

Wiltshire Council

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees 10 February 2011

**Cabinet
15 February 2011**

**Council
22 February 2011**

Subject: Wiltshire Council's Business Plan and 2011/12 Budget

Cabinet member: Councillor Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

This is a covering report for two major, linked documents:

- a. The council's business plan for 2011-15, supported by
- b. The council's financial plan 2011-15, which includes the draft budget proposals for 2011/12. The financial plan 2011-15 will form part of the business plan.

Cabinet is asked to endorse the proposals set out in these documents and to recommend approval to the Council meeting on 22nd February 2011.

Proposals

It is proposed that Cabinet, subject to scrutiny, makes the following recommendations to Council on 22 February 2011:

- a. To endorse the business plan 2011-15.
- b. To recommend to Council, subject to any considerations raised by Scrutiny, the investments and savings, as set out in sections 5 and 6 respectively of the financial plan, that provides for a net revenue budget in 2011/12 of £329.847 million.
- c. To recommend to Council, subject to any considerations raised by Scrutiny, to set a Wiltshire Council Band D council tax for 2011/12 of £1,222.43 as per section 9 of the financial plan.

Reason for Proposal

The Cabinet needs to make proposals to Council in order to:

- a. Enable the council to set its revenue budget and council tax for 2011/12; and
- b. Provide the council with a strong business plan that sets out its direction for the next 4 years.

**Andrew Kerr
Chief Executive**

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. This is a covering report for two major, linked documents:
 - a. The council's business plan for 2011-15, supported by
 - b. The council's financial plan 2011-15, which includes the draft budget proposals for 2011/12. The financial plan 2011-15 will form part of the business plan.
2. There are separate reports on this agenda that cover recommendations on the Capital Programme Proposals 2011/12 to 2014/15; the Housing Revenue Account budget and rent setting 2011/12; and Fees and Charges 2011/12.
3. Cabinet is asked to endorse the proposals set out in these documents and to recommend approval to the Council meeting on 22nd February 2011.

Background

4. Following on from the general election in May 2010 the coalition government has set out to change the role, organisation and resourcing of the public sector. For local government, the changes mean absorbing 28.4% of cuts to our grant aid, more than 300 new pieces of legislation and a completely new partnership landscape. In Wiltshire we also expect a fundamental change in the number of older people and younger people living in our boundaries in the next few years.
5. At this time of year the council sets its budget for the following financial year. The budget setting proposals for 2011/12 are included in the financial plan 2011-15, which also sets out our four year financial plan to support the business plan. The budget proposals include a number of recommendations for Cabinet to consider before it makes recommendations to Council on 22nd February.

6. A special meeting of Scrutiny will consider these documents on 10th February and so Cabinet will have the benefit of Scrutiny's comments for its meeting on 15th February.

Main Considerations for the Council

7. This business plan sets out to describe the way in which we will meet the challenges we face and still meet our main aim of creating stronger more resilient communities and delivering our goals of providing high quality, low cost customer focused services; ensuring local, open, honest decision making; and working with our partners to support Wiltshire's communities.
8. We can do this because we have taken a long term view and maximized the advantage of moving towards one single unitary authority in 2009. We have long term strategies for our key services which form the basis of where we invest. In the areas of waste management, leisure, libraries, older people's accommodation, workplace transformation we have already set out a clear way forward. We have developed a business plan that:
 - Protects our most vulnerable citizens by investing in their services,
 - Invests in the future of Wiltshire by enhancing key service areas,
 - Keeps council tax low, and,
 - Makes the savings that the government requires.
9. This will be achieved by ensuring that our business is fit for purpose and is both efficient and well run. The proposals are set out in the business plan, and these are underpinned financially by the arrangements described in the financial plan. The plan is ambitious and pragmatic and we believe it will set Wiltshire on a sure path to deliver well run local government that will enable our communities to help themselves and support the quality of life and the economy of Wiltshire in these difficult times and beyond.

Environmental and climate change considerations

10. The plan and budget have been developed to support stronger and more resilient communities in Wiltshire, and specifically includes additional investment in Energy Efficiency that will reduce our carbon footprint.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

11. The business plan sets out Wiltshire's approach to stronger and more resilient communities, to our customers and access to services and information. It contains specific investment to support vulnerable adults and children in Wiltshire. The equalities implications of the long term strategies already approved were considered as part of the development of those strategies. For other proposals in the business plan, services have either carried out equalities impact assessments or where appropriate are doing so as part of developing the detailed arrangements for those proposals.

Risk Assessment

12. The financial risk assessment that supports the business plan and the 2011-12 budget is shown in the financial plan 2011-15. Services have considered risk in developing the proposals for investment and savings

shown in the business plan and these will be reflected in their usual risk management arrangements.

13. The changes that have been made by the coalition government since May 2010 are significant, and further changes to the public sector are expected over the next few years. During 2011/12, we will need to consider whether further changes are needed to our structures and arrangements once the full details of legislative changes have been disclosed by the government. Also, we have only received a two year financial settlement and the business plan may need to change once the settlement for 2013/14 and 2014/15 is known.

Financial Implications

14. The financial implications are set out in the financial plan 2011-15.

Legal Implications

15. The legislation that governs local government is changing significantly and the business plan will be kept under review to see if changes are needed as the changes in legislation are made available and clarified.

Options Considered

16. The business plan sets out the considerable challenges the council faces and the approaches being proposed to tackle those challenges, including meeting increased demand for services in Wiltshire. Although we have only received a two year financial settlement from government we know that further reductions are likely in years 3 and 4, and that the cuts have been front loaded into the first two years. Also the role of the public sector is changing significantly. The business plan therefore sets a strong direction for the next four years, rather than the two years of the financial settlement.

Conclusions

17. The council's business plan, supported by its financial plan 2011/15 and the budget for 2011/12 sets a clear direction for the next four years.

Andrew Kerr
Chief Executive

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Date of report: 1st February 2011

Background Papers:

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: various budget working papers in services

Appendices

Draft business plan 2011-15
Financial plan 2011-15, which includes budget proposals for 2011/12