

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

9<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Watson (Chairman), and Councillors Mrs. Brown, Ford, Mrs. Hall, Harrison (substitute for Councillor Roberts (Vice-Chairman)), Murray (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Patten) and Stanton.

**Labour Group**

Councillors Chahal, Dunn, Mrs. Heath, Stuart, Taylor and Tilley.

**In attendance**

Councillors Atkin and Mrs. Plenderleith (Conservative Group).

EDS/28. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs. Patten and Roberts (Conservative Group).

**MATTER DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

EDS/29. **SERVICE BASE BUDGETS 2014 / 15**

A report was submitted which informed Members of the Committee's proposed base budget for 2014/15 in comparison to the current year, 2013/14. This included an overview of the Committee's main spending areas. It was proposed that the estimated income and expenditure was included in the consolidated budget of the Council for 2014/15, subject to the Council's overall medium term financial position. The report also set out proposals for the levels of fees and charges under the responsibility of the Committee for the next financial year, and a summary was included of the Committee's existing capital investment programme.

This Committee was responsible for services where substantial amounts of income were generated. These included Licensing, Trade Waste Collections together with Building Regulation Applications, Land Charges and Local Planning Applications. Since 2009/10, the on-going economic situation has had a negative impact on these major income streams, which had subsequently affected the Council's overall financial position. Over the last couple of years, there had been some levelling off and income had stabilised at estimated levels, although budgeted levels were still much reduced compared to previous years. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was reviewed and updated in October 2013 following the public sector spending review (CSR 13). After considering the updated financial position and the projected outcomes from CSR 13, the Finance and Management Committee had approved a further round of budget savings. Consequently, an amount of £500,000 needed to be found from within the current base budget of the Council before next year's budget round (2015/16) in order to sustain

the overall financial position in the future. As part of the strategy, the Finance Committee approved that all service budgets are scrutinised closely to identify potential savings.

Details of the Committee's overall net expenditure were provided, and it was estimated to decrease overall between 2013/14 and 2014/15 by £238,649. A summary of these changes within each service area was provided within the report.

In addition, an analysis of the main income streams was summarised within the report. Overall, income forecast for 2014/15 had been maintained at current levels for the main area's covering Licensing and Planning, in accordance with the MTFP.

The base budget for 2014/15 had been uplifted by inflation in 2013/14. However, proposed budgets for 2014/15 did not at this stage allow for future inflation. Some base costs were subject to inflation during future years and in some cases would be unavoidable, for example employee costs when National Pay increases were approved. Allowances for inflation based on various assumptions regarding price increases etc., would be calculated across the main spending heads and in total held as a central contingency. This contingency would be reviewed and monitored by the Finance and Management Committee and allocated into service budgets, as the actual effects of inflation became known over the year.

Details were provided of the Council's approved Capital Investment Programme.

An appendix was provided which showed a schedule of the proposed levels of fees and charges that would operate from 1st April 2014, together with a comparison to the existing charge. Key points relating to fees and charges were highlighted within the report and included details on

- Collection of Trade Waste
- Land and Property Charges
- Charges under the Licensing and Gambling Acts of 2003 and 2005
- Animal Licensing
- Private Hire Licensing
- Other Licenses
- Pest Control Charges
- Planning Services
- Fees for Building Regulations

Members asked for further details on the Local Plan budget and the contingency plan in case this should go to inquiry, the payment of Business Rates on car parks, and concern over the lack of capital investment in Swadlincote Town Centre.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) ***That the proposed income and expenditure for 2014/15 for the Committee's Services, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be***

*referred to the Finance and Management Committee for approval.*

- (2) That the proposed fees and charges for 2014/15, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved**

P. WATSON

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.