

Council Budget – 2015/16

Budget amendment 1 to the proposed 2015/16 General Fund Revenue Budget

Proposed by Councillor Lamb and Seconded by Councillor Courtenay

Council Tax

That the level of increase in the 2015/16 Council Tax for the Southend-on-Sea element shall be 0% (as opposed to the proposed 1.95% rise by Cabinet 12th February 2015), enabling the Council to receive the Coalition Government's Council Tax Freeze Grant, equivalent to a rise of 1.0% of Council Tax.

This would result in an annual reduction of income of £1,209,000, significantly offset by the Government's grant of £712,000.

That the annual loss in income of £497,000 be offset as follows;

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New Funding Proposal

Council-wide Vacancy Factor (250,000)

Introduce a council wide vacancy factor, totalling £250,000 (approximately 0.5% of the total salaries budget), over and above the vacancy factors that individual service areas have.

It is intended that the vacancy factor applied as evenly as possible across the whole council, but that the exact distribution be delegated to the Head of Paid Service.

Senior Management Team Restructure (200,000)

The senior management team, Head of Service and above, be restructured to deliver £200,000 worth of savings. That the Head of Paid Service be charged with proposing a new SMT structure working with Group Leaders to ensure wide member support for the new structure.

To allow the Head of Paid Service sufficient time to design a new structure and undertake the necessary consultation and risk assessment only a part year saving be expected for 2015-16 and full year savings thereafter, and £100,000 be used from the Business Transformation Reserve to allow for the full year saving in 2015-16. This proposal is also likely to incur other one-off costs in terms of potential redundancy and pension strain costs, depending upon the changes needed, of up to

approximately £350,000 and that these costs also be taken from the Business Transformation Reserve.

Reduction of one Cabinet Post (10,000)

Reduce the number of Cabinet posts reflecting the reduction in senior management across the council. The Cabinet be formed of the Leader, Deputy Leader and four others for 2015/16 and beyond.

Catering hospitality (10,000)

Reduce the amount spent on Catering Hospitality (reducing tea, coffee and biscuits provided 'free of charge' at public council meetings), by £10,000, leaving approximately 25% of the budget.

Contingency Budget-reduce the Council's revenue contingency budget (27,000)

Total of funding proposal (497,000)