budget.**

22 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 4 March 2014.

23 **Urgent Items**

1) Car Parking

The Committee considered an invitation from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Streetscene for a member of Scrutiny to participate in the forthcoming Car Parking Review through membership of the Project Board.

The Committee was thankful for the opportunity for there to be non-executive involvement at an early stage, but stressed that the presence of a non-executive member as the project progressed was in addition to the work of the Task Group already established by the Environment Select Committee again done at the invitation of the Cabinet Member.

Resolved:

To delegate to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to appoint a non-executive member to assist with the Car Parking Review, following consultation with all members for expressions of interest.

2) Youth Services

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Children's Select Committee to set up a task and finish group on the consultative options for Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People following the decision of Cabinet.

Resolved:

To endorse the set up of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task and Finish Group, following consultation with all members for expressions of interest.

(Duration of meeting: 10.35 am - 2.05 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, direct line (01225) 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

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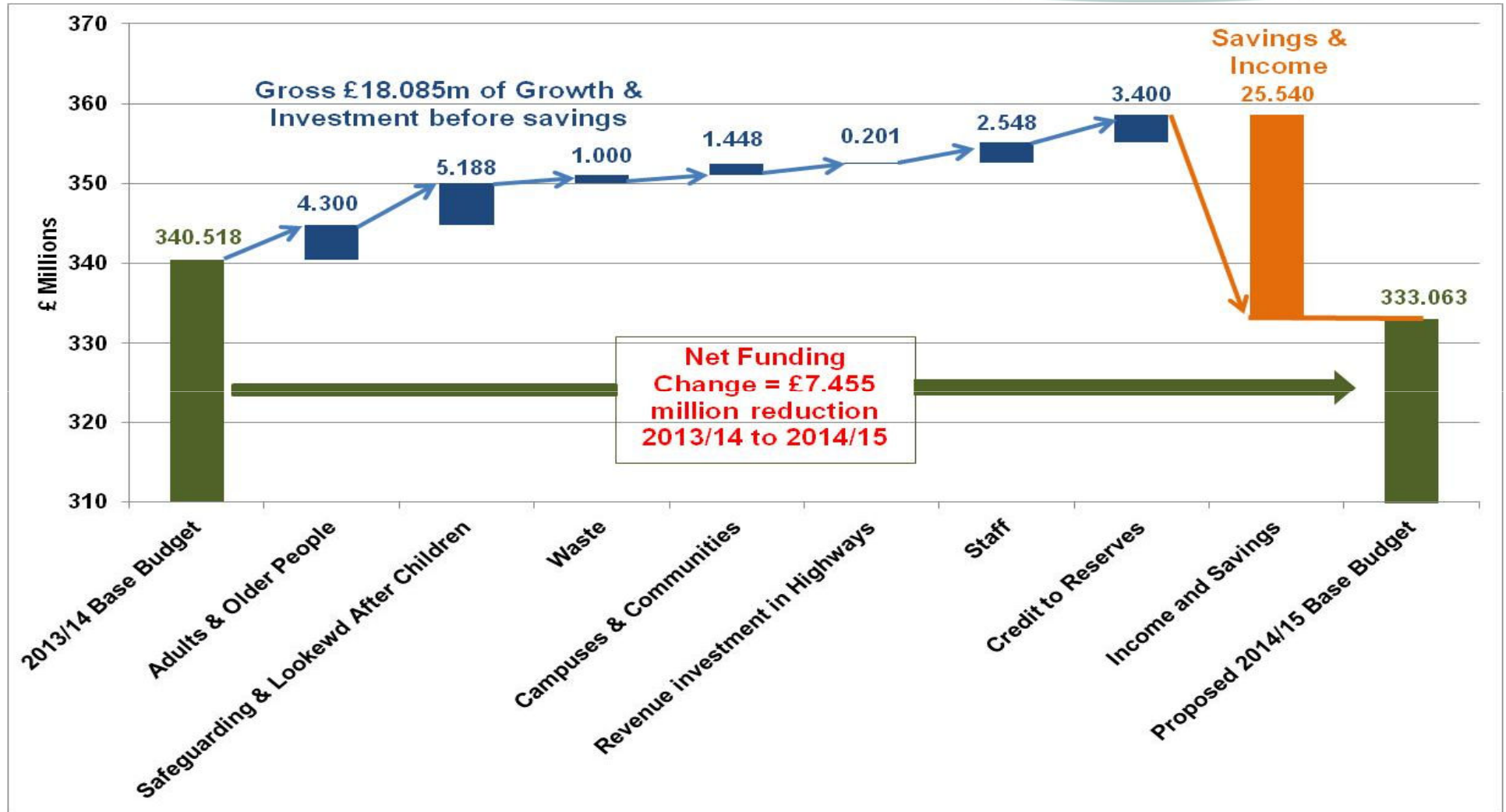
2014/15 Management Overview & Scrutiny

