

CABINET
22 June 2016

PRESENT – Councillor Dixon (in the Chair); Councillors Copeland, Harker, C L B Hughes, McEwan, A J Scott and Wallis. (7)

INVITEES – Councillors Curry, I Haszeldine and Mrs Scott. (3)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Carson, Crumbie, Culley, Galletley, Johnson, Kelley, D A Lyonette, K Nicholson, E A Richmond, S Richmond, Storr, C Taylor and Tostevin. (13)

C13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C14. REPRESENTATIONS – In relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan representations were made by Members and members of the public in attendance at the meeting in respect of the Library Service (Minute C15(6) also refers); reduction in floating support to adults; reduction in services to street scene (Minute C15(7) also refers); consultation undertaken (Minute C15(1) also refers); the budget proposals in general; the Healthy Hub; and the Community Care Fund (Minute C15(3) also refers).

C15. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2019/20 – FINALISATION OF PHASE 2 PLAN - (1) Medium Term Financial Plan Consultation – The Chief Executive introduced the report of the Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated) providing details of the activities that were carried out as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) consultation and providing Members with an overview of responses and alternative proposals that had been suggested.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

REASON – To enable Cabinet to consider the responses received to the consultation.

(2) Equality Impact Assessments and Cumulative Impacts - The Leader introduced the report of the Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated) informing Members of the impact of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2016/20 on services, particularly to vulnerable people, and the cumulative impacts on protected characteristic groups and requesting that consideration be given to the recommendations about the proposals for mitigation, as set out in the Future Fund proposals.

RESOLVED - (a) That the findings of the individual Equality Impact Assessments and the summary, as contained in the submitted report, and specifically the further detail, as shown in Appendix 3 of the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That Equality Impact Assessments be used to inform decisions regarding the MTFP proposals and the deployment of the Futures Fund.

(c) That the following Futures Fund allocations be agreed to help mitigate the worst impacts identified in the submitted report, namely:

- (i) £160,000 on floating housing related support for vulnerable adults, domestic violence victims and those with substance misuse issues;
- (ii) £50,000 on a small community development/VCS engagement function to help support the work of developing the third sector;
- (iii) a non-recurring £100,000 split between £50,000 for a 'transformation fund' to assist the voluntary sector to drive efficiencies, be in the best position to bid for external funding and to increase resilience in the sector going forward and also £50,000 to support the development of more voluntary sector provision in the delivery of early help services to vulnerable children and families in conjunction with a redesigned early help (statutory service) offer; and
- (iv) £20,000 CDCF match funding for grants to support voluntary sector services, £13,000 council contribution to the Darlington Partnership and a one off £50,000 to increase the volunteering contribution in Darlington – all aimed at increasing capacity, resilience, ability to bid for funds and tapping into and making optimum use of the resources and people of Darlington to build stronger communities;

(d) That proposals relating to the Community Care Fund and Financial Inclusion Crisis Fund, which would have a significant contribution to mitigation of the impacts outlined in the submitted report, be noted.

(e) That further work be undertaken to investigate the retention of the Companion Bus Pass option on the principle of developing a sustainable scheme which is a combination of a more robust criterion and assessment for entitlement and an annual charge at a level to be determined and that the development and implementation of a scheme on these principles be delegated to the Director of Economic Growth in consultation with the relevant Portfolio holder.

REASONS - (a) To build stronger communities and help mitigate some of the impact of the MTFP proposals on vulnerable groups and specific protected characteristics identified through the equalities impact assessment process.

(b) The duty for members to have 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty pursuant to Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 and to fully consider the contents of the EIAs produced in respect of individual proposals.

(3) Financial Inclusion Crisis Support and Community Care Fund - The Cabinet Member with the Health and Partnerships Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Financial Inclusion Crisis Support and Community Care Fund Policies (both also previously circulated) and contracts as part of the Future Fund proposals for the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED - (a) That an allocation from the Future Fund of £100,000 for the Financial Inclusion Crisis Support service, be agreed.

(b) That an allocation from the Future Fund of £120,000, plus the use of efficiencies of a further £30,000 to give a total contract value of £150,000, for the Community Care Fund contract, be agreed.

(c) That both contracts go to open tender with a contract start date of 1 October 2016.

(d) That the specification documents, attached at Appendix 1 and 2 of the submitted report, be approved.

(e) That the policy documents, attached at Appendix 3 and 4 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS - (a) The impact of cutting financial inclusion and Social Fund funding completely would have high negative impacts on the most vulnerable residents.

(b) Not having financial support and advice in place would potentially lead to more children needing to come into care because of the risk of neglect.

