

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET OVERVIEW WORKING GROUP
HELD ON**

26 November 2015

7.30 - 8.35 pm

PRESENT

Overview Working Group Members

Councillor Ian Beckett (Chair)
Councillor Maggie Hulcoop (Vice-Chair)
Councillor David Carter
Councillor Simon Carter
Councillor Clive Souter

Officers

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance
Donna Beechener, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Janet Jackson, Corporate and Governance Support Team Leader

23. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Danny Purton and John Strachan.

24. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

25. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

26. **MATTERS ARISING**

None

27. **WORK PLAN**

The Overview Working Group received a report that outlined its Work Plan for the current year.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Process for Child Protection is added to the 14 January 2016 meeting of this Group.

- (ii) Financial future of Harlow Playhouse is added to the 11 February 2016 meeting of this Group.

28. **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

The Overview Working Group received a report from Simon Freeman, Head of Finance, on the Review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. Donna Beechener, Revenues and Benefits Manager, introduced and summarised the report.

In response to questions from Councillors, Donna provided more details on the Scheme and explained when that the Universal Credit is scheduled to be rolled out by 2020. Donna then explained the introduction of the minimum income floor for self-employed claimants and the proposal to defer the removal of the family premium for a further 12 months.

The Overview Working Group asked if it was possible to have a breakdown of the summons which had been issued as follows:

- (i) how many were issued
- (ii) how many were resolved at the summons
- (iii) how many went to Court

It was also asked if it was possible to find out how many have accepted the support.

RESOLVED that the Overview Working Group:

- A** Acknowledges the current position regarding the 2015/16 Local Council Tax Support Scheme and endorses continuing stability within the scheme for 2016/17.
- B** Recommends to Cabinet that, following the results of the consultation process, the 2016/17 scheme is amended as follows:
 - (i) The introduction of a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants of Local Council Tax Support.
 - (i) The award of backdated Local Council Tax Support is limited to one month.
- C** Recommends to Cabinet that the proposal to remove the Family Premium in calculating an award of Local Council Tax Support is deferred for a further 12 months.

29. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY REPORT**

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance, gave a presentation to the Group on the MTFs which outlined the current financial position of the Council.

However, in light of the Autumn Statement it was as yet unclear how this may further affect the finances.

The Group then discussed the current financial situation.

RESOLVED that:

A the report and the underpinning principles that support the MTFS is noted.

B that the Working Group asks Cabinet to ensure that the details of the 2015 Autumn Statement and in particular but not exclusively the impact on the HRA, Capital and Discretionary Fund are considered fully in the development of the Councils financial plans for 2016/17 and future years once the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced later in December.

30. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW
WORKING GROUP