5th February 2014

1. Introduction to appendices flow & Key messages
2. 2013/14 Budget position
3. Government Funding
4. Investment
5. Savings
6. Other budgets – fees, HRA & Capital
7. Reserves
8. Impact on Council Tax

Key Messages

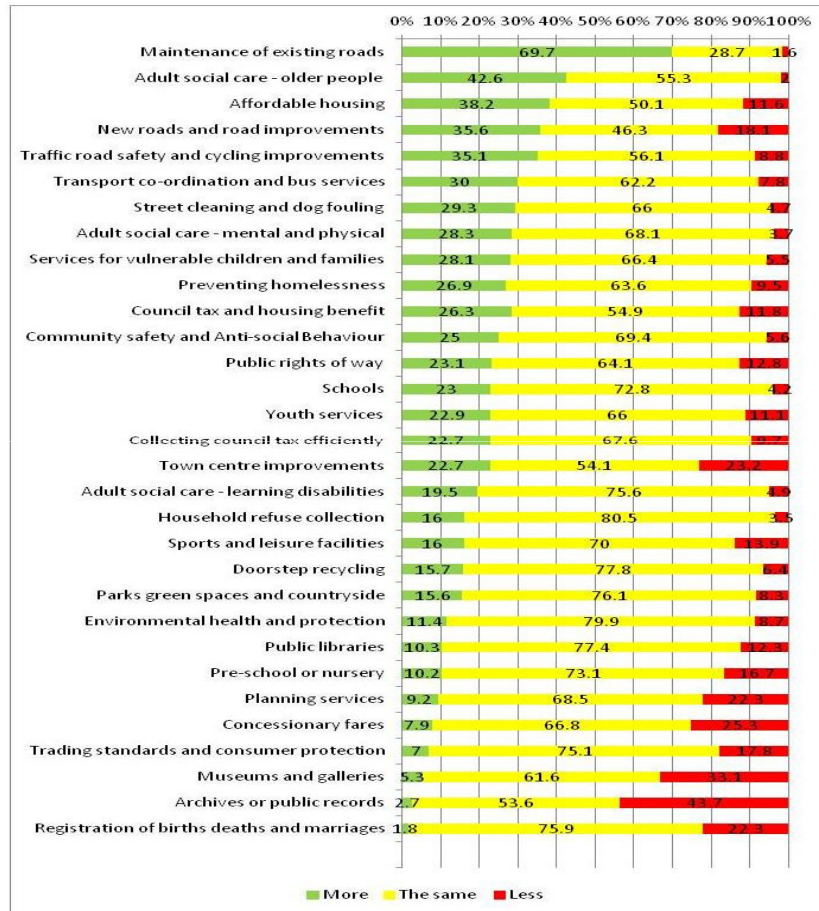
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Key messages

- **CT Frozen again** (4th year) AND 2014/15 despite 7.6% reduction in Government Revenue grant (32% overall in 5 years)
- Protection of delivery in vulnerable adults and children
- Investment in highways and waste continues
- On top of ongoing investment already agreed on campuses, housing, economy and broadband
- £142m in capital, campuses progressing and hubs in place
- 1% Pay inflation, incremental freeze lifted and pensions funded
- Savings from reducing non-essential spend and efficiency
- Less posts than planned
- Despite taking out over £90m in last 4 years with minimised impact on performance

Budget Consultation – Section 5



- 1. maintenance of roads -** £29m compared with £21.3million in 2013/14;
- 2. older people and adult social care -** £3.633 million net is proposed to be invested in 2014/15 broadly in line with the original plan
- 3. Housing –** £45 million to be invested in next 4 years

How the budget figures flow down / up - 2

Appendix A

<i>High Level MTFs 4 Year Financial Model</i>	2013-2014 Approved Financial Plan	Changes 2014-2015	Changes 2015-2016	Changes 2016-2017	Changes 2017-2018
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total Funding Changes	(340.518)	7.455	20.595	(2.632)	(3.129)
Total Savings Changes		(5.683)	0.356	(11.200)	(0.784)
Total Growth Changes		18.085	8.923	13.540	13.412
TOTAL COST REDUCTION PLAN REQUIRED		19.857	29.874	(0.292)	9.499
Priority 12 Realign our resources and secure VFM		(19.857)	(29.874)	0.000	(9.499)
TOTAL COST REDUCTION PLAN		(19.857)	(29.874)	0.000	(9.499)
DIFFERENCE		0.000	0.000	(0.292)	0.000