(c) Community Care Fund grants help keep people in their own home and reduces demand on statutory services.

(d) Community Care Fund supports people fleeing domestic violence, care leavers, offenders and individuals with substance misuse issues to return or remain in the community.

(4) Revenue Outturn 2015/16 - The Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources (previously circulated) presenting the revenue outturn 2015/16 (subject to Audit), to allow Members to consider the results in light of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and also to consider the Collection Fund and Housing Revenue Account outturn.

RESOLVED - (a) That revenue outturn for 2015/16, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That additional carry forward requests of £1.020m, as detailed in the submitted report, be approved and carried forward into 2016/17.

(c) That £0.500m of balances be allocated for the Civic Theatre project.

REASON - In order to maintain appropriate management arrangements for the Council's finances and make effective use of the Council's resources.

(5) The Bridge Centre For Visual Arts - The Cabinet Members with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive and Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to a business case (also previously circulated) produced by the recently formed Visual Arts Organisation who wished to take over the running of the Centre.

RESOLVED - (a) That the implementation of budget proposal W9, in relation to funding of The Bridge, be deferred until 31 March 2017.

(b) That the leasing of the building to the organisation at a peppercorn rent or similar arrangement, be agreed in principle, to enable all property options to be explored.

(c) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet on the outcome of negotiations with the Visual Arts organisation in January/February 2017.

REASONS - (a) To allow time for the business case to be developed.

(b) To establish outline terms in relation to property negotiations.

(c) To consider the final business case.

(6) MTFP Library Service Proposals - The Cabinet Member with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to amending the proposals contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Library service and agree to progress the revised plans.

The Assistant Director, Law and Governance, updated Cabinet in respect to the Council's legal obligations relating to the covenant on the Crown Street Library building and land.

RESOLVED - (a) That the Library needs assessment, as appended to the submitted report, be noted and approved.

(b) That the relocation of the Central Library service to the Dolphin Centre, as detailed in the submitted report, be agreed.

(c) That Cockerton Library be closed on 31 March 2017 unless a sustainable alternative proposal is agreed before December 2016.

(d) That the Mobile Library Service ceases to be provided from 1 October 2016 and additional work be undertaken to promote the housebound service.

(e) That the capital sum of £1.7m be released to relocate the Library Service to the Dolphin Centre and that the procurement of the scheme be delivered in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules by the Council's Building Services division and that the procurement be designated as non-strategic.

(f) That the Crown Street building be declared surplus to requirements and the Director of Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio, be authorised to dispose of the building, and interested community groups with proposals for use of the building, be considered as part of the disposal process.

REASONS - (a) To enable the Council to achieve the savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

(b) An extension of time will allow for further work to try and develop a voluntary-led solution for Cockerton Library.

(c) The statutory obligation to provide for library service needs can be met by the proposed changes.

(7) Street Scene and Grounds Maintenance Budget Reduction Mitigation Proposals - The Cabinet Member with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to options to mitigate the reductions in the budgets of both these services.

RESOLVED - (a) That a Member led approach to volunteering be implemented with support from within the proposed staffing structure, be agreed.

(b) That the £50,000 wild meadow fund be reallocated to fund a two year post to support volunteering.

(c) That the missed bins process be amended and some bring sites be closed, as detailed in the submitted report, to fund an Environmental Enforcement Team to focus on fly tipping and back lanes.

(d) A review, into the use of the private sector in litter enforcement, be agreed.

REASONS - (a) To mitigate service reduction.

(b) To support and co-ordinate volunteers.

(c) To provide funding for an enforcement team.

(d) To review alternative delivery options.

(8) Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20 – Finalisation of Phase 2 Plan - The Leader introduced the report of the Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated) to finalise the 2016/17 to 2019/20 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in light of consultation and any changes in respect of new information and projections.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted and it be recommended to the special meeting of Council scheduled to be held on 29 June 2016, that the revised MTFP, as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved, including :-

(a) decisions already made at Minute C15(1) to (7) above;

(b) reductions, as set out at Appendix 3 to the submitted report;

(c) an indicative annual Council Tax increase of 3.99% including the Government's 2% social care levy;

(d) the MTFP forming the basis of the Council's four year efficiency plan to be submitted to Government; and

- (e) the transfer of £3.273m to the Redundancy and Decommissioning reserve to be drawn down as required.

REASONS - (a) To set a medium term financial plan within projected available resources.

(b) To enable the Council to secure a four year grant settlement from the Government.

(c) To provide for redundancy and decommissioning costs.

**DECISIONS DATED –
WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE 2016**