

Call for Special Meeting of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In the light of:

- The failure of this administration to refer any budget savings to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committees for proper scrutiny;
- The decision taken by Council on December 12th to suspend the relevant part of the Constitution in order to avoid any such scrutiny;
- The lack of any detailed Cabinet reports setting out the details of the budget savings, and their consequences;
- The lack in particular of any explanation of the impact of the loss of over 1300 posts, the restructuring necessary to protect services, the costs of that restructuring, and the costs of the EVRs themselves;
- The lack of any report on increases in fees and charges

We, the undersigned members of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee, call for a special meeting of this committee to be held before February 21st to investigate:

- The financial and service consequences of encouraging over 1300 staff to take Early Voluntary Retirement or Severance before any restructuring proposals are in place. The costs of those EVRs
- Any planned re-structuring of services within the parameter of this committee, with associated restructuring costs.
- What the impact on the public of any changes or reductions to service will be
- The manner and timescale in which proposals are being handled and whether that is appropriate or not.
- Whether or not statutory requirements for consultation with those affected by the detailed proposals have been met, where such requirements exist.
- Whether or not the Council's best practice on consultation on individual proposals has been met.
- What the reductions in Specific Grant to the Council are, and what particular plans are in place to allow for those reductions.
- What the impact across the Council will be of zero inflation, including on contracts, when inflation is predicted to rise above 4%
- What the impact for services will be of any reductions arising from the reduced formula grant, which now includes a number of former specific grants previously ring fenced to support particular services
- What the impact will be of any transfer of resources over from another authority, and whether or not that transfer amounts to an overall reduction in service levels from previous years.
- What the impact of cuts in other public sector bodies could be where the Council has shared services or jointly funded projects
- The direct and indirect impact of cuts on the voluntary and not for profit sector who may currently be commissioned, or grant aided, to provide services.
- Any proposed increases in fees or charges
- Any changes to contracts with outside providers that may affect levels of service or charges for service
- Any other matters relevant to the budget setting process at a time when the Council faces a £52million reduction in its budget in one year.



PHIL DAVIES



JEAN STAPLETON



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