Appendix B

Service Line	Revised 2013-14 Net Base Budget	Growth & Investment	Pay increase	Total Growth	Service Savings / Income	Corporate allocated targets	To be allocated targets	Total Savings / Income	Net Budget after saving 2014-15
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Councils Net Spend on Services	318.231	11.136	2.516	13.652	(12.491)	(4.512)	0.000	(17.003)	314.880
Corporate Investment & Costs	34.033	4.401	0.032	4.433	(3.729)	4.512	(3.637)	(2.854)	35.612
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	(11.746)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(5.683)	0.000	(5.683)	(17.429)
Councils Budget Requirement	340.518	15.537	2.548	18.085	(16.220)	(5.683)	(3.637)	(25.540)	333.063
Funding	Funding 2013/2014							Funding Movement	Funding 2014/2015
Council Tax Requirement	(201.182)							(3.373)	(204.555)
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2013-14	(2.229)							0.011	(2.218)
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2014-15	0.000							(2.218)	(2.218)
RSG/ Formula Grant	(76.018)							12.780	(63.238)
Rates Retention	(50.573)							(0.984)	(51.557)
Collection Fund	(1.700)							(1.266)	(2.966)
Business Rates Grant	0.000							(0.500)	(0.500)
Unused New Homes Bonus/ NHB top slice	(0.430)							(0.327)	(0.757)
Educational Support Grant	(6.991)							1.937	(5.054)
Returned Damping	(1.395)							1.395	0.000
Total Funding	(340.518)							7.455	(333.063)
GAP (Funding v Budget Requirement)		0.000							0.000

How the budget figures flow down / up - 3

Appendix 1B

Wiltshire Council Financial Plan 2014-15

Service Line	Revised 2013-14 Net Base Budget	Growth & Investment	Pay increase	Total Growth	Service Savings / Income	Corporate allocated targets	To be allocated targets	Total Savings / Income	Net Budget after saving 2014-15
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Waste	31.840	1.000	0.118	1.118	(0.750)	(0.230)		(0.980)	31.978
Finance, Revenues & Benefits & Pensions	3.980	0.148	0.144	0.292	(1.050)	(0.044)		(1.094)	3.178
Councils Net Spend on Services	318.231	11.136	2.516	13.652	(12.491)	(4.512)	0.000	(17.003)	314.880
Corporate Investment & Costs	34.033	4.401	0.032	4.433	(3.729)	4.512	(3.637)	(2.854)	35.612
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	(11.746)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(5.683)	0.000	(5.683)	(17.429)
Councils Budget Requirement	340.518	15.537	2.548	18.085	(16.220)	(5.683)	(3.637)	(25.540)	333.063

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR: SERVICE AREA: SERVICE:	Tracy Carter Environment & Leisure Waste	Revised 2013-14 (£m)	Growth & Investment (£m)	Savings & Efficiencies (£m)	Corporate Savings Allocated (£m)	Proposed 2014-15 (£m)
Employees		6,266	0.118	(0.500)	(0.113)	5,771
Premises		0.068				0.068
Transport		0.044			(0.009)	0.035
Supplies and Services		0.333			(0.108)	0.225
Contract Payments / Third Party		28,729	1,000			29,729
Transfer Payments and recharges		0.000				0.000
Gross Expenditure		35.440	1.118	(0.500)	(0.230)	35.828
Gross Income		(3.600)		(0.250)		(3.850)
Gross Income		(3.600)	0.000	(0.250)	0.000	(3.850)
2014-2015 Net Base Budget		31.840	1.118	(0.750)	(0.230)	31.978
Breakdown of Growth						
Pay award and growth		0.118				
General Waste Growth		1.000				
Total Growth			1.118			
Breakdown of Savings						
Routing and other review reported to cabinet December 2013		(0.500)				
Commercial / Trade Waste review and increase in charges		(0.250)				
Total Savings				(0.750)		
Breakdown of Corporate Savings Allocated						
Reduce transport mileage		(0.009)				
Reduce agency & consultants expenditure		(0.082)				
Corporate Savings Target		(0.100)				
Other Corporate Savings		(0.039)				
Total Breakdown of Corporate Savings Allocated					(0.230)	

Note minor word changes

Appendix 1D

Detail of savings and growth

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Section 3

Period 9 going to February Cabinet:

- Projecting £0.449million net overspend with no action
- Largely due to additional spend in Children + corporate items; offset by underspends
- Further actions – vacancies, consultants, bad debts, etc...
- **Project - balanced**

Latest funding 2013/14 – Have we accounted for everything?

