

FC81. Revenue Budget 2018/19 and 2019/20

Council considered a report by the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which set out options identified by officers which would enable Council to make selections with a view to achieving a balanced budget for 2018/19. These options had been subject to public consultation.

The report also contained the Administration's proposals relating to these options and to the level of Council Tax in order to achieve a balanced budget. Along with this the Administration's new investment proposals of £2.3m were detailed. The report also set out Falkirk Community Trust's Business Plan for 2018/19 and proposed an allocation of funds to the Integration Joint Board.

The report contained information regarding financial year 2019/20 and while no decisions were sought for this year Council was invited to take a provisional stance on Council Tax for that year.

Council had previously considered reports on the revenue budget process and the local government finance settlement for 2018/19, the most recent being on 15 January 2018. At the special meeting of Council on 15 January 2018 Council approved its Housing Revenue Account Revenue and Capital Budgets.

Councillor Meiklejohn, seconded by Councillor Garner, moved that Council agree:-

- (1) a balanced budget closing the gap as identified in the report through the means set out in para 4.3.2 of the report with the savings further identified in appendices 3 and 6 to the report;
- (2) in addition, recognising that the first stage of the pre appraisal for Bonnybridge Railway Station is not due to conclude until later this year, that funds should be made available from the reserves that are required to fund any future stage if the decision is to proceed with it;
- (3) an increase in the council tax of 3%;
- (4) not to fix a provisional council tax increase for 2019/20 at this stage;
- (5) the service payment of £10.791m to the Falkirk Community Trust and the business plan incorporating the amended savings proposed by the Trust. In addition, that the Chief Executive prepare an options appraisal for the September meeting of Council to consider the advantages and disadvantages of (1) the current arrangements for the Trust, (2) an arrangement allowing greater autonomy and (3) bringing the services provided back in house. The appraisal should cover financial, workforce and governance implications but should also consider benefits and disbenefits in relation to achieving savings,

efficiencies and service redesign across the Council and should be undertaken in consultation with the Chief Executive and Board of the Trust;

- (6) the payment of £62.162m to the Integration Joint Board set out at para 4.8 of the report reflecting the amended savings proposed by the IJB in its Business Case;
- (7) the fees and charges changes set out in the report and that a review of fees and charges is carried out by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services for consideration at the September meeting of Council to provide information on benchmarking and recommendations on a consistent approach to charging and concessions across the Council taking into account the Poverty Strategy, and
- (8) the remaining recommendations 6-10 as set out in the report.

As an amendment, Councillor Goldie, seconded by Councillor Nimmo, moved that Council agree:-

- 1) a balanced budget closing the gap through the means identified in appendix 1 with reprofiled additional spend as set out in appendix 2 to this minute and the proposed savings set out in appendices 3 and 4 to the minute;
 - 2) to increase the Council Tax for 2018/19 by 3%;
 - 3) not to set a provisional Council tax increase for 2019/20;
 - 4) a service payment of £10.991m to Falkirk Community Trust and the Business Plan incorporated the amended savings proposed by it;
 - 5) the payment of £62.562m to the Integration Joint Board reflecting the amended savings proposed by the IJB but subject to a reduction of £300k in the proposed saving in high cost care packages and reduction of £100k in the proposed saving on purchased care home placements,
- 6-10) as per the recommendations set out in the report

Councillor Nicol gave notice of a further amendment. The Provost, having received indication that the political groups wished to consider the terms of the motion and the amendments adjourned the meeting for that purpose at 11.10am. Council reconvened at 12.20pm with all members present as per the sederunt.

Councillor Meiklejohn, with the consent of the Provost and Councillor Garner, as her seconder, adjusted the terms of clause (1) of her motion, in light of the amendment intimated by Councillor Nicol, to read:-

- (1) a balanced budget closing the gap as identified in the report through the means set out in para 4.3.2 of the report with the savings further identified in appendices 3 and 6 to the report with the deletion of option DV27 (removal of all flower bedding and baskets) with the cost (£100k) to be met from reserves;

Having heard the terms of Councillor Meiklejohn's adjusted motion, Councillor Nicol intimated that he would not move his further amendment.

Councillor Goldie, with the consent of the Provost and Councillor Nimmo, as his seconder, adjusted the terms of clause (1) of his motion to read:-

- 1) a balanced budget closing the gap through the means identified in appendix 1 with reprofiled additional spend as set out in appendix 2 to this minute and the proposed savings set out in appendices 3 and 4 to the minute with the deletion of savings option CS12 and inclusion of option CS21.

Following discussion Council adjourned at 1.05pm for lunch and reconvened at 1.35pm with all members present.

Following further discussion and in terms of Standing Order 22.4(i), the vote was taken by roll call, there being 30 members present with voting as undernoted:-

For the motion (21) – Provost Buchanan, Depute Provost Ritchie; and Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Binnie, Bouse, Coleman, Collie, Flynn, Garner, Grant, Harris, Hughes, Kerr, McCue, Meiklejohn, Munro, Murtagh, Nicol, Patrick, and Spears.

For the amendment (8) – Councillors Aitchison, Bissett, Black, Coombes, Goldie, McLuckie, Nimmo, and Reid.

Abstain (1) – Councillor Blackwood.

Decision

Council agreed:-

- (1) a balanced budget closing the gap as identified in the report through the means set out in paragraph 4.3.2 of the report with the savings further identified in appendices 3 and 6 of the report with the deletion of option DV27 (removal of all flower bedding and baskets) with the cost (£100k) to be met from reserves;**
- (2) in addition, recognising that the first stage of the pre appraisal for Bonnybridge Railway Station is not due to conclude until later this year, that funds should be made available from the reserves that are required to fund any future stage if the decision is made to proceed with it;**
- (3) an increase in the Council Tax of 3%;**

- (4) not to fix a provisional Council Tax increase for 2019/20 at this stage;**
- (5) the service payment of £10.791m to the Falkirk Community Trust and the business plan incorporating the amended savings proposed by the Trust. In addition, that the Chief Executive prepare an options appraisal for the September meeting of Council to consider the advantages and disadvantages of (1) the current arrangements for the Trust, (2) an arrangement allowing greater autonomy, and (3) bringing the services provided back in house. The appraisal should cover financial, workforce and governance implications but should also consider benefits and disbenefits in relation to achieving savings, efficiencies and service redesign across the Council and should be undertaken in consultation with the Chief Executive and Board of the Trust;**
- (6) the payment of £62.162m to the Integration Joint Board as set out at paragraph 4.8 of the report, reflecting the amended savings proposed by the IJB in its Business Case;**
- (7) the fees and charges changes set out in the report and that a review of fees and charges is carried out by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services for consideration at the September meeting of Council to provide information on benchmarking and recommendations on a consistent approach to charging and concessions across the Council taking into account the Poverty Strategy;**
- (8) to note the update on the implications for the workforce and the actions being taken to ensure changes can be implemented through voluntary methods as far as possible;**
- (9) 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, if this is required, to ensure the Council complies with its legal implications;**
- (10) to note the update on terms and conditions and that officers will continue discussions with Trade Unions on changes which support the 2019/20 Budget process;**
- (11) the temporary extension to the Head of Social Work Adult Services post for a 6 month period with the option to further extend, subject to the Health and Social Care Partnership structure, and**
- (12) 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 within Council policy to give effect to the service delivery proposals outlined in relevant sections of this report and related Appendices and Annexes.**