

## QUESTIONS FROM THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REGARDING THE REPORT TO CABINET ON 13 FEBRUARY 2020, BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2020/21 & FUTURE YEARS FORECASTS (PAPER C).

### QUESTIONS ON PAPER C (BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2020/21 & FUTURE YEARS FORECASTS)

1. (Paragraph 90) For savings proposals that require consultation, the actual method of implementation or their distributional effect will not be determined until the results of consultation have been fully considered. Following consultation, the relevant Portfolio Holder may alter, amend or substitute any of the indicative savings proposal(s) set out in Appendix C with alternative proposal(s) amounting to the same value. **Can the Cabinet identify which budget proposals require consultation before the savings can be achieved?**

*In the main only those proposals for the introduction of new parking charges will require a formal consultation*

2. (Paragraph 86) For 2020/21, 93% of all savings proposed are planned from Efficiency Savings and Additional Income with Service Reduction measures amounting to just 7% as illustrated in the chart below **Have comprehensive risk assessments been undertaken for the impact on service reduction amounting to 7%?**

*The proposals have been prepared over a six-month period that has involved intensive scrutiny of all the council's spending by the Cabinet. The risks associated with each proposal have been fully debated with officers and are understood by the Cabinet. They are summarised in the appendix to give all members a 'flavour' of what has been considered.*

3. (Paragraph 87) A summary of the overall savings proposals for 2020/21 by Portfolio is set out below.

| Portfolio   | Controllable Budget | Savings Proposal |      |
|---|---------------------|------------------|------|
|   | £                   | £                | %    |
| Adult Social Care, Public Health & Housing Needs* | 49,403,911          | 1,542,700        | 3.1% |

**To what extent have health partners been consulted on budget proposals which may have an impact on their service delivery?**

*The savings have been shared with partners who have not raised any concerns.*

## **QUESTIONS ON PAPER C - APPENDIX C (INDICATIVE SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2020/21)**

### **ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH, & HOUSING NEEDS**

#### **1. Saving 3 (Operations)**

**What is the timeframe for the full review for remodelling homecare packages, how much resource will this require, and what implications will this have?**

*We will be focusing first on those people with intensive levels of homecare (e.g. 4 visits per day delivered each time by 2 carers) In order to see which of those visits we may be able to either reduce or transfer to a Personal Assistants (PAs). It will take us 12 months to deliver the 15% target we have set ourselves. In addition, we will be working with those we serve to promote greater levels of choice and control by transferring to obtaining care and support from a PA instead of through more traditional routes people can achieve a more personalised support network with greater flexibility.*

#### **2. Saving 4 (Operations)**

**Efficiency savings are expected to be 2.5% (high cost reviews) and 5% in year 1 (resource allocation remodelling). What rationale is used to determine these figures and how robust is this model?**

*Peoples needs change over time and where we are able to input recovery and/or reablement input we know that we have success in reducing long term need as well as reducing high levels of needs. This efficiency savings of £1.05m comprises 3 components all of which overlap – for instance in reviewing high costs placements the aim is to introduce a consistence approach to costings via the resource allocation system (RAS); equally, people in receipt of Section 117 (i.e. after care for those people under sections 2 & 3 of the mental health act) will also be subject to the application of the RAS. That is why we have not given saving amounts for each of the three areas of activity designed to deliver this target. We acknowledge this is an ambitious target in that over the last two years our reviewing activity has already delivered £3.8m savings.*

### **CHILDRENS SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

#### **3. Saving 7 (Access, Performance & Resources)**

**Who determines which children qualify for free home-to-school transport?**

*Eligibility for council funded (it is not free) home to school transport is set out in law, dependent on where children live, and the distance to the schools they attend., and where appropriate their special educational needs. The policies with full details of the criteria are on the council's website. These policies, at both post 16 and school age children are not proposed for change.*

**Has the impact on families been considered (particularly where they may have made choices based on the availability of free home-to-school transport)?**

*Yes of course it has. Parents must make arrangements for getting their children to school except in the circumstances set out in law. No children eligible for council funded home to school transport will lose their eligibility through this re-tendering. This was considered alongside the priority of ensuring that all children get to school safely. Families who have previously purchased 'spare' seats may find that there are fewer spare seats available.*

**What would happen to the re-tendered contract if the community bus service was lost?**

*The tender process is for the home to school transport and the expectation is that the successful provider will be able to meet the terms of the contract.*