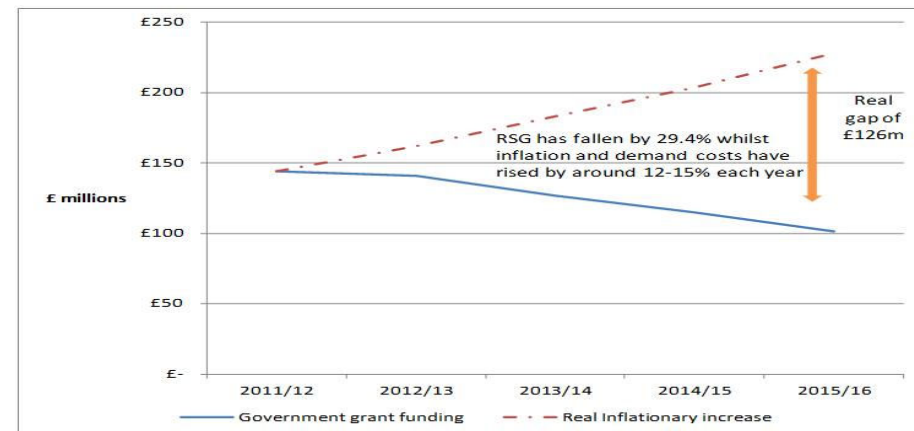
	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	13/14 Change £m	14/15 Change £m
SFA (including 2013/14 Council Tax Freeze Grant but excluding 2014/15)	76.018	65.456	48.622	-10.562	-16.834
Business Rates Retention Scheme	50.573	51.557	52.980	+0.984	+ 1.423
Total	126.591	117.013	101.602	-9.578	-15.411

Section 6

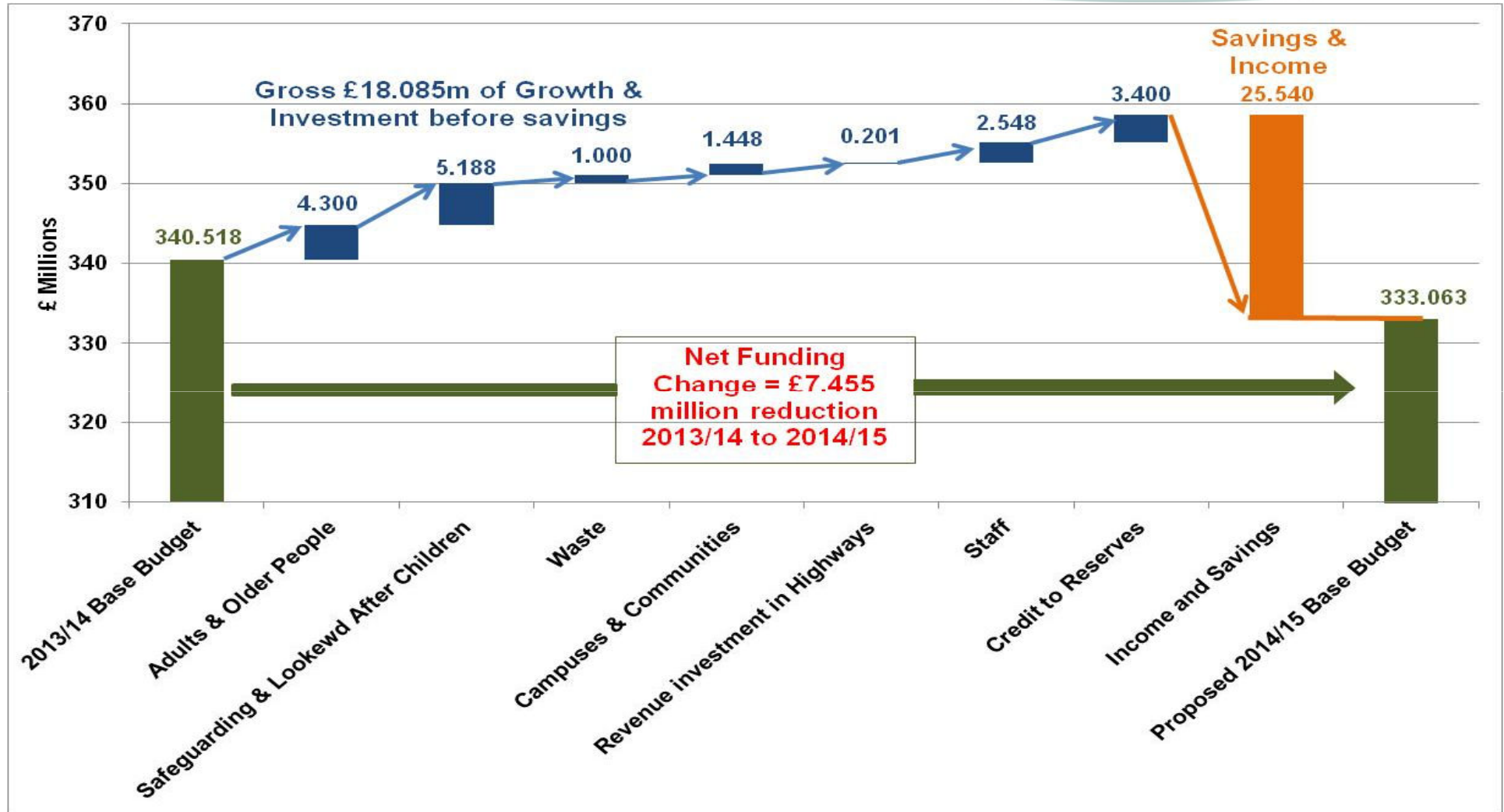
2013/14 to 2014/15 = 7.6% reduction in RSG

