

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

13th January 2015

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillors Hewlett (Chairman), Smith (Vice Chairman) and Councillors Ford, Harrison, Murray

Labour Group

Councillors Frost, Mulgrew, Rhind, Richards and Shepherd

In attendance

Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group)

HCS/51 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dunn, Councillor Mrs. Hood, was substituted by Councillor Mrs Hall and Councillor Lemmon, substituted by Councillor Mrs. Watson.

HCS/52 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee was informed that no Declarations of Interest had been received.

HCS/53 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 10**

The Committee was informed that no questions from members of the public had been received.

HCS/54 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

HCS/55 **REPORTS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no Overview and Scrutiny Reports to be submitted.

HCS/56 **SERVICE BASE BUDGETS 2015 - 2016**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented a report which informed Members of the Committee's about the proposed base budget for

2015/16 in comparison to the current year, 2014/15, As part of the annual financial planning cycle, the report details the Committee's proposed base budget for 2015/16, with a comparison to the current year, 2014/15. This includes an overview of the Committee's main spending areas.

It is proposed that the estimated income and expenditure is included in the consolidated budget of the Council for 2015/16 subject to the Council's overall medium-term financial position. This will be considered by the Finance and Management Committee during the coming month. The report also sets out proposals for the level of fees and charges under the responsibility of this Committee for the next financial year. A summary of the Committee's existing capital investment programme is also included. The Committee is responsible for some large spending areas, in particular on leisure, recreational facilities, community development and private sector housing. A large part of the Committee's annual spending on community development, crime prevention, together with sport, health and homelessness prevention, is delivered in partnership with other agencies. Expenditure is financed in part from their contributions which can in turn be reliant on specific central government funding. This funding is not necessarily available from year to year. The Council maintains specific reserves which hold funding awarded in previous years and is drawn down to meet projects and costs on a yearly basis. Some of this funding is not always replaced each year and expenditure is adjusted accordingly.

In recent budget rounds some Council posts have been mainstreamed into the Base Budget. This has confirmed on-going resources in supporting local community partnerships, environmental education, together with costs associated with maintaining Swadlincote Woodlands. Although the Council still has access to longer term funding, this is finite unless replaced. Consequently, some services could again come under pressure in future years and this will be kept under review. Furthermore, expenditure of approximately £80,000 per year on parks and maintenance of open spaces is supplemented by drawing down commuted sums received as part of residential developments. Although current funds will support expenditure for several more years, this funding is also finite and will eventually end if not replaced. This will also need to be kept under review.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was reviewed and updated in October 2014. This showed that the General Fund has built up a good level of reserves, mainly due to budget underspends. Much of this has been due to one-off factors such as staffing vacancies and additional income. Whilst in recent years, this has been a familiar pattern, it cannot be guaranteed in future years. Current spending is still projected to be greater than income as costs are expected to increase and overall core funding reduces. Consequently, there is an underlying budget deficit and this is still a key factor for financial planning. The

Finance and Management Committee will consider the detail of the overall financial position on 15th January 2015, including proposals from this Committee. Therefore, it is important that this Committee scrutinises its spending base closely to identify potential budget savings and carefully examines any areas where there are any proposals to increase spending.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the proposed revenue income and expenditure for 2015/16 for the Committee's Services, as detailed in Appendix 1, be considered and referred to the Finance and Management Committee to be approved.***
- (2) The proposed fees and charges, as detailed in Appendix 3, for 2014/15 was considered and approved.***
- (3) That the grants to voluntary bodies be increased by 2.3% in 2015/16.***

HCS/57 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it would be likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

Exempt Items

HCS/58 **ANY EXEMPT QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed that no exempt questions from elected members had been received.

The meeting terminated at 6:25p.m.

COUNCILLOR J. HEWLETT

CHAIRMAN