

## **FC79. REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15**

Council considered a report by the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer (a) setting out the Administration's revenue budget proposals for 2014/15 which had been informed by the Council's priorities in the 2012-17 Corporate Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement, and (b) outlining the projected financial position for the subsequent 3 years as reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Nicol, moved that Council agrees:-

- (1) to accept the Draft Budget for 2014/15 as proposed in the report and appended to it;
- (2) to levy a Council Tax for 2014/15 as follows:-
  - (i) a Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in Council Tax Valuation Band D of £1,070, representing a nil increase;
  - (ii) a Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in each of the other Council Tax Valuations Bands in accordance with Section 74 (1) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as set out in paragraph 10.3 of the report);
- (3) replenish the earmarked Spend to Save Reserve by £1.5m as set out in para 5.7.5 of the report;
- (4) that any shortfall in savings proposals flowing from due Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment process, together with other necessary consultations, will be covered by reserves (as detailed at paras 5.7.7 & 6.2 of the report);
- (5) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to issue a statutory notice to the Trade Unions in respect of the workforce implications of the budget proposals;
- (6) to note the actions being taken to assist with reductions in workforce spend, and to avoid compulsory redundancies as far as possible, as outlined at Section 6 of the report;
- (7) to note the development of the Business Transformation project and agree to such work progressing with updates being provided to the Executive at appropriate stages;
- (8) to change the savings criteria contained within the Severance Policy as detailed at Section 6 of the report;
- (9) to a further review of the Severance Policy to reduce the cost of the severance package with a report being submitted to the Executive on proposed changes, as detailed at Section 6 of the report;
- (10) to instruct Chief Officers to deliver Services within the specific budget allocation for each Service and authorise them to take such actions as may be required to give effect to the service delivery proposals outlined in section 6 of the report.

By way of an amendment, Councillor Meiklejohn seconded by Councillor Jackson, moved the following changes with regard to the draft budget referred to in paragraph (1) of the motion and the spend to save proposals referred to in paragraph (3) thereof:-

(1) “ Council agrees:-

- (i) to commit to the Revenue Budget resources the full figure of the 2013/14 projected underspend for the year (net of £1.5m recommended allocations of spend to save) **£700,000**

**Total Savings £700k**

(ii) to the following amendments to the Revenue Budget:-

- a. Social Work Budget – Freeze charges for essential services, scrap SW7 **£64,000**
- b. Scrap SW1 (income from non residential charging) **£101,000**
- c. Scrap SW13 (shift in external home care provision) **£37,000**
- d. Scrap SW22 (review of abuse services) **£68,000**
- e. Scrap SW6 (eligibility criteria and charging policy for transport) **£50,000**
- f. Corporate & Neighbourhood Budget, (CN12) increase burial and cremation fees by 2% **£117,000**
- g. Education budget – scrap ED29 (stop swimming lessons for P5 pupils) **£65,000**
- h. Scrap ED21 (align let prices with the trust) **£122,000**
- i. Scrap ED4 (full cost recovery of baby provision) **£29,000**
- j. Scrap ED15 ( increase in child care fees by 5%) **£20,000**
- k. Economic Development budget – additional heading. The renewables industry presents an opportunity for the establishment of more social enterprises. Place in budget provision for a district wide audit to identify potential sites for small scale hydro schemes and carry out a scoping exercise to detail possibilities for community based social enterprises **£27,000**

**Total additional spend £700,000**

- (3) Council notes the existence of proposals for Spend to Save projects involving the Falkirk Leisure Trust. As responsibility for monitoring the Trust and approving their Business Plan lies with the full Council it is proposed that Council agrees in principle to adding £1.5m from reserves with a full follow up report, including proposals involving the Falkirk Leisure Trust to the March 2014 meeting of the full Council”.

Councillor Ritchie gave notice of a further amendment.

During discussion on this item, Councillor Ritchie declared a non-financial interest as a member of the Bo’ness Fair Committee but did not consider that this required her to recuse herself from consideration of the item, having had regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct.

In terms of Standing Order 22.4(i) a vote was taken by roll call, there being 31 members present and voting as undernoted.

For the motion (16) – Provost Reid; Depute Provost Patrick; Baillies Buchanan and Paterson; Councillors Black, Blackwood, G Goldie, Gow, MacDonald, McLuckie, Mahoney, Martin, Dr CR Martin, Murray, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (15) – Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Bird, Carleschi, Chalmers, Coleman, Hughes, Jackson, McCabe, McNally, Meiklejohn, Oliver, Ritchie, Spears and Turner.

The motion became the substantive motion against with the further amendment was made.

Councillor Turner, seconded by Carleschi, moved, in substitution for that part of the substantive motion that referred to Registration offices, that:-

“a review of the Registrars’ service is undertaken in recognition of the geographical realities of the distances and difficulties which would be involved for residents and this is paid for from reserves”.

Councillor McCabe gave notice of a further amendment.

In terms of Standing Order 22.4(i) a vote was taken by roll call, there being 31 members present and voting as undernoted.

For the motion (16) – Provost Reid; Depute Provost Patrick; Baillies Buchanan and Paterson; Councillors Black, Blackwood, G Goldie, Gow, MacDonald, McLuckie, Mahoney, Martin, Dr CR Martin, Murray, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (15) – Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Bird, Carleschi, Chalmers, Coleman, Hughes, Jackson, McCabe, McNally, Meiklejohn, Oliver, Ritchie, Spears and Turner.

Councillor McCabe then moved his further amendment as follows:-

“Council deletes the proposed savings of £68,000 in regard to abuse services – in particular Open Secret, and that this cost is met from reserves (SW22)”.

The Provost ruled that the amendment was similar to that moved by Councillor Meiklejohn earlier at para 1 (ii) (d) of her amendment which had been voted upon. In terms of Standing Order 35.1 the proposed further amendment was not competent.

## **Decision**

### **Council agreed:-**

- (1) the draft Budget for 2014/15 as proposed in the report**
- (2) to levy a Council Tax for 2014/15 as follows:-**
  - a. a Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in Council Tax Valuation Band D of £1,070, representing a nil increase;**
  - b. a Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in each of the other Council Tax Valuations Bands in accordance with Section 74**

(1) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as set out in paragraph 10.3 above);

- (3) to replenish the earmarked Spend to Save Reserve by £1.5m as set out in para 5.7.5 of the report;
- (4) that any shortfall in savings proposals flowing from due Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment process, together with other necessary consultations, would be covered by reserves (as set out in paras 5.7.7 & 6.2 of the report);
- (5) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to issue a statutory notice to the Trade Unions in respect of the workforce implications of the budget proposals;
- (6) to note the actions being taken to assist with reductions in workforce spend, and to avoid compulsory redundancies as far as possible, as outlined at Section 6 of the report;
- (7) to note the development of the Business Transformation project and agree to such work progressing with updates being provided to the Executive at appropriate stages;
- (8) the change to the savings criteria contained within the Severance Policy as detailed at Section 6 of the report;
- (9) a further review of the Severance Policy to reduce the cost of the severance package with a report being submitted to the Executive on proposed changes, as detailed at Section 6 of the report;
- (10) to instruct Chief Officers to deliver Services within the specific budget allocation for each Service and authorise them to take such actions as may be required to give effect to the service delivery proposals outlined in section 6 of this report.