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| Report to: | EXECUTIVE |
| Relevant Officer: | Steve Thompson, Director of Resources |
| Relevant Cabinet Member: | Councillor Simon Blackburn, Leader of the Council |
| Date of Meeting: | 23 rd February 2015 |

COUNCIL TAX 2015/2016

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 Proposals for Blackpool Council's level of Council Tax for 2015/2016 and the General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/2016.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider all information received since the meeting of the Executive on 9th February 2015 including the Final Settlement Funding Assessment which was announced on 3rd February 2015 and to determine whether or not to confirm the Executive's recommendation to Council regarding the Revenue Budget 2015/2016.

2.2 To recommend to Council approval of an unchanged level of Council Tax for the year 2015/2016 of £1,306 at valuation band D equivalent.

2.3 To recommend to Council the revised level of net expenditure for the General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/2016 of £128,073,000.

2.4 To note that the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority will meet on 16th February 2015 and set their precept for the financial year 2015/2016 this will be reported verbally at this meeting.

2.5 To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire's precept for the year 2015/16 at valuation band D equivalent is also to be agreed on the 16th February 2015 and will therefore be verbally reported at this meeting.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Executive is required to consider the outcome of the consultation meetings and survey before finalising its Budget proposals.

The setting of the General Fund Revenue Budget and the level of Council Tax is consistent with the principles approved by the Executive at its meeting on 9th February 2015.

- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Not applicable – the report once approved will become the Council's new approved Budget
- 3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None, the proposed Council Tax is consistent with the previously recommended General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/16.
- 4.0 Council Priority:**
- 4.1 The relevant Council Priority is

"Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce "
- 5.0 Background Information**
- 5.1 At its meeting on 9th February 2015 the Executive considered a report of the Director of Resources that recommended to Council approval of a net expenditure for the General Fund Revenue Budget of £127,712,000 that would result in an unchanged Council Tax for the year 2015/16 of £1,306 at valuation band D equivalent.
- 5.2 The Final Settlement of Blackpool Council's 2015/16 Settlement Funding Assessment was announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 3rd February 2015. The impact of this was an increase in Blackpool's funding allocation of £361,000 in 2015/16. Therefore, in order to maintain a freeze in council tax in 2015/16 a revised General Fund Estimate of £128,073,000 is now recommended with the £361,000 increase in funding being added to Contingencies to provide some further cushion against any non-delivery of / or slippage within the 2015/16 Budget savings target of £25.2m.
- 5.3 As part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement the threshold for 'excessive' Council Tax increases was set at 2%, an increase of 2% or more requiring a local referendum to be held. The level of Council Tax recommended in this report will not invoke this requirement.

- 5.4 The draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/2016 and supporting information were further considered by meetings of the Finance and Audit Committee with Trade Union representatives and with Business Ratepayers and a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, all held on 13th February 2015. The views presented at these meetings will be reported to the Executive.
- 5.5 The precepts of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire were agreed on 16th February 2015 for the year 2015/16 will be verbally reported to this meeting of the Executive.
- 5.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No
- 5.8 **List of Appendices:**
None
- 6.0 **Legal considerations:**
- 6.1 None
- 7.0 **Human Resources considerations:**
- 7.1 Human Resources considerations were outlined in the General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/2016 report to the Executive meeting on the 9th February 2015.
- 8.0 **Equalities considerations:**
- 8.1 An Equality Analysis was produced for the General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/2016 report to the Executive on 9th February 2015, this remains applicable.
- 9.0 **Financial considerations:**
- 9.1 As outlined in this report.
- 10.0 **Risk management considerations:**
- 10.1 A Risk Analysis was produced for the General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/16 report to the Executive on 9th February 2015, this remains applicable.
- 11.0 **Ethical considerations:**
- 11.1 None

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

- 12.1 Consultation has taken place at separate meetings with the Trade Unions and Business Ratepayers on 13th February 2015. It has also taken place at a meeting of the Blackpool Equalities Forum (21st January 2015). The relevant minutes will be circulated to the Executive.
- 12.2 An open access public consultation started on 12th January 2015 and has run for four weeks. This consisted of an online form publicised via Your Blackpool and Social Media, and a hard copy form available from Council reception points, children's centres and libraries.
- 12.3 A report with the results of the open access consultation will be available on 16th February, once the data has been input and analysed. The report will be circulated to Executive members prior to this meeting to inform their decision making.
- 12.4 Key stakeholders including Area Forum community representatives have been consulted upon the budget proposals particularly in relation to their area. A copy of the minutes of the meeting held with Area Forum community representatives on the 10th February 2015 will be circulated to Executive members prior to this meeting to inform their decision making.

13.0 Background papers:

- 13.1 Budget working papers and above consultation minutes and feedback.

14.0 Key decision information:

- 14.1 Is this a key decision? Yes
- 14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 28/2014
- 14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
- 14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

- 15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No
- 15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 13th February 2015 Date approved: N/A

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1

18.2 Date of Decision:

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

19.1 Date Decision published:

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1