

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CABINET

12 FEBRUARY 2014

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>REVENUE BUDGET 2014/17</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>YES</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the proposed Budget for 2014/15 and the projections for 2015/16 and 2016/17.
- 1.2 Budget Council is scheduled for 25 February 2014. The Council has to agree a Budget and set the level of Council Tax for 2014/15 by 10 March 2014.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

#### BUDGET PROJECTIONS AS AT 16 DECEMBER 2013

- 2.1 The Future Financial Position report to Cabinet on 10 December updated the previous Medium term Financial Strategy and covered the period 2014/17. This provided the context in which budget decisions are being made. The projections indicated a forecast net funding available over the 3 year period of £780 million against current a net spend forecast of £863 million with a funding deficit of £83 million.

**Table 1 : Summary of the Budget Funding Gap**

Funding Gap	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Forecast Expenditure (including demographic changes)	300.3	288.1	275.1	863.5
Forecast income (including reduced grants)	272.8	257.4	250.0	780.2
Forecast Funding Gap	27.5	30.7	25.1	83.3

#### SAVINGS

- 2.2 In setting the Budget 2013/14 Council agreed savings which impacted upon 2013/14 and well as into future financial years. These are detailed in Appendix 1A.

**Table 2 : Summary Of Agreed Savings – March 2013**

Description	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£m	£m	£m
Families and Wellbeing	5.5	4.3	0
Regeneration and Environment	2.5	0.4	0
Transformation and Resources	3.0	2.7	0
Total By Directorate	11.0	7.4	0
Corporate	2.0	2.0	0
Total	13.0	9.4	0

- 2.3 The Council undertook a comprehensive What Really Matters consultation programme from 16 September 2013 to 6 December 2013. The findings were reported to Cabinet on 10 December 2013.
- 2.4 Cabinet recommended a series of savings options totalling £27.5 million to Council for 2014/15. Confirmed by Council on 16 December 2013 they included a Council Tax rise of 2% from April 2014 and additional funding to the Council Tax Support Scheme as a consequence of that increase which were subject to further consideration by Cabinet once the final Local Government Finance Settlement was received. A schedule of the savings is detailed in Appendix 1B.

**Table 3 : Summary Of Agreed Savings – December 2013**

Description	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£m	£m	£m
Families and Wellbeing	10.7	6.2	1.2
Regeneration and Environment	2.0	0.4	0
Transformation and Resources	4.7	2.7	0
Total By Directorate	17.4	9.3	1.2
Efficiencies	7.8	3.3	0
Council Tax rise (provisional)	2.2	0	0
Total	27.4	12.6	1.2

**GROWTH ITEMS**

- 2.5 The Budget Projections for 2014/15 included an assessment of growth arising from demographic changes, inflationary rises and agreed options. All Strategic Directors and Chief Officers identified potential growth bids which were subject to review by the Chief Executive Strategy Group and by internal challenge as to their validity and justification.
- 2.6 The growth bids that have been agreed are detailed at Appendix 2. These have been accepted where increased demand is placing uncontrollable pressure on safeguarding services for Adults and Children's Services and other services where the Council has a contractual obligation to fulfil.
- 2.7 The measures put in place to protect the vulnerable and reduce inequality were included in the Cabinet resolution in December, which was approved by Council. This also referred to new initiatives to attract investment and economic growth with the introduction of a Selective Licensing scheme for private rented properties and the creation of an Economic Development Unit.

**Table 4 : Summary of the Growth**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£m	£m	£m
By change			
Demographic	2,855	2,119	2,111
Other	4,768	1,490	1,607
Inflation	2,116	1,724	1,795
Total	9,739	5,333	5,413
By Directorate			
Families and Wellbeing	4,626	3,592	3,543
Regeneration and Environment	1,784	1,741	470
Transformation and Resources	3,329	0	1,400
Total	9,739	5,333	5,413

