

# MINUTES OF BUDGET WORKING GROUP MEETING

## HELD 9 JULY 2013

Present: Cllrs: T Hill, Thompson and Hore, Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Director of Community Services, Head of Financial Services.

### **1 Apologies**

1 Cllr Hirst, Knox, Rogerson

### **2 Spending Round 2013**

2.1 The DoR updated members on the Spending Round 2013 which was announced on 26 June 2013. An overall 10% cut in local government funding in real terms in 2015/16 had been announced, which was on top of the 35% of reductions announced previously.

2.2 The Spending Review announcement also stated that total spending over 2015-2018 would be reduced at the same rate as during the Spending Review 2010 period.

2.3 Other announcements within the Spending Review were also discussed, including the continuation of the Council Tax Freeze grant, Shared Services and Joint Working and the top slicing of New Homes Bonus.

2.4 The DoR highlighted that the specific impact on Ribble Valley was not yet known, however taking the headline figures announced in the Spending Review, there are forecast savings needed of at least £495K in 2014/15 and £725K in 2015/16, but these figures would need treating with caution until the Government clarified in more detail its spending plans for local government. The forecast also assumes a council tax increase of 2.5% in 2014/15 and in 2015/16.

### **3 Council Tax Support**

3.1 Members were updated with how the Council Tax Support scheme was progressing. The DoR explained the mechanics of the Council Tax Support scheme, how the council received its funding and also how the scheme impacted on the tax base.

3.2 Initial forecasts at the start of the scheme had shown a net gain of £3K, with latest forecasts now showing a net gain of £10K.

3.3 Discussions took place on the current level of 8.5% and any further review needed of this.

### **4 Business Rates**

4.1 Members were updated on the latest position with Business Rates Yields following the changes made in April.

4.2 The DoR recapped for members the complexities of how the new Business Rates scheme operated and the original forecast level of funding that the council was to retain.

4.3 The latest forecast of retained Business Rates was also provided by the DoR, highlighting the volatility of the position and the difficulty in being able to accurately predict the outturn position as at March 2014. The outcome of appeals was highlighted as the greatest concern

### **5 Public Services Network (PSN) Compliance**

5.1 The outcome of a recent Public Services Network (PSN) Compliance inspection was discussed with members. Six items had been raised from the inspection. With only one being a particular cause for concern, and relating to the security of the connection of member's ICT connection to the council.

- 5.2 Due to the need for an urgent response to be made to the Cabinet Office by the beginning of August and due to Policy and Finance Committee not meeting again until September, guidance was sought from the BWG on the favoured course of action.
- 5.3 A number of options for the solution of this issue were discussed and it was agreed that all members would be contacted in order to establish a general consensus. The BWG's favoured option was for the provision of a secure tablet device to all members.

**6 Revenue Outturn 2012/13**

- 6.1 This item was deferred for discussion at the next meeting.

**7 Capital Outturn 2012/13**

- 7.1 This item was deferred for discussion at the next meeting.

**8 Any Other Business**

- 8.1 There were no additional items of business

**9 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

- 9.1 The next meeting would be on **Wednesday 14 August 2013 in Committee Room 1 at 4.00pm**