4. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2026/27 AND 2027/28

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Lead Officer which provided an update on the council's financial plan and summarised a number of potential saving options relevant to the remit of the Panel to address the council's budget gap in 2026/27 and 2027/28, including responses from the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Phase 3 consultation.

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the outcome of the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Phase 3 consultation and comments, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2;

2. Notes the updated revenue budget gap of £15.4 million, after application of previously agreed budget saving measures, demonstrating the challenging financial position continuing to face the council;

3. Notes officer saving options, relevant to the remit of the Panel, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;

4. Notes the Integrated Relevance Assessments for all proposed saving options and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) where the options are assessed as having a potential impact on a protected group or characteristic, as set out in Appendix 4;

5. Notes that following conclusion of the PDSPs to consider potential saving options, the Director of Finance and Property Services will present an updated two-year revenue budget strategy for 2026/27 and 2027/28 to full Council in February 2026.

Those in attendance at the meeting then proceeded to ask questions on Section D3 (WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Consultation) of the report noting the following observations and comments :-

- Clarity on what specific matters the panel were being asked to consider in the overall context of the consultation responses
- The way in which the consultation responses had been posted on the councils website
- The style of the questions posed in the consultation

Those in attendance at the meeting then proceeded to explore the options outlined in Section D4 of the report (Budget Saving Options Relevant to Economy, Community Empowerment & Wealth Building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel):-

- Context of proposed reduction in FTE's
- Clarity in the terminology used in the Impact Assessment (IA) completed for the proposal P1d Workforce Modernisation in planning services
- Funding for the Sports Co-ordinator post

- Third Sector representative seeking assurances that any uplift in council budgets was passed onto the third sector
- Retaining gala day bunting

The Chair concluded by thanking everyone for their participation in the meeting

Decision

1. To note the recommendations of the report

2. To note the comments and observations by those in attendance to the proposals outlined in the report