



CABINET – 16TH APRIL 2014

SUBJECT: NEXT STAGES OF MTFP – 2015/16 AND 2016/17

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND S151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Cabinet with details of the proposed next steps in relation to progressing the budget strategy for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years agreed at Council on the 26th February 2014.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 As part of the agreed budget strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 estimated savings of £13.4m will be required through a review of discretionary services and the delivery of further efficiency savings.
- 2.2 This report sets out details of the proposed next steps to deliver this strategy focussing in particular on the Scrutiny process to ensure that savings proposals are given full and proper consideration prior to firm recommendations being made to Cabinet and Council.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The budget setting process encompasses all the resources used by the Council to deliver services and meet priorities.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 As identified in the Budget Report to Council on the 26th February 2014, estimated savings of £6.5m will be required in 2015/16 and £6.9m in 2016/17. Following agreement of the budget by Council, confirmation has been received that the Fire Service Levy for 2014/15 has reduced, resulting in a further saving of £304k. Apart from this, the target savings for future years remain as reported to Council. Any significant changes that affect the current MTFP projections will require further updates to Cabinet.
- 4.2 The agreed budget strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 is being taken forward via two main strands as follows: -
- (i) Further savings proposals for Members to consider in respect of up to 3% efficiency savings. These efficiency savings targets will require savings of circa £5m and will be applied to those statutory and essential services that the Authority has to deliver, either directly or via a third party organisation. The savings will be expected to be achieved through further reductions in service levels or doing the same for less. It is anticipated that future efficiency savings will be more problematic and sensitive than those delivered to date and they are likely to require a longer lead-in time.

- (ii) Discretionary services to be reviewed in full, with a view to identifying savings proposals totalling over £8m. This review will also consider those statutory services where the level of service provision is currently above the statutory minimum level. This strategy will ultimately lead to a much higher percentage reduction in service in a number of, if not all, discretionary service areas. There is likely to be a considerable impact on the public and in some areas even up to a 100% reduction can and should be considered, to allow for some real choices.

4.3 The Budget Report presented to Council on the 26th February 2014 included an initial list of discretionary services to be reviewed. This list was not exhaustive and as such it has recently been reviewed and updated by Officers. The updated list is attached as Appendix 1 and Cabinet Members are asked to consider and comment upon the content and to identify any other services that should be included in the review. The list will subsequently be presented to Council on the 22nd April 2014 along with details of a series of proposed Special Scrutiny Committees.

4.4 The Special Scrutiny Committees will focus on detailed reports covering the review of discretionary services and proposals to deliver efficiency savings targets. Efficiency targets will be set for individual Directorates with a view to establishing a wide range of savings proposals for consideration. The following are the proposed dates for the Special Scrutiny Committees: -

Scrutiny Committee	Proposed Date of Meeting
Education for Life	12/06/14
Policy & Resources	17/06/14
Regeneration & Environment	19/06/14
Health, Social Care & Wellbeing	17/07/14
Regeneration & Environment	07/07/14
Regeneration & Environment	04/09/14
Education for Life	18/09/14
Policy & Resources	24/09/14
Health, Social Care & Wellbeing	16/10/14
Education for Life	22/10/14
Regeneration & Environment	23/10/14

4.5 Prior to the start of the Special Scrutiny meetings as tabled above a Seminar will be held for Members in respect of the MTFP and this has been provisionally scheduled for Monday 19th May 2014. It may be necessary to schedule further Special Scrutiny meetings to ensure that the range of savings proposals are given full and proper consideration.

4.6 The series of Special Scrutiny meetings will conclude around the time that the Welsh Government 2015/16 Provisional Local Government Settlement will be announced. This will clarify the savings required for 2015/16 and will also hopefully provide firm indicative settlement figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to aid financial planning.

4.7 Once the 2015/16 savings requirement has been confirmed, reports on specific savings proposals will be considered by Cabinet prior to recommendations being included in the 2015/16 Budget Report to be presented to Council in February 2015.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The equalities implications of savings proposals will be fully considered as part of the decision making process.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As identified throughout the report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The personnel implications of savings proposals will be identified in the reports presented at the Special Scrutiny meetings.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 Cabinet is asked to: -

9.1.1 Review and comment upon the updated list of discretionary services to be reviewed, prior to consideration by Council on the 22nd April 2014.

9.1.2 Support a recommendation to Council that a series of Special Scrutiny Committee meetings as set out in paragraph 4.4 of this report should be held to consider detailed reports on specific savings proposals.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure that the agreed budget strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 is progressed in a timely manner.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000.

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Consultees: Corporate Management Team
Cllr K. Reynolds, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Gail Williams, Interim Monitoring Officer

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Initial List of Discretionary Services