2014/15 to 2015/16 = 13.2% reduction in RSG

2013/14 to 2015/16 = 19.7% reduction in RSG

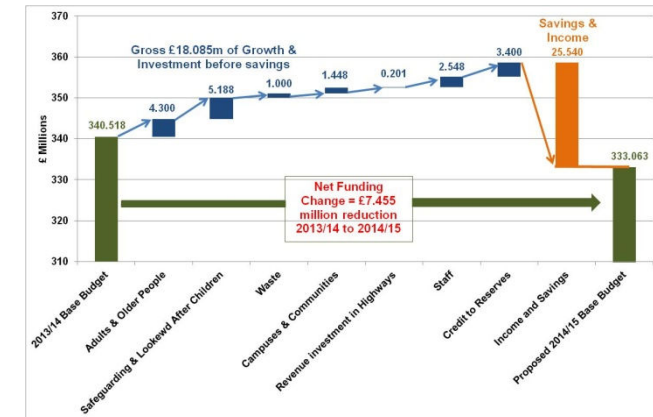


Investments – Sections 4 & 7



Investments – Is it too much / sufficient?

2014/15	Original Plan February 2013 £m	Proposals £m	Difference £m
Investing in our communities and priority services	2.000	2.501	0.501
Protecting vulnerable people	9.454	9.488	0.034
Funding inflation and cost pressures	22.396	6.096	-16.300
Total	33.850	18.085	-15.765



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Protecting vulnerable people - £9.5 million gross investment / £5.1million net

- Vulnerable children: £5.188 million gross / £1.994 million net; and
- Vulnerable adults and older people: £4.300 million gross / £3.633 million net, including £1.8 million Health monies

[Sections 4 & 7, and Appendix 2](#)

Investment in staff - £2.548 million

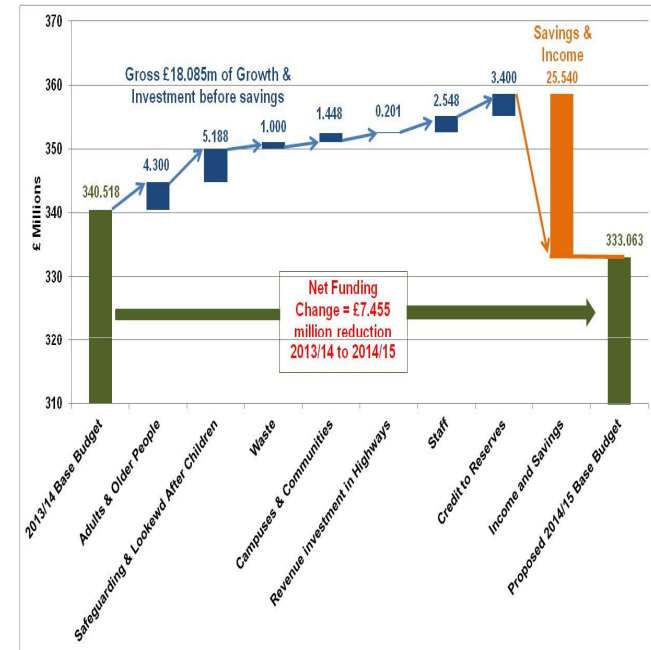
Savings – Section 9 & Appendix 1C &1D:

Are these deliverable? Does it affect performance and outcomes?

