

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
BUDGET WORKING GROUP
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 2nd JUNE, 2016**

PRESENT –

Councillors

*J. Blackburn
D. Clegg
J. M. P. Henderson
M. Iqbal
D. M. Whipp*

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Cooney, A. R. Greaves and P. White).

Also in attendance

<i>Dean Langton</i>	<i>Strategic Director</i>
<i>Philip Mousdale</i>	<i>Corporate Director</i>
<i>Vince Green</i>	<i>Financial Services Manager</i>
<i>Jane Watson</i>	<i>Senior Committee Administrator</i>



1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor M. Iqbal be appointed Chairman of the Budget Working Group for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

Councillor M. Iqbal (Chairman – in the Chair)

2. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the meeting of this Working Group held on 1st October, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN – UPDATE

The Financial Services Manager gave a presentation on the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2016-2020. This included a recap of the 2016/17 Budget Strategy and preliminary indications regarding the 2015/16 outturn.

It was noted that there was indications of a significant underspend during 2015/16 resulting from a mix of service and technical factors. One point highlighted was the ongoing decline in business rates income which due to prescribed accounting arrangements would not be accounted for until the 2017/18 budget was set. The Committee was advised that projected underspend in 2015/16

provided an opportunity to 'manage' this via a contribution to reserves which would then be drawn on in 2017/18.

There was also reference made to the key assumptions that under pinned the Medium Term Financial Plan and details of the risks were identified. There was mention of the reserves and it was noted that this would be considered by the Executive in June, 2016.

The Committee also discussed issues around business rates and the growth required to bridge the savings gap in 2018/19.

Reference was again made to the four main areas of cost for the Council which were Liberata, Pendle Leisure Trust, Waste Services (including Street Cleansing) and Grounds Maintenance. The Committee discussed a number of issues associated with each of these main areas of cost. It was acknowledged that within each area a number of issues were required to be considered. The removal of the cost sharing agreement with regards to Waste Services by April 2018 would have a major impact on the Council and this service area alone. Although these areas had been identified as the four main areas of cost for the Council it was also acknowledged that savings would need to be identified within other areas of the Council.

The Committee were asked to consider areas they wanted officers to focus on and if they had any other suggestions/proposals for additional savings. Their main concern was that there was a need to engage with the public and to highlight the Council's financial position more. It was felt that the public did not appreciate the position the Council was in.

It was also acknowledged that although savings had been made over recent years the decisions needed now to make additional savings would become harder and harder.

AGREED

- (1) That the position be noted.
- (2) That last year's 'fact sheet' be updated and publicised.
- (3) That a draft list of where savings required could be identified be submitted to the next meeting for consideration.

4. SAVINGS OPTIONS AND PROCESSES FOR 2017/18 AND GOING FORWARD

These issues were discussed in minute (3) above.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED

That the next meeting of the Budget Working Group be held at 6.00 p.m. on Thursday 11th August, 2016 at Nelson Town Hall.

Chairman _____