

16.EX.33 MAINTAINING A DURABLE BUDGET

A report was submitted which: -

- a) Provided Members with a reminder of the Council's medium term financial strategy and associated guiding principles;
- b) Illustrated the latest budget model, the delivery of efficiency savings for 2016/17 and the estimated level of budget savings that may be required over the next few years;
- c) Requested approval of the Committee to formally apply for the 'four year funding deal' that the Government outlined earlier this year;
- d) Reminded members of the background to (and previous decisions in relation to) the operation of the Council Tax Support scheme; outline the estimated financial position for 2017/18 and sought approval for the options for consultation purposes; and
- e) Provided a draft response to the Governments consultations on '100% Business Rates Retention' for endorsement of the key themes.

It was reported that the levels of savings required for 2017/18 were around £1.2 million with approximately £1.75 million to be identified. Further reports would be brought to future Executive meetings on this issue.

Members were advised that although the four year settlement put forward by the Government would continue to bring reductions in central government funding, there may be fundamental changes to the underlying needs formulae or further cuts in total funding that would result in non-participants receiving noticeably less funding through changes to top-ups and tariffs so there was a clear incentive to sign up. Having considered the offer put forward by the Government, the Council proposed to submit an application by the 14th October deadline subject to member approval.

Members heard the Council was required to undertake a public consultation of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme annually and were reminded that they were being asked to agree the four options for consultation along with the four technical changes as set out in the report. The outcomes of the consultation would be reported to the Executive before the end of 2016 with a report going to Full Council in 2017.

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It was noted that the 100% Business Rates Retention scheme consultation would end on 26th September 2016. The Council had been successful in getting itself represented at a professional level at three of the four national working groups looking at this issue.

The consultation was a very general one aimed mainly at key principles and considering areas that required changes in primary legislation. A more detailed technical consultation on Business Rates was expected before the end of 2016.

A draft response to the consultation, which was still being worked on and developed further prior to the submission date was included in the report.

Mr Drew Lockhart spoke at the meeting and advised members of the pressures of being a disabled resident in the borough and urged members to choose option four.

Officers advised Mr Lockhart that the Executive were approving options for the consultation at this stage.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw spoke at the meeting and voiced his concerns regarding the levels of Council Tax Support at the Council and urged members to think of another way forward.

After discussions Councillor Lesley Thurland proposed and it was

RESOLVED that the Executive

- a) Noted the following;
 - i The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated guiding principles;
 - ii 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;
- b) to apply for the Government's offer of a 'four year settlement', as outlined in the report;
- c) to consult on the four options (outlined in the report) for the operation of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme in 2017/18,

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together with the four technical changes;
and

- d) the key themes contained within the Council's draft response to the Business Rates Consultation as detailed at Appendix B be endorsed .