

**PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

15 January 2018

**PRESENT** – Councillors Carson (in the Chair), Cossins, Donoghue, L Hughes, Lyonette, Marshall and Tostevin. (7)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors M Nicholson and Wright. (2)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor CV Johnson. (1)

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Elizabeth Davison, Assistant Director Finance, Human Resources and Systems; John Anderson, Assistant Director, Economic Initiative; Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services; Bill Westland, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services; Dawn Taylor, Principal Officer (Trading Standards and Animal Health) and Lead Officer; and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

**P32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interests reported at the meeting.

**P33. MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN** – Submitted – A report (previously circulated) of the Chief Officers Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 12 December, 2017 in relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2018/19 to 2021/22.

Reference was made to the proposals within the submitted report in relation to the current position of the MTFP and to the proposed allocation of an additional £4.4 million which had been identified to create five Futures Fund Investment themes which would stimulate growth and would be used over the four years of the MTFP.

It was however reported that since the publication of those proposals there had been two significant areas of change which would affect that position, namely the announcement by the Government to allow Council's to increase Council tax by an additional one per cent in 2018/19 and 2019/20 before a referendum was required and the National Pay Award offer which had been made to the Unions which was over and above that originally budgeted for and would potentially remove all of the funding for the proposed Futures Fund.

Cabinet had considered the proposed increase to the Council Tax at its meeting held on 9 January, 2018, and had agreed to amend the proposed Council Tax from 1.99 per cent plus a social care precept of three per cent (4.99 per cent) to 2.99 per cent plus an adult social care precept of three per cent (5.99 per cent) in 2018/19.

It was also reported that the quarter three budget monitoring position was being pulled together and a favourable result was anticipated and whilst there would be a Futures Fund the actual amount was uncertain at this stage. Members were also advised that of the five Themes identified for the Futures Fund three of them related to this Scrutiny

Committee i.e., maintaining an attractive street scene environment, maintaining a vibrant Town Centre and developing an attractive visitor economy.

Members gave consideration to the Schedule of Charges, the majority of which were under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee and included several statutory charges.

All relevant Assistant Directors attended the meeting to provide Members with background information and clarification on charges within their remits.

The Assistant Director, Community Services provided a PowerPoint presentation for Members detailing MTFP proposals of £300k for Street Scene which included provision of additional resources to provide more frequent cleansing of back lanes and emptying of litter bins and quicker response to clearing of fly tips. In relation to manual street cleaning resources it was proposed to increase manual street cleaning by two street orderlies which would increase frequency of cleansing of key roads into the Town to twice weekly and the majority of the Town fortnightly. It was also proposed to employ a further driver to work between large and small mechanical sweepers and purchase a large mechanical sweeper which would reinstate channel sweeping to pre-2016 standards.

In relation to the Town Centre it was proposed to employ an additional Team Leader to undertake litter picking, maintenance of street furniture and grounds maintenance duties.

Details were also provided of increased services for grass cutting and grounds maintenance services and street scene proposals for one-off resource.

Discussion ensued on the timescale of availability of the recurring sum of £300k; litter enforcement current process and future proposals; employment of apprentices to undertake some duties; and options available to the Council to deter damage to grass verges by vehicles.

**RESOLVED** - That Cabinet be advised that this Scrutiny Committee supports the proposed principles within Themes 2, 3 and 4 of the Futures Fund and the proposed Council Tax increase of 2.99 per cent plus the three per cent social care levy to fund Adult Social Care for 2018/19.