- 2.8 Included within the growth for 2014/15 is £530,000 being the impact upon the Council Tax Support Scheme of a 2% Council Tax rise so that those in receipt of the Support are not liable for the increase. This is linked to any decision on the Council Tax rise upon which a decision was deferred (see the section on Council Tax later in this report).
- 2.9 The level of growth allocated for 2014/15 is in line with the amounts included in the Budget Projections. Cabinet is also advised that a separate element exists in 2014/115 for Employees with £1 million set aside for pay and associated on-costs increases,

### **INCOME FROM FEES AND CHARGES**

- 2.10 Fees and charges of the authority are reviewed as part of the Annual Budget and a Directory of Council Fees and Charges is maintained on the Council web-site.
- 2.11 Directorates have examined their fees and charges for the 2014/15 financial year and set them according to the circumstance of their services. No general inflationary increase has been applied. Any changes, including new charges and those linked to an agreed saving, have been incorporated into the Directory with changes in income targets reflected in the 2014/15 budget. Appendix 3 provides more detail with some charges subject to review and consultation including care services, charges for leisure and cultural service activities, building control fees and land charges.
- 2.12 Cabinet is asked to note the Directory and give Delegated Authority to the Director of Resources to update the Directory as charges are finalised prior to publication before 1 April 2014.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT (LGFS)**

- 2.13 The Provisional LGFS was announced on 18 December 2013 and the consultation closed on 15 January 2014. The final Settlement is now expected in early February. 2014.

- 2.14 The Provisional Settlement sees Wirral's main grant reducing from 2013/14 by £18 million for 2014/15 and £24 million for 2015/16. These are in line with the assumptions included in the Council Budget and essentially reflect the Consultation document issued by the Government in July 2013. The only difference being a further £0.3 million reduction in 2015/16. Within the Settlement are reductions in Early Intervention Grant of £1 million for 2014/15 and a further £1 million in 2015/16.
- 2.15 In terms of New Homes Bonus the Grant increased from £1.5 million to £1.8 million with the increase in properties being less than projected in the earlier consultation which also included a £1 million additional payment, now £0.2 million, for 2014/15. The Government projections included a total of £3 million of New Homes Bonus which is now £2 million for 2014/15 and 2015/16 representing a shortfall of £1 million.
- 2.16 The Budget is based upon the Provisional Settlement and therefore may change. In relation to the Council Tax Freeze Grant and any Council Tax increase a formal announcement on Referendum criteria has still to be made and is expected in mid-February 2014.

## **LEVIES**

- 2.17 Formal notification is awaited from the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority and the Merseyside Transport Authority of the levies for 2014/15. Both bodies are meeting prior to the meeting of Cabinet and have indicated that they will freeze the overall Merseyside levy. The allocation mechanism for both bodies means that there will be variations for individual authorities. The Waste Authority reflects relative tonnages resulting in a decrease for Wirral of £0.5 million for 2014/15. The transport Authority reflects relative populations resulting in a decrease for Wirral of £0.1 million.
- 2.18 The Transport Authority is again providing grant funding for an element of highways and street lighting spend which relates to supporting the provision of strategic bus routes across the area. This could, potentially, result in the Council receiving in the region of £1.5 million in 2014/15 (up on £0.7 million in 2013/14). and potentially £2.3 million in 2015/16. This funding is not permanent so could therefore be removed in 2016/17.
- 2.19 The Council Budget assumptions had included for growth in the levies. The levying body decisions are likely to result in a reduction of £0.6 million. With the grant contribution of £0.8 million from transport this represents an overall benefit to the Council of £1.8 million for 2014/15.
- 2.20 The Waste Authority has indicated that the progression of the Waste Management & Recycling and the Resource Recovery Contracts have enabled them to review their funding. The Authority is proposing to release the Sinking Fund, now the Waste Development Fund, to constituent authorities. The release of this 'one-off' sum is subject to the formal agreement of all the constituent authorities who will commit to use their best efforts to support the objectives and targets of the Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy. It is worth £6.7 million to Wirral and should become available during 2014/15.

