

#### **Item 4 – References from the Advisory Committees**

Below are the relevant minute extracts from the Cabinet Advisory Committees when considering 'Budget 2015/16: Service Reviews and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS).'

##### Strategy & Performance Advisory Committee – 7 October 2014 (Minute 19)

##### Budget 2015/16: Service Reviews and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which detailed the update to the 2015/16 budget within the existing framework of the 10 year budget and savings plan. The report considered by the Committee represented the second stage of the budget process and would be presented to all Advisory Committees. The purpose of the report was for the Advisory Committees to advise Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the Services within their terms of reference. He advised that the budget was currently balanced and this was where the Council wanted to be at the year end.

Currently there were no growth or saving proposals identified which were applicable to the Committee. The Service Overview was a new document that was intended to provide Members with improved information to give further context.

In response to questions the Chairman advised the Committee of staffing levels within Democratic Services and how as the team was so small, there were limited options for partnership working.

It was queried whether previous Freedom of Information (FOI) requests could be included on the website. The Chief Finance Officer advised that there was an Officer working group looking at what additional information regarding FOIs could be included on the website.

Members discussed the length of the reports and whether there were alternative options for the information to be presented. The Chief Finance Officer advised that the contents of this report has changed over recent years to reflect Members comments and any further comments would be considered when writing similar reports in future years. The Chief Executive advised that certain information included in all reports was a requirement and also that safeguarding was an important issue. Members agreed that it was important to have a high standard of reports, so that if processes failed lessons could be learnt.

##### Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That there were no further suggestions for growth and savings for the services within the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee

## Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee – 8 October 2014 (Minute 22)

### Budget: Review of Service Plans and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which set out updates to the 2015/16 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report presented proposals that had been identified which the Committee considered and agreed.

Following on from the discussion during Minute 20, Cllr. Eyre proposed, and it was duly seconded that the budget for air quality monitoring be reduced and consolidated to £40,000 a year (£120,000 over three years). This was put to the vote and the motion was lost by virtue of the Chairman's casting vote.

Members further discussed the reduction of the budget but whilst in agreement that it should be reduced were divided as to the amount of the reduction.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: **That it be recommended to Cabinet that**

- a) the growth and savings proposals identified in Appendix C to the report, be agreed; and
- b) an additional saving be made on the budget for local air quality monitoring with a reduction to either £40k per year (an ongoing annual reduction of £18k), or £45k per year (an ongoing annual reduction of 13k).

## Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 21 October 2014 (Minute 19)

### Budget: Service Reviews and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which detailed the update to the 2015/16 budget within the existing framework of the 10 year budget and savings plan. A replacement page 17 was tabled which included current and future pressures. There were no proposed growth or savings items included in the report for this committee.

In response to questions the Chief Finance Officer advised that works to the all weather pitch in Edenbridge came under the Asset Management plan which was reported to the Finance and Resources Advisory Committee annually. Members were advised that the income from Council Tax court costs were to recover the costs of taking people to court. The Head of Parking and Surveying Services

advised that Development Control fees were set by central government but the building control fees were different and were set within the legal framework on a cost recovery basis. Savings in Building Control had been made by the new partnership between Sevenoaks District and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils.

#### Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that there were no further suggestions for growth and savings proposals for the services within the terms of reference of this Advisory Committee.

#### Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 23 October 2014 (Minute 21)

Budget: Service Reviews and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which set out updates to the 2015/16 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report did not present any savings proposals, but one growth item had been identified which the Committee considered and agreed. Cllr. Edwards-Winser addressed the Committee but was advised that his queries came under the remit of the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee.

*Action 1: The Chief Finance Officer to ask Property to respond to Cllr. Edwards-Winser.*

The Portfolio Holder advised that he would like to investigate further the possibility of increasing the budget (a further growth item) in order to be able to test viability studies (see Minute 19). The Committee agreed that this should be investigated further.

Resolved: **That it be recommended to Cabinet that**

- a) the growth proposal identified in Appendix C to the report be agreed; and
- b) there were no growth or savings items to propose at this time.

#### Finance & Resources Advisory Committee – 11 November 2014 (Minute 30)

Budget: Service Reviews and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which detailed the update to the 2015/16 budget within the existing framework of the 10 year budget and savings

plan. The report identified seven growth items and seven saving proposals. It was brought to Members attention that the saving and growth items for Legal would be removed as a current central government consultation may impact on future income streams of the service.

Members discussed staffing levels in IT Services. Members were advised that the team covered many different functions within the Council and it also included the Geographical Information System (GIS) team. The IT Services team were one of the smallest in comparison to other Local Authorities. Partnership working had been investigated previously with the GIS team, and this arrangement had now come to an end. Other options had been considered with key points being the potential of increased costs and the need to ensure requirements for the Government Code of Connection (COCO) to be met.

In response to questions Members were advised that the Council subscribes to a Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for it's Microsoft licences and the cost was fixed for the duration of the agreement. Inflation costs were covered in the overall budget, not on specific items as some items listed would not be ongoing for 10 years. If the assumption of a 2% increase changed it would alter the budget and need to be reviewed. Licences were changing to per user rather than per device which presents an increased cost. Software options were frequently being reviewed however some of the systems that the Council used were specifically designed to work with Microsoft Software.

*Action 1: Chief Officer Corporate Support to provide a breakdown of Microsoft Licence costs.*

A Member queried the expenditure on the Bus Station, and the reasons as to why they were high.

*Action 2: For Head of Finance to provide a breakdown of costs of the bus station.*

In response to a question Members were informed that changes had been made to the split of partnership costs between Sevenoaks and Dartford Borough Council due to the demographic differences which has resulted in an increased number of benefit changes in Dartford. Members thanked Officers for their hard work.

#### Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: that it be recommended to Cabinet that

- a) the growth and saving items proposed in Appendix C of the report be agreed; and

there were no additional growth or savings item to propose.