

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Janette Williamson
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Finance & Income Generation
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Shaer Halewood – Director of Finance and Investment

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

I was pleased at the Budget Cabinet meeting in February to confirm that, thanks to our robust financial planning and management, the Council was once again projecting to deliver a balanced budget for the current financial year.

This is again in the context of having to deliver £45 million of savings during the year, while at the same time continuing to deliver the services our residents rely on. The fact we are able to do this, under such pressure and with next to no support from Central Government, is testament to our determination to ensure we deliver for Wirral whatever obstacles are placed in our way.

Earlier this month, we agreed our Budget for 2018/19, as part of our Medium Term Financial Strategy. Once again, we were faced with huge financial challenges – a £61 million deficit in the next financial year alone. Once again, we have found new and innovative ways to propose a balanced, sustainable and fair budget which enables us to deliver our pledges as promised.

I would like to once again thank every Wirral resident who took the time to provide us their views on the budget proposals. Around 6,000 local people had their say, and their views were taken into account when we proposed our budget to Council.

What I am most proud of is how we have come together to find ways to support our children's services. Making sure our most vulnerable children are safe and well supported by excellent services could not be more important and, with demand far outstripping supply in almost every area of the North West, it was once again left to councils like ours to find local solutions to national problems.

It is therefore heartening, and a demonstration of this Council's commitment to supporting the most vulnerable that even during a time of such prolonged austerity and financial challenges we were able to invest such significant additional resources into our services for children and young people.

I believe it is right that we continue to call on the Government to meet their responsibilities and provide a proper solution to this developing crisis in children's social care. I am pleased that my Cabinet colleague has joined with children's cabinet members across the region to lobby Phillip Hammond to provide the national support to these serious issues.