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY & PUBLIC PROTECTION**

### **4. Saving 9 (Regulatory Services)**

**Rationalisation of back office costs should be part of normal business. How is this different and how is this an indicative saving?**

*Identifying efficiencies is a core part of the council's business activities. However, savings generated in service need to be subject to corporate scrutiny rather than allowing the service to reallocate the funds. In this way savings of this nature can be captured and used as a contribution to the savings target. This is a cumulative figure of a number of smaller budget savings for example postage, printing (better use of electronic contact) and the retendering of a service contract (at a cheaper price). Whilst being efficient with back office costs to achieve in year savings, the proposals are permanent and ongoing budget reductions.*

### **5. Saving 11 (Bereavement Services)**

**Will the 7% increase in fees and charges generate a profit, or make the service cost neutral?**

*The service already makes a surplus is used to fund other council services.*

## **ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE**

### **6. Saving 16 (Rights of Way)**

**How is retendering the pathways strimming contract an indicative saving for 2020/21 if it has already been achieved?**

*Identifying efficiencies is a core part of the council's business activities. However, savings generated in service need to be subject to corporate scrutiny rather than allowing the service to reallocate the funds. In this way savings of this nature can be captured and used as a contribution to the savings target. Right of Way strimming saving has been achieved through retendering process and will be delivered in 20/21 as the work is programmed to take place in May–Aug 2020.*

### **7. Savings 25 & 26 (Leisure)**

**Do the figures justify the commercial investment in leisure services, in light of the shifting market and competitive local facilities?**

*Yes, the capital investment has seen the leisure centres move from a position of being subsidised to making a surplus to support other council services. This continues despite the recent addition of two national private sector gym operators in Newport.*

**Does the car park revenue for Medina and the Heights go to leisure centres or to parking services?**

*The car parks were both built to support the use off the facilities and not as general pay and display car parks, the income for these facilities is returned to the leisure centres.*

### **8. Saving 27 (Theatre)**

**What has the £10,000 indicative saving been based on?**

*This is based on an analysis of the number of tickets sold in previous years.*

**Will there be a standard booking fee for all ticket purchases, or will it be a percentage?**

*A standard fee of £1.00 for each ticket purchased which is now common practice in many venues.*

**If the introduction of a booking fee for all ticket purchases is in accordance with standard industry practices, why hasn't the theatre been operating like this before?**

*In the past we had an administration fee for postage; however, the new fee will apply to all tickets no matter how they are purchased and dispatched. Currently we are charging a £1.00 fee per transaction (not per ticket) for all internet sales but this does not apply to all ticket sales.*

**It would appear that there is already a booking fee charge. Is this saving in retrospect or is it a legitimate saving for 2020/21?**

*Please see above this has been taken into account in the projected savings.*

## **INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT**

### **9. Savings 28-37 (Parking)**

**What is this savings model based on, and how optimistic is it?**

*The model is based on providing a uniform approach across the island and is based information gathered from other areas of the country and the initial findings from the work on the car park strategy. Calculations are based on ticket sales, similar demographic areas and a sensitivity analysis where prices have increased.*

**What communications are planned to ensure residents are informed of any changes - and how robust is this?**

*For new chargeable areas there is a formal consultation process before any implementation. With regards to other areas a communication plan will be put together before the introduction of any changes; this will replicate what has been implemented in previous years.*

## **PLANNING & HOUSING RENEWAL**

### **10. Saving 39 (Building Control)**

**Is there a robustness on how this is going to be charged, and what will the impact be?**

*The increase in Building Control fees will be applicable to all elements of work that require a fee. They will be calculated based on a review average hourly rates, average time taken per application, review of inspection service plans and a review of costs to implement for 20/21. For the purposes of budgeting it was considered prudent to allow for a 10% increase. The Council's Building Control team is unique in as much as it operates a statutory function within a competitive environment. Applicants are already being advised of the anticipated fee increases and given there has been little change in fee levels over the last few years and the geographic constraints of the Island market, it is not forecast that there will be a significant change in the number of customers using the service.*

## **PROCUREMENT, WASTE MANAGEMENT, PROJECTS & FORWARD PLANNING**

### **11. Saving 45 (Waste and Recycling Management)**

**Reviews of services should be ongoing as part of normal business. How is this different and how is this an indicative saving?**

