

MINUTE of MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within CONFERENCE ROOM 3, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON , on 31 JANUARY 2023.

Present – Councillors Tom Conn (Chair), Cathy Muldoon, Alison Adamson, Diane Calder, Danny Logue (substituting for Councillor Tony Pearson), Veronica Smith and Kirsteen Sullivan

Apologies – Councillor Tony Pearson

In attendance – Tom Carr-Pollock (Trade Union Representative), Pippa Plevin (Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils) and Pat Tedford (Trade Union Representative)

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair opened the meeting by outlining the budget savings measures that the council was having to implement in order to achieve a balanced budget and that all 32 local authorities found themselves in a similar position.

He continued by explaining the role of the Panel in scrutinising officer's proposals on where the Council could make potential budget savings; this was following an extensive consultation exercise undertaken in 2022. Any comments made by Panel Members would be noted and used in a section of the report going to the budget-setting meeting of Council at a later date.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Lead Officer for the panel providing an update on the council's medium-term financial plan and summarises a number of potential saving options relevant to the remit of this panel to address the council's budget gap over the three-year period 2023/24 to 2025/26, including responses from the *WL2028 Your Council, Your Say* Phase 2 consultation.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note the outcome of the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Phase 2 consultation and comments as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report;

2. Note the updated revenue budget gap of £47.6 million, demonstrating the hugely challenging financial position facing the council over the next five years;
3. Note work undertaken to date by officers in developing the five-year revenue financial plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28;
4. Note officer saving options, relevant to the remit of the Panel, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report;
5. Note the Integrated Relevance Assessments for all proposed savings options and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) where the options were assessed as having a potential impact on a protected group or characteristic, as set out in Appendix 5 of the report;
6. Note that following conclusion of the PDSPs to consider potential saving options, the Head of Finance and Property Services would present a report to full Council on 21 February 2023 containing a five-year revenue financial plan and a three-year detailed revenue budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The Panel then asked a series of questions on some of those matters detailed in the committee report including school transport, travel concessions, pedestrian crossings and crossing guards, community lighting installation and removal, charges for garden vs. food waste, encouraging composting, publication of *Your Council Your Say* consultation comments, school meals, reduction in cleaning hours, street cleaning, impact of proposals on staff, and automated public conveniences.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.