

FC64. Revenue Budget 2018/19 & 2019/2020

Council considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on a wide range of budget matters including the identification of further savings options by officers. The report also included business cases for both the Falkirk Community Trust and the Integration Joint Board. The report invited Council to take a provisional decision on the level of Council Tax.

Council agreed to an adjournment at 2.10pm and reconvened at 2.40pm with all members present as per the sederunt with the exception of Councillor Blackwood.

At this point Councillor Black declared a non-financial interest in item FC67 as a member of NHS Forth Valley Health Board which had submitted a late letter of objection to the application of which she had just become aware.

At this point Councillor Patrick advised, in reference to his earlier declaration, that a family member had a financial interest in this item as an employee of Falkirk Community Trust and stated that he would recuse himself from consideration. In line with his declaration of interest Councillor Patrick left the meeting at this point.

Decision

Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the UK's Budget and the COSLA "Fair Funding for Essential Services" paper;**
- (2) to note the increase in the 2018/19 budget gap to £25m;**
- (3) to note the preview of the Local Government Financial Settlement;**
- (4) to note the update on public engagement;**
- (5) to note the update on workforce matters;**
- (6) in principle the approach proposed by officers in relation to external organisations, particularly not just a blanket percentage reduction, noting that any proposal that emerges from this exercise to be conducted by officers will be carefully considered in light of any impacts of the proposals on those receiving services;**
- (7) that the additional officer savings options, set out in paragraph 4.7.2 of the report, go out for consultation;**
- (8) to recognise that the Employment and Training Unit is not a statutory service, but in acknowledging the successful work it has done in enabling young people into training and employment and as a result being the only local authority awarded the contract to deliver the Scottish Government Fair Start programme, agree to the proposed changes to the savings**

options for the Employment and Training Unit and Fairer Falkirk described in paragraphs 4.7.4 and 4.7.5 of the report;

- (9) in principle to the Council Tax being raised by 3% with the final decision to be taken at the budget setting meeting on 20 February 2018;**

In reference to the Trust Business Plan recommendations, Council:-

- (1) noted the income growth proposals and income projections set out in paragraph 4.2 of the Business Plan subject to continuing discussions with the organisations involved with the Bairn's Christmas to support them to identify a suitable date and venue;**
- (2) agreed the changes and modifications to the facilities outlined in paragraph 4.3 of the Business Plan to facilitate the achievement of the income targets in these sites;**
- (3) noted the use of £245,000 from the Trust unrestricted reserves as outlined in paragraph 4.5 of the Business Plan;**
- (4) approved the various initiatives to tackle the reduction in funding through service efficiencies and reductions as outlined in section 5 and in appendix 2 to the Business Plan with the exception of the facilities listed in paragraph 5.5 of the Business Plan and agreed to request that these are reviewed with a view to further consideration of the potential for community asset transfer for these facilities;**
- (5) agreed the approach to fees and charges for 2018/19 as outlined in section 6 of the Business Plan;**
- (6) agreed the capital proposals for 2018/19 as outlined in section 7 of the Business Plan;**
- (7) agreed the Helix Business Plan for 2018/19;**
- (8) agreed to prepare and implement a joint communications plan for stakeholders and communities in respect of the proposals to withdraw from the facilities identified in section 5 of the Business Plan, and**
- (9) did not support the closure of 2 libraries and requested that the Trust give further consideration as to how the saving could be achieved through reduced hours/days, and co-location of other services with libraries.**

In reference to the Integration Joint Board Business Case 2018/19, Council:-

- (1) noted that the proposals of £2.3m of savings brought forward by the IJB to date fall short of the £4m that was originally requested;**

- (2) agreed that there should be no closure of care homes but requested that the IJB gives further consideration to its proposals, to look at alternatives reaching to £3m, and**
- (3) agreed to express concerns to the IJB in regard to its proposals in regard to charges and asks the IJB to look at different options in relation to charging and requested fuller and further information prior to taking a decision in February 2018.**