*Identifying efficiencies is a core part of the council's business activities. However, savings generated in service need to be subject to corporate scrutiny rather than allowing the service to reallocate the funds. In this way savings of this nature can be captured and used as a contribution to the savings target. The paid for collection services are reviewed as Business as usual, against the market and demand and in this instance, some will see a price increase to increase income to the council.*

## **REGENERATION & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

### **12. Saving 47 (Regeneration)**

**What is property-related rental income from Regeneration, and what will the impact on service be?**

*This follows the end of a rent-free period of a tenant in a council-controlled premise. There is no impact on service delivery*

## **RESOURCES**

### **13. Saving 50 (Corporate)**

**Do voluntary organisations with the provision of co-located information, advice and guidance services in the county hall complex pay rent?**

*The IAG consortium pay an annual rent of £9,000 per annum to the council for the occupied floor space utilised for their back office administrative services. This has proved to be a more cost-effective solution for the hosting of their administrative base than that of their previous location.*

**Has the impact on the voluntary sector been considered in these proposals?**

*Yes, an impact assessment has been undertaken and there is no direct impact identified.*

### **14. Saving 53 (Corporate Services)**

**What arrangements were in place for schools using HR/ Payroll services prior to returning to the local authority? Was it a free service?**

*Individual schools undertook to procure their required support services through competitive tendering processes. Their purchasing decisions were based upon the most economically advantageous price to be secured from the bids they received. The local authority in returning to making submissions for published school tenders has been increasingly successful in securing contracts for the specified works.*

### **15. Saving 59 (Property)**

**Reviews of services should be ongoing as part of normal business. How is this different and how is this an indicative saving?**

*Identifying efficiencies is a core part of the council's business activities. However, savings generated in service need to be subject to corporate scrutiny rather than allowing the service to reallocate the funds. In this way savings of this nature can be captured and used as a contribution to the savings target. Rent reviews are conducted on an ongoing basis resources permitting. This proposal is the result of accelerating the systematic review to enable a backlog to be cleared and planned reviews to be achieved on their target date in every circumstance going forward.*

## **QUESTIONS ON PAPER C - APPENDIX E (COMPLETE CAPITAL PROGRAMME INCLUDING NEW SCHEMES)**

### **ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH, & HOUSING NEEDS**

#### **16. Ref No. 12 (Reablement Including SMART Homes)**

**What is this equipment? Is this to be sold commercially - If so, will the Council get commission?**

*Over the course of a year the Adelaide and the Goulding's offer 15,664 bed nights. The breakdown of this capital investment is as follows:*

*Replacement of commercial equipment (£20,000) at Adelaide & Gouldings that includes a commercial standard hot trolleys X2, Commercial Food Steamer, Electric hoist, electric stand aid, Commercial hot cupboard, food processor, potato peeler & food mixer.*

*White Goods for re-ablement flats (£60,000) – This is money to set up the re-ablement flats being created with the capital spend on refurbishment to give a homely domestic style environment for people being assessed to return home. Equipment includes lounge furniture, TV, bedroom furniture and kitchen white goods to replicate the home setting that underpins assessment.*

*SMART Technology (£52,000) – Telecare equipment for the above re-ablement flats that people will trial during assessment and will have the option to purchase when returning home. Equipment includes Wightfibre Wi-Fi, video door entry, SMART sockets, auto curtains, auto lights, profile beds and riser recliner chairs.*

**How many people will benefit from this over the lifetime of the investment?**

*In 2019, 348 people used a re-ablement bed in our two resource centres, for re-ablement as well as regular short stay people and people who attend for day care. These are some of our most vulnerable island residents, the majority of whom (approximately 80%) are discharged from hospital.*

**What work has been done prior to this? Could the Committee be provided with a business case?**

#### **17. Ref No. 13 (Learning Disability and Care Homes Interactive Projector Equipment)**

**How many people will benefit from this over the lifetime of the investment?**

*This is specialist with proven positive impact on helping to calm and settle people with learning disabilities when they are especially agitated. This technology is used extensively for children and adults with LD and as part of our journey to continually improve quality across the councils LD care homes this equipment will support some of the islands most vulnerable people with LD.*

### **INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT**

#### **18. Ref No. 56 (Highways Network Integrity Priority Works)**

**Why are we contributing to this? Are these works not covered in the Highways PFI contract?**

*The Highways PFI Contract does not provide funding for improvements related to the Highways Safety and Improvement Register (formerly the Network Integrity Register). The funding for these works has always sat within the council or externally funded grants.*

