

15.EX.20 MAINTAINING A DURABLE BUDGET

A report was submitted which:-

- a. Provided Members with a further case study on the success of the invest to save schemes;
- b. Provided a reminder of the Council's medium term financial strategy and associated guiding principles;
- c. Provided a revised medium term budget model illustrating the levels of savings that may be required over the coming years and highlighted the significant financial challenges facing the Council;
- d. Provided a further update on the potential impact to the Housing Revenue Account following the announcements made in the Summer Budget;
- e. Reminded members of the background to (and previous decisions in relation to) the operation of the current Council Tax Support scheme;
- f. Outlined the estimated financial implications of the Council Tax Support Scheme (from next year); and
- g. Outlined the policy options that were available to the Council to ensure that the Council's medium term guiding principles are adhered to and sought endorsement of the options for consultation purposes.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw addressed the Committee, welcoming cross-party working on the budget, it being noted that officer briefings for members of the opposition could be arranged upon request. In respect of the options for Council Tax Support, Councillor Scrimshaw said that the opposition felt that 55% was a large increase for people on benefits to find. However, he acknowledged that the Council was constrained by its guiding principles and urged that these principles be consulted upon as part of the budget-setting process.

During discussion, it was noted that £3.912m revenue contribution brought forward as part of the Capital Programme outturn monitoring statement represented a contribution from the Housing Revenue Account.

It was also noted that the two options for Council Tax Support were representative of upper and lower limits only, and that other options could be considered as part of the consultation process.

In conclusion to the debate, members welcomed the progress that was being made in identifying savings, whilst maintaining front-line services and keeping Council tax at a low level.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Executive note the following:-
 - (a) the success the Council has achieved in partnership working;
 - (b) the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated guiding principles;
 - (c) the Council's current Medium Term Financial Forecast and the progress being made for the delivery of efficiency savings for 2016/17 and future years;
 - (e) the key updates relating to the Housing Revenue Account made in the Summer Budget announcement;
and
- (ii) the two options (outlined in the report) be consulted on for the future operation of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (as outlined in the report).