

## **COUNCIL**

**11 DECEMBER 2017**

### **CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor Janette Williamson
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>	Finance & Income Generation
<b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Tom Sault – Assistant Director : Finance

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

#### **DELIVERING A FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE BUDGET**

We are working hard to deliver a balanced budget in the current year. This includes the achievement of £45 million of savings and additional income agreed at the Budget Council in February. Services, particularly social care, are facing hugely increased demand. The additional investment into Children's Services to safely support this vulnerable group has been highlighted by colleagues and does present a challenge this year, and indeed, in future years.

Managing within the existing resources is a big ask, and one which is incredibly important if we are to continue providing safe, good quality and sustainable services to residents.

So far, we are making excellent progress, and are expecting to have a small under-spend this year. This should help our position in future years, which based on current projections look extremely challenging.

The changes to local government funding will see the ending of the Revenue Support Grant, the increasing reliance on Business Rates, the reducing or ending of other grants for such as Education Support whilst we are faced with massive increases in demand for social care services. This all puts our budgets and services under incredible pressure.

It was very disappointing, therefore, to see no real support for local government provided in the latest Autumn Budget statement from the Chancellor. He has been consistently lobbied – by this Administration and many other councils – to tackle the funding crisis enveloping public services. Whilst providing support for Health there was nothing forthcoming for Children's care services. In a speech which barely mentioned Local Government, the Chancellor failed to take his opportunity to fix these problems.

That leaves it, once again, to local Councils to attempt to take less money and do more with it. We are working hard now to progress proposals to increase our income and deliver improved services through closer working with partners. But

more is needed and we are developing new proposals, and are asking all elected members – regardless of party – to support the process and help us create a budget which is collaborative, allows us to deliver our 20 Pledges and which meets the needs of Wirral residents.

Residents will be able to review these proposals, and provide their views through a consultation exercise. Regular updates will be published on Wirral View and through the local media.