### **PLANNING AND HOUSING RENEWAL**

#### **19. Ref No. 64 (Disabled Facilities Grant)**

Background - The Disabled Facilities Grant is founded from the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and is a statutory responsibility of the council. It is a means tested grant

available for someone who is disabled to make adaptations to their home. The maximum DFG that can be awarded is £30K. *Each year the MHCLG will allocate a certain amount for disabled facilities grants which is passed to the local authority via the better care fund. The capital can only be spent in line with the conditions specified in the grant determination letter.*

### **How many people will benefit from this over the lifetime of the investment?**

*The council has a statutory obligation to award a grant to anyone who is eligible. Demand for DFGs is increasing year on year – so far this year we have received 441 grant referrals. In the last five years we have helped over 1,000 remain independent and safe in their own homes. In certain circumstances the grant is repayable (e.g. sale of the property within 10 years) and for this purpose a charge is placed on the property.*

### **Are partners like Isle Access a consultee?**

*As a grant process there is no consultation other than that the individual has to have had their needs confirmed and assessed by the occupational therapist.*

### **Who will be delivering this, and can the Council specify what is needed?**

*The DFG grant system is led by housing Renewal Services as part of their statutory function. The initial assessment will be made by an occupational therapist (currently a commissioned service by adult social care). Only eligible works may receive a grant – necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the individual.*

### **As it can be difficult to know what is required until a person is hospitalised, are there any plans to future-proof homes to prevent hospital admission and keep people in their own homes?**

*Very few DFG applications come from those who are in hospital. The majority of grant applications come from those already living in their own or rented accommodation. The purpose of the grant is to enable individuals to live independently for as long as possible in their home environment.*

## **RESOURCES**

### **20. Ref No. 89 (Fleet Vehicle Replacement)**

#### **How many vehicles have been replaced, and what type of vehicles are they?**

*Since 2017, the fleet replacement programme has seen a total of 57 vehicles being replaced. In the main these have been either pool cars for the use of adult social care services; planning and building control officers and parking services staff (which has delivered an overall reduction in the costs associated with business mileage and has promoted more efficient and effective working practices); small vans utilised by Wightcare; facilities management; environment services and three minibuses for the Adelaide; Gouldings and Beulieu House. There are a further 46 vehicles remaining in the replacement programme, including the commissioning of electric vehicles to further reduce running costs and carbon emissions.*

### **21. Ref No. 90 (Strategic Assets)**

#### **What is the value of the maintenance backlog for the whole estate? Is this a sensible and reasonable amount to invest?**

*We do not have an up to date estimate of the back log of repairs for the whole estate. The back log is different from the work we prioritise each year and for which budget is sought and agreed. It will never cover the back log but should enable buildings to operate and be occupied safely.*

### **22. Ref No. 98 (Sandown Civic Centre)**

#### **Have the logistics of this already been determined?**

*Plans are being formalised to bring the Civic Centre building back in to use in the with the Council's Rationalisation Strategy. The refurbishment will, for accessibility and health and safety reasons include repair of the lift, new heating and new lighting. The building will be decorated, and furniture and ICT will be installed that will allow for the flexible use of the building for office use, conference/training facilities, public access depending on need. Upgrading this building will facilitate the council leaving the last building it leases for office accommodation, generating savings from the lease payments.*

**What steps are being taken to address digital poverty for those residents who are unable or unwilling to engage with technology (such as self-service)?**

*Corporate Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with their request, have recently been provided with an update briefing on the council's website re-development project, including an overview of steps being taken to overcome digital poverty. There will be continued access to computers with on-hand help and assistance for free in council help centres and libraries and free wi-fi for guest users in these locations as well as leisure centres. The council has also retained and invested in its call centre to help people who are not keen to engage digitally and invested in its facilities at county hall and Ryde library for those who would prefer to deal face to face.*

**23. Ref No. 100 (Rolling ICT Equipment Replacement Programme)**

**Does the Council have surplus equipment to ensure all new starters have the appropriate equipment ready to go from their first day?**

Yes

**24. Ref No. 101 (Adults Social Care, Public Health and Housing Needs Key Applications)**

**What is this?**

*The software data systems that record the council's support for residents and its purchasing arrangements with contractors.*