

STRATEGY COMMITTEE – 12 JANUARY 2012

Report No. L123 – Strategic and Financial Planning – Budget Options

Amended Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee endorses the key aspects of Budget Option 1 for the 2012/13 financial year, as set out and described in the report, which reflects:

- The very substantial Integration, transformation and other savings and income generation proposals of £1m summarised in Appendix B and further referred to in this report and Paper L119, which was considered by the Joint O&S Committees on the 13 December 2011
- A Council Tax increase of 3.5% to provide a degree of financial sustainability in future years instead of accepting the Government's one-off Council Tax Freeze grant
- The retention of free parking for up to 3 hours in Sudbury and Hadleigh but there being an increase in the long-stay charge from £1.50 to £2.

2.2 That, in addition, further savings and income of £40k relating to public conveniences and the brown bin scheme (as reflected in Budget Option 2) be also incorporated in the 2012/13 Budget and also that:

- The further reduction in community grants of £30k is deleted, with a full strategic review of the community grants budget in 2012/13 by the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee, having regard to the information attached in Appendix D to this report
- The remaining Budget shortfall, estimated at £134k, is funded by the limited temporary use of the New Homes Bonus and/or the additional use of reserves
- The remaining New Homes Bonus is used to support economic growth and the vitality of market towns, jobs, new homes and investing in achieving long-term savings, as set out and described in section 8.9 of this report
- The reserves strategy, as also outlined in Paper L119, adjusted as necessary by the above proposals is approved.

2.3 That, in terms of the significant financial challenge facing the Council over the next 3 years, it adopts the following approaches:

- Vigorously pursue the programme of service integration and transformation with Mid Suffolk District Council to achieve annual savings of at least £1m by the end of 2014/15, recognising that this involves significant staff reductions, and

- Continue to constructively engage with local communities, particularly Town Councils, on how they can contribute to the transformation of services in order to assist in meeting the budget shortfall of around £1.3m that still has to be found by end of 2014/15

The Committee is asked to make the above recommendations to an additional meeting of the Full Council on 26 January 2012

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