## PENSIONS

- 2.21 The Merseyside Pension Fund was subject to the triennial valuation in 2013. The actuarial assessment determines both the Contribution Rates for Employers and the Deficit Recovery Payments for the financial years 2014/15 – 2016/17.
- 2.22 Contribution rates have been set at 13.6% (up from 12%) for the next three years being based upon payroll costs and numbers employed. The Deficit Recovery element is separate being subject to annual increases as the recovery is deferred over three years but is fixed in that it does not vary with changes to employee numbers over the period.

**Table 5 : Pension Fund Increased Costs**

Description	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£m	£m	£m
Deficit Recovery	8.8	9.2	9.6
Less : Budget 2013/14	-7.4	-7.4	-7.4
Increase on 2013/14 figure	1.4	1.8	2.2
Pension Contribution increase	1.4	1.4	1.4
Total Increased Costs	2.8	3.2	3.6

- 2.23 The overall increased cost to Wirral is in the region of £2.8 million for 2014/15. This is £0.3 million in excess of the assumptions in the Budget Projections for 2014/15. Further increased contributions are required in 2015/16 and 2016/17 as the Deficit Recovery payments are fixed over period. The pension contribution costs in future years will vary with reductions in the workforce.

## CAPITAL AND INVESTMENTS

- 2.24 The Capital Programme and Financing report on this agenda details the process followed in order to determine the Programme. More stringent procedures were adopted in considering new submissions for inclusion in the Programme. Having regard to the considerable re-profiling undertaken during 2013/14 particular attention was paid to the planned phasing of spend for the new submissions. The report concludes that the increased borrowing costs for 2014/15 are £1.2 million.
- 2.25 As in previous years the Treasury Management Monitoring report has highlighted the low returns from investments given the current economic position. Therefore the Council has sought to use internal borrowing in lieu of external borrowing which in the short-term realises financial benefits. The reduced returns resulting in income from investments projected to be £0.5 million less than budget in 2014/15.
- 2.26 As the Budget Projections included £1.7 million for Capital Financing the proposed Capital Programme and changes to investments can be accommodated within this figure.

## COUNCIL TAX

- 2.27 Cabinet on 10 December 2013 agreed the Council Tax Base for use in 2014/15. This takes the actual number of properties which are converted to the Band D equivalent and adjusted for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and other Council Tax Discount, Exemptions and Disabled Relief and then by the Collection Rate to give the Council Tax-Base.

**Table 6: Wirral Council Tax Band D calculation 2014/15**

Band	Value (£)	Actual property numbers at 11 Nov	Band D equivalent properties at 11 Nov	Net Band D equivalent adjusted for exempt, etc
A	<40,000	58,697	33,345.0	21,216.9
B	40,001-52,000	31,629	21,982.5	18,332.9
C	52,001-68,000	27,134	21,884.7	19,973.1
D	68,001-88,000	13,135	12,036.8	11,434.5
E	88,001-120,000	8,053	9,142.2	8,895.4
F	120,001-160,000	4,233	5,720.4	5,601.8
G	160,001-320,000	3,087	4,827.9	4,788.9
H	>320,000	268	465.0	464.7
Band A Disabled (1/9 <sup>th</sup> of Band A)			55.7	26.9
Total		146,238	109,460.2	90,735.1
Collection Rate				x 96.75%
Adjusted Council Tax-Base				87,786.2

- 2.28 The Government has announced that a Council Tax Freeze Grant will be available for 2014/15 for Councils which freeze Council Tax levels in 2014/15. This is the equivalent of a 1% Council Tax rise, based upon the 2013/14 levels, and for Wirral equates to £1.3 million. It is stated that this will be built into the base funding for the life of the Spending Review so is payable for both 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- 2.29 If the Council agreed to increase Council Tax the Government has again imposed the requirement for a Council Tax Referendum. The calculation of the Referendum 'trigger' amount is also to be simplified to a comparison between overall Band D levels for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and which now includes levies. Formal confirmation of the % increase and the supporting calculation that 'triggers' the Referendum is awaited. This may not be published until mid-February 2014.
- 2.30 Cabinet / Council in December 2013 provisionally approved a 2% Council Tax rise for 2014/15 subject to the Local Government Finance Settlement. The Council has to consider Council Tax levels for 2014/15 with any variation below the £1.7 million net income achieved from the 2% rise representing a further growth in the Budget. A decision to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2014/15 would therefore represent growth, as it reduces the provisionally agreed savings, of £0.4 million.

