

# **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

## **REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 05 NOVEMBER 2013**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Scrutiny Review: Impact of 2013/14 Budget Options and Potential for 2014/15</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Task &amp; Finish Group</b>

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the task and finish group examining the impact and deliverability of budget options taken 2013/14
- 1.2 This report also considers potential budget options for 2014/15 to make an informed contribution by way of pre-decision scrutiny to 2014/17 budget options

### **2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 2.1 In November 2012, Cabinet instructed the Chief Executive to publish and then consult in relation to a series of budget options, designed to enable the Council to begin the process of making savings of £109 million over the next three years. Cabinet further resolved that a number of principles, which were detailed in the resolution, should be paramount in the design of those options.
- 2.1 The Chief Executive further outlined in communications to residents and the Council workforce that the budget options had been designed to, as much as possible, mitigate the impact on the 'front line' and look to the back office for savings.
- 2.2 These principles, combined with the changing public demands and expectations in relation to service delivery for these departments, the current economic climate in a wider sense and the unprecedented financial challenges the Council is facing, contributed to the development of a new vision for how services in these areas will and should be delivered in Wirral, which formed a further basis for the publication of options.
- 2.3 Budget Council on 5<sup>th</sup> March agreed over £48m in budget savings for 2013/14. Despite the progress made towards delivering these savings, major financial challenges remain. There is a need to find further savings of £27.5 million for the next financial year. On 16 September 2013 the Chief Executive published options for consultation on savings for 2014 and beyond.

### **3 METHODOLOGY FOR THIS REVIEW**

- 3.1 At their inaugural meeting, Members of Regeneration and Environment Committee considered initial items for their work programme. An item identified was the Review of the implication and impact of Budget Options 2013/14. It

was further agreed that the Chair and Party Spokespersons would finalise the programme, including the detailed scope of this review.

- 3.2 Task & Finish Group representatives were nominated and agreed by Party Spokespersons. Participants in this review were Cllr Alan Brighthouse (Chair) & Cllr Paul Doughty.
- 3.3 In order to inform the upcoming debate on 2014/15 budget options, it was agreed this review would need to report in time for Committee to consider the Task & Finish Group's findings at their November budget meeting.
- 3.4 Initial discussions relating to the scope took place, agreeing that given the timescales involved it would be helpful to focus on a number of 2013/14 options and specific options for 2014/15. These were largely chosen because they had high value savings attached e.g. Garden Waste (£582k) or because they aligned to other options and it was logical to group them together e.g. Street lighting and Highways Maintenance.
- 3.5 Individual sessions took place between members of the Task & Finish Group and Service Managers to discuss the impact & deliverability of each of the 2013/14 budget options and to consider potential budget options for 2014/15.
- 3.6 To support this process the Task & Finish group were provided with research information, data & desktop analysis before and after sessions.

#### **4.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 4.1 There are none relating to this report.

#### **5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 N/A

#### **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Comprehensive programmes of consultation and engagement have been completed in relation to each of the budget options outlined within this report. The mechanisms and feedback from the consultation process was reported in detail to Cabinet on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2013

#### **7.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS**

- 7.1 N/A

#### **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 N/A

#### **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 The Council faces unprecedented financial challenges, requiring savings of £27.5m in the next financial year. This report will inform pre-decision scrutiny of proposed savings.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 N/A

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

The report is for information to Members and there are no direct equalities implications at this stage.

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 N/A

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 N/A

## **14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

14.1 Members are requested to consider the findings of the Task & Finish Group and use these to inform their pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's budget options.

## **15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

15.1 To ensure Members have the appropriate information to review the budget performance of the directorate.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Report of the Task & Finish Group