Description	£ million
Grants income	5.683
Service decisions (per full list at Appendix 1D)	9.238
Decisions already made / out to consultation	0.941
Strategic decisions (see below & Appendix 1C)	2.912
Corporate targets allocated	3.229
Corporate targets being allocated	3.537
Total	25.540

Budget book for details

Strategic Savings		£m
1	Review and increase of Commercial / Trade Waste in charges	0.250
2	Reduction in non efficient bus routes	0.176
3	Review application of spare seat policy and comply with existing policy	0.150
4	Review of discretionary and non statutory educational transport to and from schools and colleges	0.200
5	Further reviews alternative bus concessions	0.039
6	Efficiencies from better use and procurement of taxis	0.100
7	Free travel for OAP and disabled bus pass holders after 0930	0.180
8	Bring Family Information Services in-house	0.120
9	Use of earmarked reserves	0.200
10	Transfer Salisbury CCTV to partners	0.025
11	Income (paragraphs 8.1 to 8.4 of this report)	0.636
12	Highways 4.5% contract management and efficiencies	0.761
13	Area Boards fund local Speed Indication Devices	0.075
Total		2.912



Savings – what are the strategic changes?

Appendix 1C

Strategic savings

Saving	Comments	£m
1. Review and increase of Commercial / Trade Waste in charges	Due to the rural nature and level of competition in parts of the County the Council provides a larger proportion of trade waste collection. At present this service is subsidised by around £0.5 million. This option proposes increasing fees and seeking options for alternative provision.	0.250
2. Reduction in non efficient bus routes	The Council's Transport team regularly review the usage of bus routes and it is proposed that certain routes are withdrawn based on the levels of usage.	0.176
3. Review application of spare seat policy and comply with existing policy	The Council's policy is that it will not fund transport for children who attend a school other than their local designated establishment through parental choice. However, where spare capacity is available on council-funded transport, non-eligible children are allowed to travel on payment of a fare or a spare seat charge. It is proposed that where a saving could be made by re-planning the transport without the non-eligible children, the policy be enforced and capacity managed to deliver this saving.	0.150

Other budgets – Section 8 and Appendices 1F, 1G & 1H

Capital Programme, page 1 of 2

Appendix 1F –

Capital Programme budget workings 2014/2015 to 2017/2018 including f						
Scheme name	Capital Programme budgets					Grant Contri
	Current Budget 2014/2015	Current Budget 2015/2016	Current Budget 2016/2017	Current Budget 2017/2018	Total	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Education schemes						
Additional Accommodation	8.991	5.430	5.701	5.701	25.823	20.1
NDS Maintenance & Modernisation	10.158	3.500	3.100	2.800	19.558	19.1
Devolved Formula Capital	0.921	0.800	0.750	0.700	3.171	3.1
NEW Universal infant free school meals capital 2014-15	0.786	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.786	0.7
Access and Inclusion	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.400	0.0
DCSF Targeted Capital 14-19 SEN	0.647	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.647	0.0
Other Projects New Schools	2.384	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.384	0.0
Total Education schemes	23.987	9.830	9.651	9.301	52.769	44.0
Highways schemes						
Integrated Transport	4.002	3.752	3.752	3.752	15.258	15.1
Bridges	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	12.000	12.1
Structural Maintenance Grant Funded	10.519	9.262	9.262	9.262	38.305	38.1
Additional Borrowing required to take total Structural Maintenance to £21m	10.481	11.738	11.738	11.738	45.695	0.0
Highway flooding prevention and Land Drainage schemes	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	2.000	0.0
Street lighting	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.0
Total Highways schemes	29.002	28.252	28.252	28.252	113.758	65.0
Campus and Operational Delivery (CAOD) schemes						
Depot Strategy	5.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.000	0.0
Campus Initial 3 sites	21.994	8.135	0.000	0.000	30.129	0.0
Campus New 4 sites	13.820	7.925	2.600	0.000	24.345	0.4
Total CAOD schemes	40.814	16.060	2.600	0.000	59.474	0.4
Other Property schemes						
Buildings Planned Maintenance (non CAOD)	2.500	2.500	2.500	2.500	10.000	0.0
Total Other Property schemes	2.500	2.500	2.500	2.500	10.000	0.0

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DOG WARDEN			
Service Area	Environment Services		
Associate Director	Tracy Carter		
All Dog Warden Fees are Discretionary			
Dog Warden / Animal Welfare			
Income Type	2013/2014 Financial Year	2014/2015 Financial Year	% Increase
Collection & Admin Fee	£35.00	£36.00	2.86%
Daily Kennel Fee	£12.50	£15.00	20.00%
Dog microchipping	£18.00	£20.00	11.11%
Rehome stray dog to new owner	£32.00	£35.00	9.38%
Performing Animals Licence	£50.00	£50.00	0.00%

