

**EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

25<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

**PRESENT** - Councillor I. Haszeldine (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Coultas, Crumbie, Johnson, K. Nicholson and C, Taylor (7)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Mrs. H Scott (1)

**ABSENT** – Councillor Crichlow (1)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor Harker (1)

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Elizabeth Davison, Assistant Director – Finance and Human Resources

**ER25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**ER26. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2020/21 – SCRUTINY COMMITTEE’S RESPONSE** - Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of all of this Council’s Scrutiny Committees which had been held to consider a response to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the first stage of revising the MTFP for 2016/17.

It was also reported that Place Scrutiny Committee had requested further information in relation to a number of charges within its remit and an explanation had been provided to that Committee as a response.

Discussion ensued on the proposed schedule of charges and Members commented that of approximately 545 fees only approximately 45 were being recommended to be increased and an explanation was given as to why that was the case in some areas. Members felt that further work should be undertaken in relation to the schedule of charges and it was reported that Cabinet would be setting these at its meeting to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2015, in advance of approval by Council, however, the charges could be reviewed later in the year if Members felt it appropriate.

In relation to the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee, discussion ensued on the Government’s proposal to allow Council’s with responsibility for Adult Social Care to be able to levy a ‘precept’ of two per cent on top of the current Council Tax referendum limit to help fund the increased cost of adult social care, which, in Darlington was the largest overall budget and further information was requested on the impact of this for Darlington and the Assistant Director Finance and Human Resources reported that the two per cent equated to approximately £800,000.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That Cabinet be advised that, taking into account the views and comments of all of the Council’s Scrutiny Committees, the following is this Scrutiny Committee’s response to the proposals contained within the first stage of the MTFP 2016/17 :-

- (i) that, in relation to the proposed Council Tax increase of 3.99 per cent for 2016/17 and subsequent years, the majority view is that Cabinet's proposals as contained in its report dated 1 December 2015 be supported and the minority view is that the proposal is not supported;
- (ii) that the schedule of charges, as set out in Appendix 3 of Cabinet's report dated 1 December 2015, be supported, however, it be noted that Scrutiny will undertake further work during the next financial year to re-visit those charges and make recommendations thereon if appropriate; and
- (iii) that, in relation to the use of £1.613 million revenue balances to fund the budget gap in 2016/17, Cabinet's proposals as contained in its report dated 1 December 2015, be supported and the minority view is that the proposal is not supported.

(b) That it be noted that the 2016/17 to 2019/20 MTFP will be reviewed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 February 2015, and that further consultation thereon will be undertaken.