**Table 7 : Council Tax Options**

Options	Income	
	£m	£m
Tax Rise of 2% (assumes Wirral + Levies)	2.2	
Less Local CTax Scheme protected from rise	-0.5	1.7
Tax Rise of 1.5% (assumes Wirral + Levies)	1.7	
Less Local CTax Scheme protected from rise	-0.4	1.3
No Tax Rise and acceptance of the Freeze Grant. Calculated at 1% of the adjusted 2013/14 Tax Base.		1.3

**BUSINESS RATES**

- 2.31 On 1 April 2013 a new Local Government Finance System was introduced. Under these new arrangements, billing authorities retain a proportion of locally raised business rates and either pay a tariff or as in Wirral's case receiving a top-up to ensure a comparable starting position with the previous funding system.
- 2.32 A declaration of an estimated surplus or deficit for the 2013/14 financial year together with a forecast for 2014/15 must be submitted to the Government by 31 January 2014. Business Rates are managed through the Collection Fund with any surplus / deficit being allocated to Central Government 50%, to Wirral Council 49% and to Merseyside Fire and Rescue 1%.
- 2.33 Business Rates is a particularly complex and volatile tax area that can fluctuate due to a number of reasons including:
- Appeals against rating decisions. Dealt with by the Valuation Office Agency and can be large and backdated a number of years
  - Changes in liability relating to changes in occupancy
  - Changes in building use
  - Alterations to buildings size and layout
  - Demolitions and new builds
  - Actions avoiding full liability eg empty property and charitable reliefs
  - Assessment of bad and doubtful debts
- 2.34 With this a new area to the Council and one which brings additional risks because of its complexity and volatility any surplus arising from Business Rates for 2013/14 will be held in a General Fund reserve which can then be used to meet any potential deficit from the Collection Fund. At this time the Business Rates forecasts are being collated for 2014/15 having regards to potential changes through the economic situation and including growth as well as bad debts. As the initial year of the new arrangements has yet to conclude a similar approach is being followed. Any surplus / deficit arising from the 2014/15 will be considered as part of the Collection Fund report in January 2015.

**LEVEL OF GENERAL FUND BALANCES**

- 2.35 Sound financial management principles require that sufficient funds are retained by the Council to provide a stable financial base at all times. To retain this stable financial base the Council needs to maintain a General Fund balance that is sufficient to provide a financial reserve for

unanticipated expenditure and/or expenditure that is of an unforeseen, emergency nature.

- 2.36 The level should be based on the Council's own specific circumstances. In determining the appropriate level of General Fund balances the Council takes account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the Council. The report to Cabinet on the 2013/14 budget on 28 November 2012 detailed the new approach and Appendix 4 has the calculation updated.

**Table 8 : Summary Of The Assessed General Fund Balances**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Assessed at February 2013	13.0	17.7	13.1	-
Assessed at February 2014	13.0	17.3	15.4	13.9

- 2.37 The latest Monitoring Report (December 2013 - Month 9) showed the projected balance at 31 March 2014 to be £17.2 million so the revised target of £17.3 million is achievable.

**Table 9 : Summary Of the Projected General Fund Balances**

Details	£m	£m
Projected balance 31 March 2014 when Budget set 2013/14		+13.6
Add: Increase following completion of 2012/13 accounts		+3.6
Add: Potential underspend, at Month 9	+1.0	
Less: Funding of energy increase 2013/14	-0.2	
Less; Funding for Storm damage and cleansing	-0.3	
Less: Transfer to Remodelling / Restructure Reserve	-0.5	-
Projected balance 31 March 2014		17.2