2012/2013		2013/2014	2014/2015
Actual Outturn	Service	Revised Budget	Proposed Budget
£		£	£
	HRA Expenditure		
281,070	Provision for Bad Debts	250,000	250,000
14,382,179	Capital Financing Costs	13,986,000	13,986,000
4,155,832	Repairs and Maintenance	5,842,970	5,559,470
392,090	Supervision & Management Special	422,830	422,830
3,607,703	Supervision & Management General	3,066,928	3,281,928
22,818,874		23,568,728	23,500,228
	Housing Income		
(140,880)	Interest	(140,000)	(140,000)
(23,074,940)	Rents	(24,060,000)	(24,682,600)
(23,215,820)		(24,200,000)	(24,822,600)
(396,946)	Total Housing Revenue Account	(631,272)	(1,322,372)

Reserves – Section 11 and Appendix 3

	31 st March			
	2013 £ million	2014 £ million	2015 £ million	2016 £ million
Opening General Fund Reserve	14.1	12.6	7.8	11.2
Contribution to / (from) general fund reserves	1.5	0.0	3.4	2.5
Contribution (to) / from earmarked reserves from General Fund	(0)	(4.8)	0.0	1.0
Closing General Fund Reserve	12.6	7.8	11.2	14.7

	31 st March			
	2013 £ million	2014 £ million	2015 £ million	2016 £ million
General Fund Reserve risk assessment	10.0	9.1	9.1	14.3
Current Projections (see para 11.6)	12.6	7.8	11.2	14.7
Reserves sufficient	✓	See paragraph 11.2 for more detail	✓	✓

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Key risks in reserve assessment:

- Corporate savings
- Children's Safeguarding
- Future years Better Care Fund

Appendix 3

Appendix 3

General Fund Reserve Risk Assessment					Reserve Requirement				
No.	Year	Risk Event	Risk %		Potential Net Financial Impact £000	2014-15	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
			Low = 0% - 25%	Medium = 26% - 50%		£000	£000	£000	£000
1	2013-14	Potential use of reserves in previous year based on this risk assessment	Low	0%	-	-	-	-	-
	2014-15		Low	0%	-	-	-	-	-
	2015-16		Low	5%	2,000	-	-	100	-
	2016-17		Low	5%	2,000	-	-	-	100

Council Tax setting – Section 10

	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
2012/13 Revised Base Budget		340.518
Plus		
<i>Investment built into initial medium term financial plan</i>		
- Gross demand and inflation (paras 7.1)	18.085	
Additional spending requirements		358.603
Less		
<i>Savings & Income (as set out at Section 9):</i>		
		(25.540)
Net budget requirement		333.063
Financed by		
• SFA (paragraphs 6.3 to 6.6) and 2014/15 Council Tax Freeze Grant		(67.674)
• Business Rates Retention (paragraphs 6.3 to 6.6)		(51.557)
• Other Central Grants (e.g. ESG)		(6.311)
• Collection Fund		(2.966)
Amount to be found from the Collection fund through Council Tax		(204.555)

10.8 The Council has agreed that the average Band D tax base of 167,344.47 for 2014/15 ([Link](#)). Given the calculated draw on the Collection Fund, as identified in section 10.1 of this report, to deliver a balanced budget, after assuming a £2.966 million contribution from the Collection Fund surplus is a net £204.555 million, The Band D Council Tax proposed for 2014/15 is thus frozen and is again £1,222.43 (£204.555 million divided by 167,344.47 tax base).

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
814.95	950.78	1,086.60	1,222.43	1,494.08	1,765.73	2,037.38	2,444.86

Next Steps

- Cabinet 11th February 2014
- Final Settlement Announced ?Today?
- Precepts from Fire, Police and Parishes announced in between now & Council
- Council 25th February 2014

Wiltshire Council

**Cabinet
11 February 2014**

**Council
25 February 2014**

Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Report on the Draft 2014-15 Budget

Purpose of report

To feed back to Cabinet and Full Council a summary of the main issues discussed at the special meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee held on 5 February 2014.

