

Extract of the Draft minutes of Cabinet dated 10 February 2015

23 Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan 2015/16

Key Councillor Dick Tonge presented a report which provided an assessment in advance of draft proposals going to Council to set a budget for 2015/16 and the impact on Council Tax, rents, fees and charges, the capital programme, schools overall budgets, as well as Council reserves.

The Leader also invited the following Members to speak to the item: Councillor Simon Killane, as Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Chair; Councillor Christine Crisp, as Chair of Health Select Committee; Councillor Jon Hubbard, as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and chairman of Children's Select Committee; Councillor Roy While, as members of the Financial Planning Task Group; and Councillor Chris Caswill.

In the course of the presentation and the discussion, the issues discussed included: the consultations with the representatives of the Trade Unions; that the results of public consultation would be published in time for consideration by Council; that the work of the Scrutiny Task Group was praised; the benefit of involving the individual Select Committees; that the Liberal Democrat Group would present their amendments to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and that whilst some base budgets may be protected, that additional demographic and policy changes would increase demand on revenue.

In response to a question from Councillor Chris Caswill, Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, stated that although Ofsted had taken over responsibility for an aspect of their work, resulting in a reduction in the budget, Early Years Advisory Teachers remained a key support role and there would not be reductions in frontline support.

Resolved:

That Cabinet recommend to Council that it:

- (a) Endorses the update of the Financial Plan for 2015/16.**
- (b) Approves the savings and investment proposals summarised at Sections 9 and 7 respectively of this report and at Appendix 1, to provide a net revenue budget for 2015/16 of £314.983 million.**
- (c) To:**
 - (i) Freeze Wiltshire Council's element of the Band D council tax for 2015/16 £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 2015/16 at £314.983 million.**
- (iii) Set a 2.2% increase for dwelling rents in accordance with rent restructuring;**
- (iv) Set the HRA Budget for 2015/16 as set out at Appendix 1G of this report.**
- (v) That all other service charges related to the HRA be increased by 2.2%, including garage rents.**
- (vi) Approve the Capital programme proposed at Appendix 1F of this report.**
- (vii) Set the changes in fees and charges set out in detail at Section 8 of and at Appendix 1H of this report.**

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to set its revenue, capital, housing revenue accounts, fees and charges, levels of reserves and resultant Council Tax for 2015/16 to then issue Council Tax and rent bills. To provide the Council with a strong business and financial plan for sustainable delivery for 2013-17.