## **REVIEW OF RESERVES AND PROVISIONS**

- 2.38 Integral to the effective use of resources is an understanding of the overall financial position of the Authority. The monthly Monitoring reports presented to Cabinet and to the Policy & Performance Committees include reference to resources held on the Balance Sheet in the form of provisions and reserves.
- 2.39 Resources set-aside for specific purposes as provisions and reserves should be established and used in accordance with the purposes intended. These are reviewed at least twice a year including in preparation for the 2014/15 Budget. And this is detailed in Appendix 5.
- 2.40` With the Council undertaking a major remodelling in order to deliver the Council Vision for 2016 resources are needed to help achieve this aim. It is proposed to create a Remodelling Reserve from the reserves released by Directorates as no longer being required together with the transfer of two reserves namely the Budget Support and Local Pay reserves. Cabinet has also agreed that any Revenue Budget underspend in 2013/14 with be used to replenish balances and any additional sum be allocated to the Remodelling / Restructuring Reserve.



## **ROBUSTNESS OF THE ESTIMATES**

- 2.41 Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Authority's Chief Financial Officer (Director of Resources) is required to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Council's Budget calculations and the adequacy of the General Fund balances and reserves.
- 2.42 Appendix 6 sets out the requirements and the actions taken by the Council in relation to the Robustness of both the Revenue Estimates and the Capital Programme. The Annex contains an assessment of the key issues identified in relation to demonstrating how the legal requirements have been met.

## **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 The changes to the financing of local government in April 2013 included changes in respect of the Formula Grant and also Business Rates. The latter placed an increased risk upon local authorities as any they will benefit from a share of any increased revenues but also liable for at least a share of any falls in income (subject to the safety net triggers) and any non-collection.
- 3.2 The Government has indicated that the austerity measures outlined in the Spending Review for 2011/15 will continue until at least 2018. This was confirmed in the Spending Review 2013 and in the Autumn Statement on 5 December 2013.
- 3.3 One of the key elements in the Budget is the achievement of agreed savings. A number are reliant upon consultation with other bodies and groups; involve reductions in staffing following remodelling of the Council or through revised Commissioning and Procurement. These may take longer than anticipated to deliver which is reflected in the level of balances and the savings profiling budget. Management action is taking place to mitigate these risks.
- 3.4 The introduction of the new retained business rates system has passed increased risk to local authorities. Reductions in income including those arising from appeals relating to past years will now partially fall on the authority. There may also be opportunity to share in any increased income where collection is above the forecast amounts. These risks can be mitigated through a combination of the operation of the Collection Fund and the General Fund balances. The latter comprising both a specific Business Rates reserve and General Fund balances.
- 3.5 The Council needs to have good financial resilience at a time of increasing financial pressures and in difficult economic times. The holding of sufficient funds is part of the move to improve resilience. The locally and risk based approach to the level of General Fund balance adopted by the Council is in line with the achievement of this approach.
- 3.6 The Robustness Statement required under Section 25 of the LGA gives an assurance regarding the deliverability and sustainability of the Estimates as well as the adequacy of the level of reserves and balances.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 The Budget position collated in this report represents the result of a wide range of available option, based upon detailed and assessed assumptions, to produce a robust Budget.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The findings from the What Really Matters consultation that ran from 16 September 2013 to 6 December 2013 were reported to Cabinet on 10 December 2013.

5.2 Where legally required to undertake a more formal consultation in respect of individual options then this more specific consultation will be carried out.

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

6.1 Where budget options recommend a reduction or removal of a public service, discussions will take place with appropriate alternative service providers to ascertain if the impact would result in increased demand for services from the alternative providers. This will include voluntary and community sector groups and organisations.

#### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Budget Projections 2014/17 indicated a shortfall between spend and resources of £83 million. This formed the base position for identifying any actions to address the Budget gap.

7.2 The Budget projections for 2014/17 as detailed in Table 1 have been revised to incorporate the updates contained in Section 2.2 – 2.34. The updated position shows a 'surplus' for 2014/15 of £0.4 million whilst the indications for future years are a Budget Gap of over £44 million for the period 2015/17. This will be subject to change as the Government has only issued the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 and indicative figures for 2015/16.