Background

1. This special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee provided an opportunity for non-executive councillors to question the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Associate Director for Finance on the draft 2014/15 budget before it is considered at Cabinet on 11 February 2014 and Full Council on 25 February 2014.
2. The Associate Director of Finance and the Cabinet member for Finance gave a presentation covering the key components and influences on setting this year's budget, under the themes below:
 1. Introduction to appendices flow & Key messages
 2. 2013/14 Budget position
 3. Government Funding
 4. Investment
 5. Savings
 6. Other budgets – fees, HRA & Capital
 7. Reserves
 8. Impact on Council Tax

The key messages were as follows:

- CT Frozen again (4th year) and 2014/15 despite 7.6% reduction in Government Revenue grant (32% overall in 5 years)

- Protection of delivery in vulnerable adults and children
- Investment in highways and waste continues
- On top of ongoing investment already agreed on campuses, housing, economy and broadband
- £142m in capital, campuses progressing and hubs in place
- 1% Pay inflation, incremental freeze lifted and pensions funded
- Savings from reducing non-essential spend and efficiency
- Less posts than planned as not filling vacancies
- Despite taking out over £90m in last 4 years with minimised impact on performance

Main issues raised during questioning and debate

1. The Committee acknowledged that 2014/15 was a particularly challenging budget demonstrated by the level of the savings required as detailed in the budget book, with the main concern being that there was little room for flexibility.
2. It was noted that it was projected that the 2013/14 budget would balance at year end despite current continuing overspends in some services. This would be down to the success of recovery plans and underspending in other areas.
3. It was highlighted that there was a lack of focus on risk in the presentation but the Committee was assured that risks have been properly accounted for by the appropriate professionals and adequately catered for in the budget.
4. It was noted that transport was one of the Council's largest expenditures hence the focus of the strategic savings being on this area.
5. It was confirmed that as a Council we do get value from recyclables and that this is reviewed to maximise savings. The Environment Select Committee was aware of this issue and would be looking to investigate it further to incorporate a reward principle into the new waste contract from 2016.
6. The involvement of Area Boards in promoting more effective public consultation on setting the budget should be better utilised, potentially with a dedicated session. It was reported that last year turnout was disappointing at the consultative road shows. This year events have been directed at particular demographic groups. The Committee recognised that by whichever means chosen, that relaying the key messages of the budget to the public required refinement, although doing something meaningful within the timescales set was challenging. It was confirmed that Communications would be producing a summary document for public consumption following Council.
7. The potential influence that campus development could exert within the local economy was felt to be significant and should be fully exploited under Action 2. However it was recognised that contract regulations required fair competition but the nature of the work involved would naturally benefit local suppliers and employment. It was reported that improved controls and challenge are to be put into place within the procurement process to help in such matters.

8. It was confirmed that the pressure points identified in the Report are predominantly due to an increase in demand on the services involved due to the change in demographic, these being Adult Social Care and Children's Services. The Committee accepted the premise of the investments outlined in these areas and that priorities are being set in line with the Business Plan.
9. Clarification was sought in relation to the monies in Action 3 and the role that Area Boards would have to influence other spend beyond the continuing grant. For town and parish councils, despite the grant to offset the consequences of the Council Tax Reductions (CTR which has had the effect of reducing the Council Tax Base) not being ring-fenced by Government, would still be passported to town and parish councils as agreed by Cabinet on 21st November 2013.
10. Action 5 - The Better Care Plan had been drafted and will be ready for release shortly following approval by the Health and Well-Being Board. The funding for which will be drawn from the acute hospitals in the form of top slicing 3% from their budgets to streamline services and form a centralised system aimed at providing more community care. The Health Scrutiny Select Committee would be involved in monitoring delivery.
11. Item 4 of the strategic savings was confirmed to be aimed at subsidised transport and did not constitute a decision to withdraw funding but rather to seek joint funding via the Further Education establishments, with no loss to the service. It was noted that no impact assessment has been completed on this as yet and that Scrutiny should be a part of this process.
12. The detail of Item 13 should be considered by the Highways and Street Scene (BBLP) Task Group.
13. The Voluntary Redundancy scheme yielded more volunteers than anticipated and therefore resulted in higher initial costs to the Council. The shortfall was funded by monies borrowed from reserves and replaced by the additional savings that were accumulated after the one-off payments were made. This resulted in the 'technical' draw down best described as a cash flow issue. Certain costs have also been capitalised under a scheme offered by Government.
14. The work of the Committee's Financial Planning Task Group included early discussion on aligning budget, performance, risk and service planning which would continue through 2014/15. It was anticipated this would enhance its monitoring role and make an overall contribution to reviewing the strategic delivery of the Council's 4-year Business Plan.

Conclusion

1. To thank all those who attended the meeting and contributed to discussion and, in doing so, to acknowledge the work done by the officer team in drawing the budget documents together and the challenges faced by the Executive in difficult financial circumstances.

2. Cabinet and Full Council are asked to take this summary of the issues raised at the special scrutiny meeting into account when finalising the budget and council tax for 2014/15.

Cllr Simon Killane
Chairman –Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

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