**Table 10: Summary of the Budget Funding Gap at January 2014**

Funding Gap	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Funding Gap 10 December 2013	27.5	30.7	25.1	83.3
Savings	-27.4	-12.6	-1.2	-41.2
Local Govt Finance Settlement	+1.0	+0.3	-	+1.3
Levies	-1.0	-	-	-1.0
Levy / Transport Grant	-0.8	-0.8	+2.3	+0.7
Pensions	+0.3	+0.4	+0.4	+1.1
Council Tax	**	-	-	
Revised Budget Gap	-0.4	18.0	26.6	44.2

\*\* Projections presently include the provisional Council Tax rise of 2%. Cabinet is advised that the Government has still to announce the Final

Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 and the Referendum limits applicable to Council Tax rises for 2014/15.

Therefore a 2% Council Tax rise may require a Referendum; a Council Tax rise of 1.5% would require growth of £0.4 million and may require a Referendum and acceptance the Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2014/15 would require growth of £0.4 million.

7.3 The level of General Fund Balances is projected to be in the order of the £17.3 million minimum level for 2014/15.

7.4 A number of the budget savings impact on staff. Formal consultation meetings and communication have been taking place across the organisation. Any budget options which impact on staff have been, or will be, subject to further detailed consultation on the potential impact including one-to-one consultation with employees, and collective consultation with the Trade Unions, as part of the statutory process.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Council is required to agree a Budget for 2014/15 by 10 March 2014. The Chief Financial Officer is required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to produce a report on the robustness of the estimates made for the Council's Budget.

8.2 The duty of the Council to avoid a budget shortfall which is not just an academic exercise in balancing the books. The Chief Financial Officer of a local authority has a personal duty under Local Government Finance Act 1988 section 114A to make a report to the executive if it appears to her that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 When taking Budget decisions the individual decisions may have Equality Implications. Equality Impact Assessments have been completed in relation to the options and these will be re-assessed as the options progress and updated where appropriate.

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

12.1 That the savings 2014/17, set out at Appendices A1 and A2 be confirmed.

12.2 That the Budget Growth 2014/17, set out in Appendix 2 be agreed and the detail be built into the Budget.

- 12.3 That the fees and charges be noted and delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources to update the Council Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2014.
- 12.4 That the level of General Fund balances recommended continues to be based on a locally determined approach to the assessment of the financial risks that the Council may face in the future and that the Council maintains balances at, or above, this level.
- 12.5 That the release of Provisions and Reserves by Directorates be agreed and that a Remodelling / Restructure reserve be created from the reserves released together with the amalgamation of the Budget Support 2014/15 and Equal Pay reserves.
- 12.6 That the Chief Financial Officer Statement regarding the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of the Budget and the adequacy of the General Fund balances and reserves (Appendix 6) be noted.
- 12.7 That, with reference to Sections 2.30 and 7.2 of this report, a decision be made on Council Tax levels for 2014/15.
- 12.8 That Cabinet recommend to Council a budget proposal for 2014/15.

### **13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 13.1 Cabinet are required to recommend a Budget to Council on 25 February 2014. The issues detailed in this report support the recommendations which all contribute to enabling Cabinet to be in a position to recommend a Budget proposal.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Tom Sault  
 Head Of Financial Services  
 Telephone 0151 666 3054  
 Email tomsault@wirral.gov.uk

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1A	Savings Agreed 2014/17 - March 2013.
Appendix 1B	Savings Agreed 2014/17 - December 2013.
Appendix 2	Growth Submissions 2014/17.
Appendix 3	Fees and Charges.
Appendix 4	Level Of General Fund Balances.
Appendix 5	Reserves.
Appendix 6	Robustness of the Estimates.

### **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Council Budget 2013/14 - March 2013.  
 Autumn Statement – HM Treasury – December 2013.  
 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15  
 - Department for Communities and Local Government – December 2013.  
 Section 25 - Local Government Act 2003.

## SUBJECT HISTORY

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet	
Planning the budget process for the next budget round 2014/17	18 April 2013
What Really Matters Consultation Findings	10 December 2013
Future Financial Position	10 December 2013